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The Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Western Balkans Program

Midterm Impact Assessment



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Executive Summary

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) commissioned an impact assessment of its Western Balkans program from 2010 to 2015. As the team who carried out this assessment, our overall conclusion from the assessment is that the RBF program in the Western Balkans is having meaningful positive impact, and it is relevant to the developments in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and the rest of the region. We believe the program is well designed and is achieving a lot with a relatively small amount of money.

The choice of the Western Balkans as a pivotal place is appropriate as it is one of the least stable parts of Europe. The four goals of the program connected to strengthening democracy, peace, and sustainable development in Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, are directly relevant to the RBF's overall purpose as an organization and allow it to play to its strengths.

The RBF should expect to remain engaged in the Western Balkans for at least another 10 years. The following conditions are indications that it could be time to exit this region:

- All three countries have joined the European Union. The experience of Hungary demonstrates, however, that this is insufficient in itself to preserve democratic practice.
- If the legal system, and political processes more generally, can bring the most powerful to account and deal with impunity.

Contending with a political system based on impunity and patronage, as is common in the Western Balkans, will require effort on many fronts from many actors. Key areas that will need attention include ensuring rule of law/judicial reform, ensuring an independent media, and closely scrutinizing the management or privatization of publicly owned enterprises. In order to achieve impact in these areas, we believe the program should be more focused in the next five years.

Considering the success of the RBF's previous work in the energy sector, as well as the geopolitical headwinds in the Western Balkans, it is our opinion that the Fund should narrow the focus of its work on sustainable development to energy. Within this, however, we suggest expanding the range of the work to cover energy issues across the region.

We agree with the approach of supporting nascent or less well-known civil society organizations (CSOs) to bring new life and diversity into the CSO sector. This has helped re-invigorate civil society in the countries where the RBF works.

The civil society triangle concept, which brings together think tanks, investigative journalists, and grassroots organizations, can be a powerful instrument for attaining many of the RBF's goals for the region. The RBF can make major contributions to the efforts of such triangles by using its existing networks and convening power to link them with international actors (international organizations, advocacy groups, think tanks, state actors) who can support their efforts. This may also mean working across different programs in the RBF.

The RBF should continue framing the program around the countries' aspirations to join the EU. However, it might be necessary to start promoting the goals in the RBF program, such as reforms to support accountability and transparency, as "goods" in their own right. Some fear that by promoting reforms purely as necessary for EU accession rather than as having intrinsic benefits for the country, the RBF risks not achieving its goals if it becomes clear that EU accession is no longer on the table.

Introduction

Objectives of Impact Assessment

The RBF commissioned a three-person team to carry out an impact assessment of its 2010–2015 grantmaking in the Western Balkans in order to:

- assess progress within Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo against the goals and indicators in the program framework;
- give an opinion as to the relevance of these goals within the current context;
- assess whether/how the RBF and its grantees contributed to this progress, or lack of it;
- assess whether the assumptions regarding European Union accession are still valid and useful going forward;
- summarize the key aspects of the approach taken by the RBF in its Western Balkans program and analyze the extent to which these approaches are working, as well as the lessons to be drawn from them; and
- develop overall lessons learned and recommendations for the next five years.

Methodology

The methodology was developed in consultation with RBF staff and comprised:

- an initial meeting of the evaluation team with key RBF staff in Pristina, Kosovo, to discuss and agree on the assessment focus and approach, leading to the development of a methodology paper;
- a review of relevant documents including key external and internal documents (see Appendix C);
- Skype interviews with RBF staff and board members, grantees, and external people;
- field visits to Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Brussels to carry out individual and group interviews;
- a three-day team analysis meeting followed by a preliminary feedback and discussion session with RBF staff; and
- drafting this report.

Overall, the evaluation was informed by 54 current and former grantees, six RBF staff members, two RBF board members, and 34 external interviewees.

Challenges Facing the Midterm Impact Assessment

The program is broad, complex, and ambitious, meaning that in the time available, the team focused on the big picture and was not able to look in detail at all areas of the work. In particular, it was not possible to have a full assessment of the overall impact against Goal 2 because of the following factors:

1. We didn't look at the impacts achieved by smaller CSOs that access funding from regranting by the foundations funded by the RBF.
2. We were not able to access comprehensive data on the level of local contributions to the civil society sector.

3. We were not able to assess the final impact of areas of work such as **Philanthropy for Green Ideas** or, to an extent, the work of the **Regional Environmental Center (REC)** (Goal 3), as it will take more time to show results.

Additionally, we found the program framework unclear in places, and it appeared that the de facto approach had developed beyond the original framework without the full underlying theory of change being clearly articulated. Furthermore, the indicators in the program framework were not necessarily the best ones for assessing impact.

However, despite these challenges, we were able to get a sufficient sense of the overall design of the program to draw conclusions and recommendations about its impact. We regret that time and space do not allow us to report in detail on all the initiatives that were shared with us.

Context and Trends that Shape RBF Work in the Region

Shared History and Issues

The federation of six republics and two autonomous provinces formerly known as Yugoslavia started disintegrating in the late 1980s as a result of deep economic and structural problems. Nationalism had been on the rise throughout the previous decade, especially in Serbia. There, Slobodan Milosevic, a rising Communist leader, came to power using nationalism and a vision of a Greater Serbia that would include parts of Croatia, most of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the whole of Serbia, including Kosovo and Vojvodina. During the ensuing wars in Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995), and Kosovo (1998–1999), more than 100,000 people were killed and millions were expelled in what became known as ethnic cleansing. Milosevic's murderous streak was finally stopped by the U.S.-led NATO intervention in 1999.

Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Macedonia were recognized as independent and sovereign U.N. Member States already by 1993. Montenegro held a successful referendum on independence in 2006. Kosovo was a de facto international protectorate from 1999 until it declared independence in 2008. Aside from Slovenia, the countries of former Yugoslavia were left with overwhelming social, economic, and transitional justice problems—which they struggle with to this day.

The Present

Regional

The three countries in which the RBF's Western Balkans program is active—Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia—have many things in common. All three are aspiring EU members. Serbia and Montenegro have opened formal negotiations with the EU, whereas Kosovo has recently signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement. However, membership is a distant prospect for all.

All three countries have strong executive branches of government with few checks and balances. The parliaments and the judiciary are either weak or directly controlled by the executive. Public administration in each country is heavily politicized, and strong patronage networks allow parties in power tremendous leverage over voters during elections, which are nominally free and fair.

Criminalized power structures are strong in all three countries and cooperate efficiently across the borders. Often, the organized crime networks are connected to—or controlled by—the intelligence apparatus, which was instrumental in organizing and committing the mass atrocities in the 1990s.

There is little similarity in how the three societies interpret the events of the 1990s as well as distant history. The educational systems are exclusively focused on teaching one-sided interpretations of the wars, thereby ingraining dangerous, nationalist narratives into future generations.

Civil society groups in all countries are operating under duress. Civil society in its organized form (i.e., nongovernmental organizations) is not necessarily viewed positively by the public. Most often, these organizations are viewed as foreign agents (especially in Serbia, as a consequence of Milosevic's propaganda), special interest groups, or corrupt elites.

In all countries, civil society groups are numerous and heterogeneous. However, a number of organizations are inactive, existing only on paper. Among the active ones, some are truly nongovernmental, whereas others are linked strongly to government. At the start of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Western Balkans program in 2001, all countries had a cadre of well-established organizations, most of which were criticized for monopolizing the civic space and access to donors.

International donors are gradually moving out of the region,¹ and that trend may well continue among bilateral donors, especially in the areas of democracy and civil society assistance. The attention of policymakers in the Western capitals is currently focused on the crises in Syria, Iraq, or Ukraine while the Western Balkans is now considered a third-tier issue. However, partially reversing this trend was the recent decision by the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation selecting Kosovo as eligible for grants.²

Kosovo

Six years after it declared independence and four years after it began taking over key institutional responsibilities from the international community, Kosovo held a bitterly contested election in 2014. It took the parties more than six months to agree on a ruling coalition, mostly because the country's president and the Constitutional Court blocked the opposition three-party coalition from forming the government. Finally, the biggest opposition party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), decided to abandon Vetevendosje and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and form a ruling coalition with the incumbent Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), delegitimizing the government from the opposition's perspective.

The region's laggard in the EU accession process, Kosovo finally signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU in October 2015. Many commentators viewed this as a reward to the ruling coalition for participating in the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue in Brussels and signing a series of agreements with Serbia in August 2015. But the agreements with Serbia deepened the country's extended political crisis after the Kosovar government acquiesced to give the Serb municipalities in Kosovo the right to be governed separately in many aspects. Kosovo's President Atifete Jahjaga took the August 2015 agreements to the Constitutional Court, which gave them conditional approval. The opposition parties' demands for greater transparency and accountability vis-à-vis the agreements are still ongoing. Over the last several months, opposition parties have set off tear gas

¹ See for example, Adam Fagan, "Promoting Democracy in the Western Balkans after the Global Financial Crisis," <http://www.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/LSEE/PDFs/Publications/Adam-Fagan-Paper-For-Publication.pdf>

² See <https://www.mcc.gov/news-and-events/release/mcc-board-selects-five-countries-for-mcc-partnerships-121715>

six times in the Parliament in protest against the concessions that the Kosovar delegation made. In response, the government arrested a number of opposition leaders, further deepening the crisis.

Civil society groups and media organizations in Kosovo are very active and have a strong voice in public debate. With considerable international presence on the ground, it is difficult for the government to silence critical voices. Think tank organizations in Kosovo are especially effective in getting access to decision-making processes and having their proposals considered and adopted as policy. Also, private and investigative media in Kosovo are in the best position of the three countries assessed. Although under constant political pressure, public service broadcasters are also more objective, and air shows that are critical of the government, such as *Jeta ne Kosove*, which regularly exposes misconduct in branches of the government.

The United States is still a key international player in the country. The positive side effect of this is that the Kosovar government has to at least pretend that it is taking democratic practice seriously. However, on the issue of sustainable development, U.S. influence has not been entirely positive. Plans to build a new power plant, which the Fund's grantees strongly oppose, have enjoyed support from the U.S. government because the investor is an American company.

Montenegro

Montenegro's EU accession process has been progressing fairly well since the country officially opened negotiations in 2012. The NATO accession process is almost complete (as of March 2016), with Montenegro officially invited to join the organization in December 2015.

Geopolitical interests of the EU, United States, and Russia are important for the country's future. As a majority Orthodox Christian country, Montenegro has historically been allied with Russia. Hence, the decision of the government to join NATO is a historic exception and gives the ruling party leverage with decision makers in Washington and Brussels in other areas.

Montenegro is the only democracy in Europe that has never had a transition of power. The Democratic Party of Socialists has ruled the country since the first multiparty elections in 1990. As a result, the political scene is extremely polarized, and informed debate often gives way to ad hominem attacks and smear campaigns.

In terms of RBF goals, it is important to note that the government of Montenegro has agreed to participate in the **Regional Commission for the establishment of facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights (RECOM)**, has taken some steps to address the leading transitional justice issues, and has agreed to transfer publicly owned property for use by the **Civil Society House**. Furthermore, the civil society scene is vibrant, albeit polarized. This polarization manifests itself partly in the opposition of one group of established civil society organizations to the **Civil Society House** initiative. Despite this polarization, an emerging group of organizations supported by the RBF is beginning to cooperate quite closely and demonstrate impact (see Impact and Contribution of the Fund's Grantmaking).

The Montenegrin government has repeatedly pledged strong support for building an “ecological state,”³ and has passed a number of laws and strategies that aim to support this vision; however, implementation is either weak or lacking entirely.

Serbia

Former far-right Serbian nationalists, today known as the Serbian Progressive Party, won Serbia’s parliamentary elections in 2014 by a wide margin. Since then, their leader, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, has succeeded in gaining nearly complete control over the country’s government, economy, and the media. The opposition to Vucic is fragmented, and either very weak or has been co-opted by him.



Directors and journalists marked BIRN’s 10th anniversary at a regional conference in Sarajevo in 2015. Photo courtesy of BIRN.

Under his leadership, Serbia has aggressively pursued EU integration goals, managing to convince the EU to officially open the accession negotiations without Serbia recognizing Kosovo as an independent country.

Civil society in Serbia is less vibrant than Kosovo. A number of important organizations are well-established and working on issues such as transparency and accountability, but there remain many gaps, such as the lack of a serious and relevant organization focused specifically on anti-corruption.

Russia is very influential in Serbia, having made considerable

investments in its economy, especially in the energy sector, and fostered close ties with the Serbian Orthodox Church. In addition, there is a wide-ranging network of pro-Russian, right-wing civil society groups, which oppose EU integration. As a result of this geopolitical tug-of-war, coupled with a near-complete government control of the media, Serbia’s pro-EU civil society groups face numerous constraints in getting their critical voices transmitted to the public.

Peacebuilding and sustainable development activities are not high on the government’s agenda. Parts of the security apparatus rank and file have a vital interest in preventing the country from facing the past.

Background on the Fund’s Work in the Region

In early 2001, following a decade of war, the RBF began exploratory grantmaking in what was then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia (including the province of Kosovo) and Montenegro. This work built on 20 years of experience in Central and Eastern Europe supporting

³ The Constitution of Montenegro uses this term as a way to describe the country’s commitment to sustainable development. However, this verbal commitment is not really followed up with meaningful action.

transition processes and helping to create conditions for that region's accession to the EU. At the time, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was seen as a region of "special concern" due to its recent emergence from a decade of war and the potential for future regional instability.

The initial funding was focused in five areas: building healthy democratic processes; supporting initiatives to overcome persistent ethnic myths and prejudices; encouraging a vibrant civil society and sustainable communities; promoting regional security; and assessing public and private sector options for international engagement in the Balkans. After nine months of working in the region, a change in program status from exploratory to multiyear grantmaking was agreed on by the board and the focus was narrowed to the first three of these areas with the main focus on "building the basic capacity for civil society to play a meaningful role in the transitional processes."⁴

In 2003, the program became one of the RBF's three "pivotal places"⁵ within the new program architecture, where the Fund was to focus its place-based grantmaking. The Western Balkans was chosen as a pivotal place as it met the following three criteria: "particular importance with regard to the Fund's substantive concerns; the potential for disproportionate impact on the future of its region and/or the globe; and special significance in light of the Fund's grantmaking history."⁶ It was also agreed that Kosovo should receive increased attention "as its political status at that time was undecided and it posed one of the biggest security challenges for the region and international community."⁷

The annual program budget in 2003 was \$500,000, which grew to \$2.1 million by 2009. During this period, Serbia, the largest country both by territory and population, received 45 percent of funding; Kosovo around 27 percent; and Montenegro, the smallest country, approximately nine percent. Although the RBF has focused work on these three countries, it has also supported work regionally and in other nearby countries as appropriate; this accounts for 19 percent of overall funding.

The RBF demonstrated its concern over the future status of Kosovo in 2007 when it convened a meeting at [The Pocantico Center](#) to plan for Kosovo's transition to independence in line with the comprehensive proposal for the final settlement of Kosovo's status, known as the Ahtisaari Plan.⁸ This brought together leading Kosovars, including representatives of Kosovo's Serb minority, and international leaders.

Program Grantmaking and Approach over a Five-Year Period

Grantmaking

The program in the Western Balkans was reviewed in 2010, and a new 10-year program framework was drawn up. This framed the RBF's support around the region's EU integration aspirations and adopted the first three goals below. Following the revision of the Fund's Peacebuilding program in 2011, a fourth goal, focused on peacebuilding, was added to the Western Balkans program to

⁴ Abazi, 2010.

⁵ Pivotal places are chosen based on the opportunity for grantmaking that "cuts across and integrates democratic practice, sustainable development, [and] peace and security," Stephen Heintz in his President's Essay for the 2006 RBF Annual Review, cited in Gaberman and Seessel, 2009.

⁶ Abazi, 2010.

⁷ Ibid.

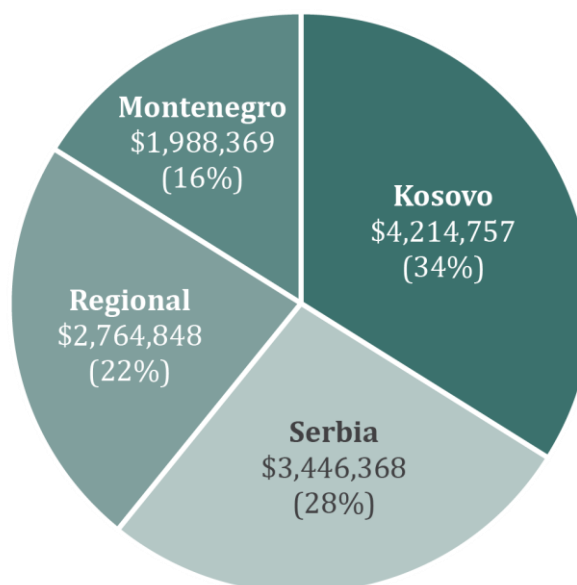
⁸ See <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/101244.htm> for more details.

highlight and consolidate the peacebuilding-focused work in the program. The goals are now as follows:

- Democratic Practice: Improving the performance, accountability, and transparency of government.
- Democratic Practice: Building civil society capacity and effectiveness to strengthen participatory democracy.
- Sustainable Development: Building a culture and practice of sustainable development.
- Peacebuilding: Strengthening constituencies for reconciliation and enduring peace.

The program has an annual budget of approximately \$2.25 million. From 2010 to 2015, the Fund awarded 166 grants totaling \$11.7 million to 85 different organizations. An additional \$700,000 was spent on RBF direct activities⁹ or conferences at The Pocantico Center, bringing the total expenditure over the five-year period to \$12.4 million. A third of the total went to Goal 2, with Goals 1 and 3 each receiving approximately a quarter of funding, and Goal 4 receiving 12 percent (see Table 1).

Chart 1: Geographical Expenditure*



**Excludes grants totaling \$24,424 for cross-programmatic disaster relief after the 2014 floods.*

Goal	WB Program Funds	% of Total
Goal 1: Public Policy Development, Transparency, and Accountability	\$3,248,924	26%
Goal 2: Civil Society Capacity and Effectiveness	\$4,399,649	35%
Goal 3: Culture and Practice of Sustainable Development	\$3,094,918	25%
Goal 4: Constituencies for Reconciliation and Enduring Peace	\$1,461,041	12%
Other	\$234,234	2%
Total	\$12,436,178	100%

The program focuses on Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo as well as supporting several region-wide initiatives. Kosovo has received a third of the funding, followed by Serbia, regional work, and then Montenegro (see Chart 1).

In the period 2010–2015, 41 percent of the funding went to the three foundations (the **Trag Foundation**, the **Forum for Civic Initiatives [FIQ]** and the **Fund for Active Citizenship [fAKT]**),

⁹ Direct activities include projects that the Fund organizes directly, such as KOSID.

work on **RECOM**, the **Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID)**, and **REC**. Parsing by grantee, 60 percent of funding went to 12 grantees and RBF direct activity (see Table 2).¹⁰ This left \$5 million (40 percent) of funding spread among 73 grantees and meetings at The Pocantico Center; 29 of these grantees received one-off grants of \$30,000 or less.

Organization	Funding 2010–2015	% of total funding 2010–2015
Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) (for work in Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia)	\$1,050,000	8%
Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ) (Kosovo)	\$1,077,740	9%
RBF Direct Activity (Balkan Forum, KOSID, and Philanthropy for Green Ideas)	\$662,588	5%
Trag Foundation (Serbia)	\$790,000	6%
Fund for Active Citizenship (fAKT) (Montenegro)	\$790,000	6%
Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (Kosovo)	\$578,000	5%
The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) (Serbia)	\$525,000	4%
Institute for Development Policy (Kosovo)	\$405,400	3%
Civic Alliance (Montenegro)	\$360,000	3%
Humanitarian Law Center - Documentation and Memory (Regional)	\$357,000	3%
Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network (Regional)	\$280,000	2%
Partners Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management (Albania)	\$274,000	2%
Institute for Advanced Studies (GAP) (Kosovo)	\$250,000	2%
Total of organizations receiving > \$250,000	\$7,399,728	60%

The program currently has a full-time program director, Haki Abazi, based in New York, a full-time program assistant, Dragana Ilic, based in Belgrade, and a half-time program assistant, Karen Karnicki, based in New York, as well as support from other departments across the institution.

Approach

There are a number of distinct aspects to the way the RBF has been approaching grantmaking in the program, most of which cut across all goals:

- The triangle approach: Grantmaking includes support for capacity building and collaborative work among think tanks, investigative journalists, and grassroots NGOs to improve the performance, transparency, and accountability of governments.
- It has sought to support work at the grassroots, national, and regional levels simultaneously and to encourage linkages between organizations working at different levels.
- From the start of the program, there has been a focus on grantee organizational sustainability, and the RBF has planned for what happens to grantees after its own exit from the region through a focus on capacity building, support for transition to EU funding, and the establishment of **Civil Society Houses**.
- The program has been flexible in its grants and willing to fund core staff costs.

¹⁰ It should be noted that a significant proportion of the funding going to the three foundations is then regranted to a number of organizations; in addition, each is holding resources for CSHs. See text box, Civil Society Houses.

- There has been a focus on solving common problems across ethnic divides rather than on what divides people.
- Grantmaking takes a long-term perspective.
- The RBF deliberately seeks out and supports new civil society actors in order to promote diversity and independence within civil society. This includes a focus on youth.
- The RBF has been an engaged grantmaker. This means it both enters into dialogue with potential and existing grantees about their approaches and strategies, but also is willing to take risks in its funding decisions by engaging in advocacy directly and doing some direct operational work. It has also helped establish new organizations.¹¹
- The program has actively looked for opportunities to draw on the expertise and resources of, and collaborate with, other RBF programs.

“Now there is less money, but we are 10 times more powerful. In 2010 it was just people speaking up; now we are professional. We beat their professionals. We give them things they don’t know. ... We are more effective because the quality of analysis is better. Our capacity has been built. ... Now we have NGOs that are distinguished on topics they follow. [Five years ago, NGOs] were all doing the same thing. Now there are specialized NGOs on sustainable development and democratic promotion.”

—Grantee (Kosovo)

Impact and Contribution of the Fund’s Grantmaking

This section addresses each of the four goals that the RBF is seeking to attain in the Western Balkans including a brief overview of the funding that has been allocated, a recapitulation of the strategies that have been implemented, and a discussion of the activities that have achieved the most impressive impact.

Goal 1: Democratic Practice: Improving the Performance, Accountability, and Transparency of Government

Allocation for work to achieve this goal has been \$3.25 million over the last five years (26 percent of the total). **BIRN** in Kosovo has received the most funding (\$578,000), followed by **CRTA** in Serbia (\$525,000), and then **Civic Alliance (CA)** in Montenegro (\$360,000). Collectively these three organizations received 45 percent of the funds allocated under this goal. Overall, Kosovo has received 41 percent of the funding under this goal, with Montenegro getting 23 percent, and Serbia 33 percent. The rest was spent regionally and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (33 percent).

This goal has three strategies:

1. Enhancing the capacity of civil society to monitor the quality of public sector governance and service delivery.

¹¹ For example, Slavko Curuvija Foundation was founded in 2013 with the Fund’s guidance to promote and support the development of free, independent, and accountable local media and the advancement of investigative journalism in Serbia.

2. Strengthening the investigative and educational practices of media and nongovernmental organizations.
3. Strengthening the capacity of government and nongovernmental institutions to conduct sound policy analysis.

These strategies are essentially about developing the capacity of the three components of the civil society triangle: grassroots organizations, investigative journalists, and think tanks.

The individual components of a civil society triangle do exist and are functioning in all three countries. But their impact varies due to differing capacity, the degree of adversity within each context, and the extent and depth of collaboration among the components. It appears to us that, individually and collectively, the grantees in Kosovo are achieving more than those in the other countries.

Kosovo Impact Achieved

The Court Monitoring Program carried out by **BIRN Kosovo**, which is dedicated to using investigative journalism to hold the powerful accountable, in strategic partnership with its *Justice in Kosovo* (*Drejtësia në Kosovë*) television program, has directly contributed to the following fundamental building blocks of transparency in the court system:

- The public announcement of court hearings in advance of convening (82 percent of the time vs. 0 percent seven years ago) and the appointment of information officers to supervise this function by the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC).
- Use of audio and video recording equipment (for 85 percent of cases vs. 1 percent).
- Use of courtrooms rather than judges' offices for hearings (in 80 percent of cases vs. 27 percent).¹²



BIRN Kosovo's Jeta ne Kosove organized public debates prior to national elections in 2012. Photo courtesy of BIRN Kosovo.

Accountability has been bolstered because the KJC now has its own monitors throughout the court system and, according to **BIRN**, the "Office of the Disciplinary prosecutor is competent ... to initiate procedures against judges who violate the code of ethics, or the procedural rights of the parties."¹³ **BIRN** reports that "every month we are getting people fired." Perhaps the greatest impact, however, has been to strengthen the ability of some judges to make tough decisions, thus confronting one aspect of impunity (see quote below).

¹² *Annual Court Monitoring Report: 2014*, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and Internews Kosova, April 2015.

¹³ *Ibid*, 52.

The Justice in Kosovo and *Jeta në Kosovë (Life in Kosovo)* television programs also regularly expose misconduct in branches of the government other than the judiciary. Among the more notable instances of impact cited by **BIRN** are:

- taping a citizen who reported a police officer asking for a bribe to remove a traffic ticket resulting, in the officer's arrest and trial (the journalists won an award for the best anti-corruption TV story of the year);
- exposing that a member of Parliament and brother of a former prime minister, was serving as an external advisor to a private company, which led to his resignation from that position because serving in both capacities is in violation of Kosovar law;
- revealing that individuals convicted by the Basic Court in Pristina were being released on the way to correction facilities, resulting in an investigation and change in the transportation procedures;
- highlighting a violation of procurement law by a municipal official, resulting in arrest;
- reporting that a contract for medical supplies with the Ministry of Health involved forgery worth millions of dollars, resulting in the arrest of the owners of the companies involved; and
- exposing corruption in the education system involving three professors at the University of Pristina who hold the title "professor emeritus" without meeting the requirements.

BIRN Kosovo won awards for anti-corruption reporting for the latter two stories.¹⁴

BIRN's strategic litigation program has succeeded in achieving a judgment against the prime minister that obliges him to reveal his travel expenses. This has served as an example to politicians at all levels that they can be held accountable (see text box, Strategic Litigation). It also represents a major transformation in the rule of law since 2009, when **BIRN Kosovo's** executive director had her life threatened by the former Kosovo Liberation Army commander and mayor of Skenderaj, after she televised a program about his performance as mayor (see text box, Town Hall Debates Organized by a Civil Society Triangle). As **BIRN** describes the situation today, "Now the game is being fought more through the courts than through violence."

"After seven years of court monitoring we have judges calling us when they have a key decision to announce. If the decision is tough, they want media and NGO attention. For example, this happened recently in a murder case where the judge was dealing with the threats of the perpetrator. He announced a sentence and he wanted us there."

—Grantee (Kosovo)

The **Group for Legal and Political Studies (GLPS)**, which conducts policy research and advocates for democratization and the rule of law, supports the Parliamentary Committees on Legislation, Anti-Corruption, and EU Integration in carrying out their oversight functions more effectively by producing annual work plans, gathering data, and producing annual reports that are presented to Parliament.

¹⁴ "BIRN Kosovo Wins Two Anticorruption Awards," BIRN Kosovo, December 9, 2015. Available at <http://birn.eu.com/en/news-and-events/birn-kosovo-wins-two-anticorruption-awards>

This has the potential to result in ministers being called to testify before these committees on their actions.

Strategic Litigation

After years of exposing criminal misconduct by government officials on its TV programs with little response by prosecutors, three years ago, **BIRN Kosovo** adopted the use of strategic litigation to advance high-impact cases. This is a prominent example of “engaged journalism,” which actively seeks to promote accountability and bring about fundamental change. In the case of strategic litigation, the purpose is to transform a corrupted, co-opted, or cowed legal culture by pursuing carefully selected cases. Two cases have been undertaken by BIRN thus far.

The first case resulted in the court ordering former Prime Minister Thaci to produce his travel vouchers. This is a landmark victory. [As the head of BIRN Kosovo’s Legal Office remarked](#), “I believe there has never been a court in the region that has decided in favor of citizens and against some politician on the issue of transparency.” This demonstrates that politicians at all levels can potentially be held accountable. **BIRN** has also won the second case against the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council in the Court of First Instance directing the Council to reveal the names of prosecutors who have been disciplined for misconduct. The appeal will be decided in 2016.

Institute for Advanced Studies (GAP) has also undertaken two strategic litigation cases against the Ministry of Economic Development for their refusal to provide access to public documents used in the tendering process for the privatization of the Kosovo Electricity Distribution and Supply network. Additionally, the **Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID)**, a consortium of Kosovo’s leading CSOs working together to advocate for long-term and sustainable solutions for the energy sector in Kosovo, has used strategic litigation with the World Bank in regard to resettlement issues relating to the proposed Kosovo Power Project. The outcomes of the **GAP** and **KOSID** cases are pending.

The Brain Fund is a government-run initiative proposed by the **Institute for Advanced Studies (GAP)**, a think tank that advocates for good governance and monitors the work of public institutions. The purpose of the Brain Fund was to attract high-level specialists to work for the government by paying them a supplement; however, in 2015 a **GAP** review of the program revealed that the number of people benefiting had risen from single figures to more than 200, with most not meeting the criteria. They publicized this abuse, received considerable media coverage, and succeeded in getting the government to withdraw the nominations. **GAP** was asked by the government to consult with it in preparing the subsequent list, resulting in the elimination of unqualified candidates.

Traditionally, board positions of publicly owned enterprises were handed out through patronage. In order to address this, the **Institute for Development Policy (INDEP)**, which focuses on strengthening democratic governance and plays the role of public policy watchdog, successfully advocated for a law prohibiting the appointment of anyone who has been in a leadership position in a political party or run for office in the last 36 months.¹⁵ In 2015, they found



Rinora Gojani and Krenar Gashi of the Institute for Development Policy (INDEP) present their 2014 report on the state of media in Kosovo. Photo courtesy of INDEP.

that 10 nominees for these posts had lied under oath about their eligibility. When notified of this, the government claimed it didn't have the capacity to check. After the government appointed seven additional politically connected individuals in violation of the law, **INDEP** went public with this information together with **GAP** and **GLPS** and also notified all embassies, along with the EU. As a result, the Kosovar Anti-Corruption Agency launched an investigation, the outcome of which is pending, but it could recommend a criminal investigation or revocation of the appointments.

KALLXO.com ("speak out/do tell" in Albanian) is an anti-corruption online platform developed by **BIRN Kosovo**. Since its inception three years ago, it has received more than 4,800 reports of corruption, which is more than the government Anti-Corruption Agency. Of these, approximately 60 percent have been found worth pursuing by **BIRN**. As a result, 70 cases have been filed with the authorities, and results are now coming in on average once a month (e.g., demotions or firing of government employees). According to **BIRN**, one indication of KALLXO's success is that "All of the municipalities find the KALLXO tool so useful that they put it on their website." Town hall debates are also a good example of impact at the municipal level (see text box, Town Hall Debates Organized by a Civil Society Triangle).

¹⁵ Law No. 03/L-087 on Public Enterprises.

Town Hall Debates Organized by a Civil Society Triangle

In 2007, **GAP**, **BIRN Kosovo**, and the **Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC)**, an NGO devoted to community development and civic activism, combined their talents. They decided, with RBF support and encouragement, to conduct town hall debates in 26 of Kosovo's municipalities prior to the municipal elections that year. **GAP** provided analysis of the budget proposals of the candidates. **FIQ**, a Kosovar foundation, enlisted its network of grassroots NGOs to recruit stakeholders in each municipality to be panelists and attendees, and to identify an appropriate venue. **BIRN Kosovo** televised the debates, and its founder, Jeta Xharra, served as the moderator. The purpose was to allow the electorate to evaluate the platforms of the candidates in order to make an informed judgment prior to voting. This initial exercise in popular democracy was characterized by extravagant promises from candidates that the winners were incapable of keeping.

Prior to the next election, **BIRN Kosovo** returned to each municipality to reconvene the town hall meetings, play back the recordings of the elected mayors' promises, and afford citizens the opportunity to question the mayors about their performance. In the subsequent municipal elections, the town hall debates focused on how to address the issues of greatest concern in that community, as determined by polls conducted by **GAP**. This contributed to a 50 percent turnover in the parties in power, the most basic form of democratic accountability. Another indicator of success is that all TV channels have copied this format, but the **BIRN** broadcasts remain the most popular. In 2014, they expanded the practice to include candidates for Parliament debating a wide range of different issues, among them how to improve the rule of law, anti-corruption efforts, and transparency and accountability of the new governing bodies.

Montenegro Impact Achieved

Civic Alliance (CA)—founded by a merger of **35mm** (a media CSO) and **Youth Initiative on Human Rights**—has 13 domestic NGO partners that work together to hold those in power to account, including exposing the abuse of prisoners and advocating for a new anti-corruption agency that will begin operations in 2016. CA's most prominent initiatives are the TV program *Robin Hud*, devoted to resolving citizen complaints about government misconduct, and monitoring and following up on police brutality during the public demonstrations in September and October 2015 (see text box, Civic Alliance, *Robin Hud*, and Monitoring of the Legal System).

"The citizenry is not very active. People don't believe that they can change anything. That is why Robin Hud is such an important show."
—External interviewee



Civic Alliance's Darko Ivanovic talks about establishing Robin Hud, with Bosnian civil society organizations. Photo courtesy of Civic Alliance.

According to most of our interviewees in Montenegro, as a result of the work of **CA**, the public has access to unbiased information that is largely unavailable from the polarized media, which spins the news along pro- and anti-government lines.

Civic Alliance, *Robin Hud*, and Monitoring of the Legal System

Dedicated to addressing citizen complaints about government misconduct and malfeasance, *Robin Hud*, an initiative of **CA**, is one of the most popular programs in Montenegro. Over the past five years, the program, which is broadcast on public television, has addressed more than 100 complaints per year, with roughly two-thirds having been successfully resolved.* *Robin Hud* has accomplished this in part by mobilizing support from lawyers who provide pro bono legal assistance and in part by taking a problem-solving approach that tends to elicit a constructive response from government officials. However, if officials fail to honor their commitments, the program will follow up. Perhaps the greatest impact is that many citizens have begun to shed their apathy, phoning into the program because it has demonstrated that citizens can hold government officials to account. According to the U.N. office in Montenegro, almost 10 percent of the population has benefited from the program's interventions in the last five years.† Additionally, the government has demonstrated a willingness to respond to petitions from citizens, at least when they are backed by the clout of a popular TV program. The U.N. office in Montenegro has recognized *Robin Hud* as a good practice "... acting as a service to citizens aiming to help build trust between citizens and institutions by efficient handling of their problems." ‡

Robin Hud has also undertaken court monitoring, after the RBF suggested adapting **BIRN Kosovo's** efforts in this regard to Montenegro's circumstances. The critical first step was to determine through a survey what issues were of greatest concern to the public. This guided monitoring efforts to address excessive waiting times for trials and the common practice of judges and prosecutors consulting with each other prior to the trial. The latter practice virtually ceased, and 80 percent of judicial proceedings started on time by the end of the court monitoring program's efforts. **CA** also established a constructive working relationship with the supreme state prosecutor, the interior minister, and the police director by helping them comply with Freedom of Information Act legislation requirements and assisting with observance of human rights principles in the treatment of prisoners.

* Lidija Brnović, "Accountable Citizens, Accountable Governments: Mapping Mechanisms for Participatory Policy Monitoring in Montenegro," UN System in Montenegro, May 2014, 23. Available at: http://www.un.org.me/uploads/Documents/2014/Montenegro%20Mapping_Participatory%20Monitoring%20for%20Accountability_Report%20-%20June%202014.pdf

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

The **Center for Democratic Transition (CDT)** works to promote and strengthen democracy in Montenegro by developing and fostering public dialogue; training political actors; and monitoring government institutions, processes, and policy implementation. The CDT advocated for a law on political party financing that limits the amount of government spending during elections to a maximum of the average spent during the previous six months; this was successfully passed into law. The purpose is to prevent the incumbent government from increasing the number of public sector jobs and spending by the Ministry of Social Affairs just prior to an election, since every job that is doled out is considered to equal four votes. The CDT is also poised to monitor implementation of the law.

Civic Alliance (CA) has graduated 14 classes from its School of Democratic Leadership for promising future government policymakers, media, and civil society leaders. One-quarter of current Parliament members graduated from this program, showing that this school has created a network bridging state and society.

These relationships proved to be crucial during the October 24, 2015 demonstrations that culminated in an attempt to storm the Parliament building. **CA** monitored and recorded the police response at the scene, had a representative in police headquarters who interviewed those arrested, and had access to hospitals, where **CA** representatives interviewed those beaten by the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SATU). **CA**'s real-time reporting via social media of the excessive use of force by the SATU was picked up by all the traditional media. Subsequently, **CA** received a video of a particularly egregious assault on a 60-year-old protester by 20 anti-terrorist police, which it used to identify two of the officers involved, leading to their indictment. In December, **CA** joined with five other prominent NGOs to demand that the police director and commander of the SATU be charged with complicity in this police brutality, and they appealed to the international community to make this a bellwether case for Montenegro's ability to meet EU requirements for respect of human rights and the rule of law. Through these accomplishments over the past five years, **CA** and the associated *Robin Hood* public service program have established credibility with the public and a reservoir of potential energy for mobilizing support to hold the government to account.

Serbia Impact Achieved

Truth-o-Meter™ was established by the **Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA)**, an organization that aims to empower citizens and create opportunities for political participation through advocacy and government watchdog efforts. Truth-o-Meter monitors the statements of politicians for truthfulness and fulfilling campaign promises. The information is shared on a webpage that gets 200,000–300,000 unique visits per month (see text box, CRTA's Istinomer [Truth-o-Meter]).

Transparency of the legislative branch has been advanced by the Open Parliament Initiative sponsored by **CRTA**. Working in cooperation with Parliament, **CRTA** has ensured that parliamentary transcripts, voting records, and bills since 1997 are now available online. Some committees have live streams. A parliamentary group for Open Parliament has also started to institutionalize cooperation between civil society and Parliament.

In 2015, **CRTA** published the budgets of 10 Serbian municipalities at their Data Center portal, rendering their spending transparent to journalists, activists, researchers, and the public. They also trained 10 local CSO partners on how to research budget information and develop budget advocacy campaigns aimed at resolving budget issues in their communities. Although this initiative is nascent, it has already resulted in a proposal to fund a local ombudsman that is being considered by a municipal assembly.

“Arandjelovac Equestrian Foundation is a good example. They started from scratch organizing seminars, etc. They no longer wait for donors to do things. They engage with citizens. As a result they raised the level of trust in civil society which suffers from extremely low level of public trust.”

—Grantee (Serbia)



The Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability's Truth-o-Meter election debate was held in Nis, Serbia, in 2012. Photo courtesy of the Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability.

Mikro Art, a think tank that connects activists, socially engaged artists, architects, and citizens on issues of urban development and resources management, and **CRTA** have focused on issues of public access to, and use of, publicly owned property. This has helped to bring a number of issues into the public domain, including the Belgrade Waterfront Development, where they have successfully mobilized people to demonstrate. These are significant achievements given the effective suppression of the media in Serbia.¹⁶

CRTA'S Istinomer (Truth-o-Meter)

One successful approach to creating a demand for transparency in Serbia is CRTA's Istinomer, which was the region's first fact-checking website. Inspired by the Pulitzer Prize-winning Politifact in the United States, which fact-checks statements by leading politicians and rates them on the world-famous Truth-o-Meter™, a group of civic and political activists brought together by the NGO **Linnet** launched Istinomer in the fall of 2009. The Washington-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED), already a **Linnet** donor, provided seed funding for the site and remains a steady donor.

The idea of tracking and rating the veracity and consistency of politicians' statements and promises was a novel one in the region, and it quickly spread. Today, every country in the Western Balkans has its own version of Istinomer. The sites are networked into a regional coalition of organizations using information communication technology to promote political accountability and most, including Istinomer, are also members of a global fact-checking network led by the Poynter Institute, the owner of Politifact.

Having realized the potential of fact-checking for promoting political accountability and transparency, Istinomer founders decided to rebrand their organization into what is today known as the **Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA)**. The RBF awarded **CRTA** its first institutional grant in 2010, allowing the organization to further develop both its online and offline activities around Istinomer. In fact, RBF funding was instrumental in allowing **CRTA** not only to maintain a steady public presence, but also to position Istinomer as a go-to reference point for politicians' performance, especially ahead of elections. Building on NED funding, **CRTA** used RBF funds to introduce Istinomer election debates and, later, video versions of selected fact-checks, both of which remain highly popular.

For several years, Istinomer was featured weekly in print by Serbia's most circulated daily, *Blic*. However, *Blic* decided to stop featuring Istinomer ahead of elections in 2012, most likely under government pressure. As is the case with most other civil society groups, **CRTA** relied mostly on its online presence to transmit its findings to the public. Most recently, however, **CRTA** was invited to produce a short video version of Istinomer to be aired weekly by the leading regional television station, N1—an arrangement that is bound to increase the sites' usage and visibility.

Despite the narrow media space it has received over the years, Istinomer has become tremendously influential. Leading politicians regularly reference it during their statements, and party representatives are eager to participate in the Istinomer election debates. Perhaps the highlight of Istinomer's watchdog and advocacy activities was its campaign to spotlight the lack of accountability by Serbia's Minister of Education, who refused to annul the results of a standardized college entrance exam after it was made public that the test answer keys were leaked and used by numerous high school students in the summer of 2013. Istinomer's online and offline campaign, using satire backed by facts to create public pressure demanding accountability for the leak, led to the minister's eventual dismissal in the ensuing government reshuffling.

¹⁶ Herbert Wright, "Belgrade Waterfront: An unlikely place for Gulf petrodollars to settle", *The Guardian*, December 10, 2015. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/dec/10/belgrade-waterfront-gulf-petrodollars-exclusive-waterside-development>

Goal 2: Democratic Practice: Building Civil Society Capacity and Effectiveness to Strengthen Participatory Democracy

This is the largest area of investment, with \$4.4 million having been allocated to work to achieve this goal during 2010–2015 (35 percent of the total). \$2.7 million¹⁷ of this (60 percent of allocation on this goal and a fifth of the overall program allocation) has been allocated to three foundations: **Trag Foundation** in Serbia, **Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ)** in Kosovo, and **Fund for Active Citizenship (fAKT)** in Montenegro. The RBF considers this a strategic use of funds given the role that the foundations play in supporting other civil society organizations in their respective countries. \$1,260,000 of this is intended for setting up **Civil Society Houses**,¹⁸ and \$173,000 went to specific projects.¹⁹ Of the remainder, between 34 and 95 percent²⁰ goes to regranting, depending on the organization, including to organizations located outside the capital cities, thus extending the RBF’s geographic reach. A further \$274,000 was allocated to **Partners Albania** for work on Philanthropic Development (including **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**). The rest was allocated to a number of other organizations for a range of work including supporting journalists in Serbia (**Slavko Curuvija Foundation**); gifted and talented children in Kosovo (**ENCOMPASS**); and university-level students from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in Kosovo (**Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development**).



Stephen Heintz and Jelena Curuvija at the launch of the Slavko Curuvija Foundation on March 28, 2014. Ms. Curuvija founded the organization in memory of her father, a journalist who was assassinated in 1999. Photo courtesy of the Slavko Curuvija

Civil Society Houses

According to the Grant Docket, **Civil Society Houses** are intended to be “shared spaces and resource centers for civil society organizations. In addition to providing a physical home for civil society organizations, **Civil Society Houses** will serve as centers for connection, collaboration, and coordination for civil society within each country and between countries, including other countries in the region. The houses will nurture civil society organizations working to promote equality, justice, human rights, democratic values, and sustainable development and provide expertise and demand accountability to ensure the successful completion of European Union and Euro-Atlantic integration. Furthering sustainable development goals, the houses will be designed to reflect sustainable urban planning, be energy efficient, and use clean energy.”

¹⁷ This doesn’t include \$15,000 Trag reports it received in 2015 for flood relief as this was not included in the database of grants we received.

¹⁸ \$420,000 has been awarded to each foundation for establishing Civil Society Houses.

¹⁹ \$70,000 for Trag, and \$103,000 for FIQ.

²⁰ fAKT calculates that approximately 95 percent of the general support grants it got from the RBF go to regranting. For Trag, it is 42 percent, and for FIQ, 34 percent.

In our opinion, the idea of achieving the goal across the whole of civil society with the resources available is unrealistic; however, in practice, work toward the goal has not focused on everything, but on the following two strategies:

1. Strengthening the organizational and financial capacity of the civic sector.
2. Stimulating indigenous philanthropy and solidarity in society.

This is happening in the following ways:

- Supporting three foundations, one in each country, in order to ensure that grassroots organizations have a sustainable source of support and funding through regranting, training in fundraising, and other means.
- Working to increase the funding available for grassroots organizations into the future by promoting philanthropy.
- Promoting solidarity through supporting examples of what can be done when people come together to take collective action either through civil society organizations or through organizations based on the principle of social entrepreneurship (see quote above).
- Some work on the legal framework around tax incentives for giving to charitable organizations.

“What we are trying to do ... is promote entrepreneurship climate and cooperation at a small scale. To build communities that are not around an NGO, workshop or initiative imposed by some international donor. It is good that it is bottom up.”

—Grantee (Macedonia)

The three foundations have been making grants to grassroots organizations and now appear to have the capacity to continue the regranting work effectively into the future. This is demonstrated by their success in accessing funding from other donors, most notably the EU, to continue this work.²¹ Since 2010, **fAKT** has made 79 grants with RBF funds and 244 in total, with a value of €1.2 million.²² The RBF is one of the donors that supported **fAKT** to become an autonomous organization in Montenegro,²³ rather than an office of the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (now the **Trag Foundation**), and according to **fAKT**, the RBF’s approach allows them to be “very responsive to local needs and context.” **FIQ** has made grants with RBF funds to 29 organizations, with a total amount of €127,000, and **Trag Foundation** made 47 grants.

The foundations also support their grantee organizations beyond funding. For example, **Trag** provides technical grants and support to build capacity through training in how to mobilize local resources and raise funds, and incentivizes this through matched funding. Between 2010 and 2014, they supported 60 CSOs with technical grants of \$101,000, with which the CSOs raised a total of \$246,000 that **Trag** then matched with \$304,000.²⁴ **Trag** also provides technical support and

²¹ For example Trag receives money for regranting from the Cooperative Netherlands Foundations, Mott Foundation, Balkan Trust for Democracy, USAID/Institute for Sustainable Communities, EU, and Oak Foundation. Full details can be found in Appendix D.

²² Examples of initiatives funded by fAKT regranting can be seen at [NGO GREEN.ME](#); [Friends of kindergarten Djina Vrbica, Podgorica](#); [Non-formal group of youth Bijelo Polje](#); [NGO: Humanitarian Niksic](#); [NGO “To vivify village” Pljevlja](#); [Healthy Food Production, Niksic](#); [Association of Parents of Montenegro, Podgorica](#)

²³ fAKT was registered in 2008. See <http://eng.faktcg.org/about-us/history-of-fakt/>

²⁴ For more details, see Appendix D.

incentives to build local partnerships to develop local philanthropy. In addition, **Trag** is working on building up its own endowment to ensure sustainability of its grantmaking.

“This will be the ninth year that this was awarded. Competition is very intensive and many big companies apply. We see local companies as agents of philanthropy in local communities. They often don’t have a strategic approach to giving but are getting there. Last year a company gave one percent of their total income to an anti-trafficking organization. Their core business is in construction material. There is a lot of forced labor in the construction business so they wanted to be involved in that. They are also sharing leaflets about the problem of trafficking.”

—Grantee (Serbia)

Promoting philanthropy has largely been pursued through two high-profile initiatives: Philanthropic awards (see quote to the left) and, to some extent, **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**. Over time, the philanthropy awards in each country have developed new categories to recognize businesses, individuals, and diaspora.²⁵ Feedback on these awards is very positive. According to people we interviewed, the awards are regarded as the most prestigious in each country, and the foundations report that generally, philanthropy appears to be on the rise. Our interviews

suggested that, as well as raising the profile of philanthropy, these awards are helping to make giving more strategic. They are also reported to have led to other similar awards. For example, the philanthropy award in Serbia, VIRTUS, was reported by an external interviewee to have increased “the awareness of the wider stakeholder community—private sector and relevant organizations—of how important corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate philanthropy are.” According to the interviewee, three other organizations decided to establish yearly awards as a result.²⁶

For the last few years, **Trag** has been successful in covering the cost of the VIRTUS award from funds from other donors such as the EU, the Balkan Trust for Democracy, and USAID.

The **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**

competition and some direct RBF grants are providing examples of ways of organizing for social benefit that are not necessarily dependent on external donors in the long run, for example, grassroots initiatives that encourage solidarity through social entrepreneurship (see text box, **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**).

“For example, a guy gives money to the local sports club. Then he hears about VIRTUS and he thinks about transferring money in a different direction—towards the marginalized groups. This is clear impact.”

—External interviewee (Serbia)

²⁵ For example FIQ now awards prizes for: contribution at the national level (for companies); contribution of SMEs (small and medium enterprises); individual contribution; contribution from abroad (businesses, individuals from the Diaspora CSOs); innovation (businesses, individuals, CSOs); and better awareness campaign (businesses, individuals, CSOs).

²⁶ A National CSR Award by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce; Aurea, the best investment award (which takes account of CSR), and a special award for CSR contribution by local media, E-kapija; and an award for CSR Partnership and for Corporate Volunteering by Corporate Social Responsibility Forum.

A study commissioned by the RBF in 2014²⁷ concluded that, in general, there is an enabling legal framework for the establishment and operation of foundations. For civil society more generally, according to USAID's *Civil Society Sustainability Index*, there has been a very slight—almost negligible—improvement in NGO sustainability between 2010 and 2014 in Montenegro and Serbia, with it remaining the same in Kosovo.²⁸

Philanthropy for Green Ideas

Philanthropy for Green Ideas is a regional competition that the RBF initiated in 2012 to encourage individuals and groups to establish socially responsible small businesses utilizing local resources in an environmentally friendly way. The idea arose after an RBF forum on the development of local philanthropy held at The Pocantico Center in 2010, where participants stressed the interplay of local resources and public trust on the strategic development of the philanthropic sector in the Western Balkans. It is organized by the RBF in collaboration with five foundations in the Western Balkans: **Partners Albania**, **Forum for Civic Initiatives** in Kosovo, **ARNO** in Macedonia, **Fund for Active Citizenship** in Montenegro, and **Trag** in Serbia.

Each country holds a national competition from which three winners are selected. These winners then present their ideas at a regional competition in front of international judges; the location rotates among the five participating countries. The three regional winners are awarded up to \$10,000 to implement their projects. Winners at the national level get publicity, new networks, mentoring, and, in some cases, support to access loans from mainstream banks.

Although there are clear benefits for the actual winners, the impact is intended to reach beyond the small number of participants as, according to interviewees, the competition also aspires to:

- challenge the post-communist culture of lack of engagement or agency by developing an entrepreneurial climate;
- develop ideas for new ways of engaging on civic and sustainability issues such as social entrepreneurship;
- increase trust in civil society;
- promote green ideas and change people's attitude to local resources;
- support micro-level social entrepreneurs and small scale industry;
- have a multiplier effect on local economies thus reducing urban and international migration;
- support the development of local philanthropy;
- reduce dependency on outside donors; and
- bring together people from different countries and ethnic groups to discuss issues of common interest and develop links.

Thus the competition cuts across three of the RBF's goals in the Western Balkans: supporting the development and sustainability of civil society in the Western Balkans, sustainable development, and peacebuilding.

[continued on next page]

²⁷ The Operating Environment for Public-Benefit Foundations in the Western Balkans Region (2014) European Foundation Centre.

²⁸ USAID, 2014. The 2014 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/EuropeEurasia_FY2014_CSOSI_Report.pdf#page=120

The competition has only been running for four years, and it is too early to assess it against all these aspirations. Feedback from those involved shows an enormous enthusiasm for the initiative. In Albania, an RBF grantee reports that there have been at least 10 successful businesses supported by the competition, and the government has adopted the concept of a start-up competition for sustainable tourism inspired by **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**: “I know they [the government] were influenced in setting up this competition by what we [the grantee] were doing. ... Last May, with their involvement, we organized the same kind of competition for sustainable tourism.”

The first overall regional winner in 2012, a couple from Berane, Montenegro, turned their house, which is more than 100 years old, into a small [ethnographic museum](#) that offers ecotourists accommodation and the opportunity to experience the traditional way of life in a mountain village.

Another winner is Design by Pana an “Innovative, Creative, Ecological and Social Upcycle Company” in Albania. They use recycled material to create products and employ people from marginalized groups such as orphans, retired people and returned emigrants. They won the national prize in Albania and second prize at the regional level in 2014 and now employ 13 people and are “becoming quite visible in the country and in the region.” Winning was instrumental in the organization being established. As explained by founder Pezana Rexha, “We have begun the enterprise only because we have won the competition otherwise it would have been almost impossible to make the dream come true. Winning the first competition in Albania was amazing because with that amount of money we could make it possible to buy the first equipment. Winning the one in the Balkans gave us the credibility that this idea had a value and in the meantime some extra money to have a bigger warehouse and ... some extra employees and equipment. To be honest I think that without those two competitions [regional and national] Design by Pana would not have existed nowadays.”



Design by Pana founder Pezana Rexha directs the construction of a crib, using reclaimed lumber.

Establishing supportive legal and fiscal frameworks for civil society’s financial sustainability remains an issue, particularly around tax incentives for giving. All the foundations supported by the RBF are involved in discussions on these issues, and **Trag** was reported to be a key actor in developing Serbia’s 2010 law on foundations.

Financial viability is recognized as by far the biggest weakness in the *CSO Sustainability Index* and remains a significant challenge in all three countries.²⁹ In order to tackle this issue, the RBF has started to support the establishment of a **Civil Society House** in each country for its major grantees (see text box, **Civil Society Houses**). There has been some progress here in that the Kosovar and Montenegrin governments have pledged to provide land free of charge; in Serbia, the land may have to be purchased.

Goal 3: Sustainable Development: Building a Culture and Practice of Sustainable Development

The program framework shows three strategies to achieve this goal:

1. Contributing to participatory and inclusive approaches to the design and implementation of strategies for sustainable development.
2. Supporting educational reforms to include sustainable development concepts and practices as part of curriculum.
3. Introducing and encouraging energy efficiency and environmental protection approaches in economic and infrastructure development.

Over the past five years, the Fund's Western Balkans program has allocated \$3.1 million to achieve this goal (25 percent of overall spending). This figure includes some funding for direct activities by the RBF on **Philanthropy for Green Ideas**, covered under Goal 2.

Impact Achieved

Strategies for Sustainable Development

As far as we could ascertain, Serbia has not made a notable effort to develop strategies for sustainable development. In Montenegro, the **Expeditio Center for Sustainable Spatial Development**, which works to encourage sustainable, spatial development, has participated in the development of the 2005–2012 Sustainable Development Strategy. Also, it developed the monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the strategy. In addition, it participated in the design of the 2015–2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, **Expeditio** will help develop monitoring mechanisms and indicators. In Kosovo, we noticed some success in both energy strategy and ensuring that EU standards, including those related to sustainable development, are taken into account in other strategic areas; however, there is no overarching strategy for sustainable development.



Expeditio participated in the 2015 PARK(ing) Day in Kotor, Montenegro. PARK(ing) Day is an annual, global event where citizens turn parking spaces into temporary public parks to promote civic engagement and creativity. Photo courtesy of Expeditio.

²⁹ Ibid. Kosovo Financial Viability is assessed to be 4.7 compared to an overall sustainability score of 3.8; Montenegro it is 5.0 compared to 4.0, and in Serbia it is 5.2 compared to 4.1. A low figure indicates increased sustainability.

Education for Sustainable Development

Over the past five years, the RBF has contributed \$1.05 million towards work done by the **Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)** on education for sustainable development in the Western Balkans. **REC** is an intergovernmental organization that consists of 30 member states and 18 branch offices. Its approach builds on the opportunities arising from educational reforms implemented through the process of EU integration. Experts from **REC** have worked in partnership with the Ministries of Education in Serbia, Kosovo, and Montenegro to develop curricula and materials relating to sustainable development. Seed money from the RBF has led to co-financing from the Ministries of Education in Serbia and Kosovo, as well as additional funding from the Austrian Development Agency. **REC** has had the following successes:

“RBF money is a core driver to attract other donors to the region for education for sustainable development initiatives. Without RBF funds it would be much harder to attract other donors.”

—Grantee

Kosovo: A draft curriculum with associated learning outcomes has been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Government support is indicated by MEST providing financial support to train teachers, preparing a teacher manual, and developing content.

Montenegro: Inter-subject themes and topics related to sustainable development have been officially approved by the National Bureau of Education and made part of the curricula for pre-school, primary school, high school, and vocational school. Teachers are now obliged to cover key relevant topics, including climate change, in their lessons.

Serbia: The national curriculum in primary and secondary education has been reformed to integrate sustainable development learning outcomes into each subject, and the concept of environmental responsibility has been integrated into the official school curriculum. Environmental protection criteria are now included in performance assessment indicators for educational institutions, and sustainable development principles are incorporated into indicators for assessing teachers' professional development.

Economic and Infrastructure Development

Within this area, two topics stand out: energy and, to a lesser extent, urban planning. The work in the Kosovo energy sector by the **Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID)** has had considerable success and has shown significant spinoffs. **KOSID** has been successful in: presenting alternatives to constructing a new coal-fired power plant, demonstrating to the World Bank the risk to its reputation for its involvement, getting filters installed on the existing coal-fired power plants, and gaining approval for the energy efficiency fund concept. This work reflects a successful intra-RBF collaboration between the Western Balkans program and the Democratic Practice's global governance portfolio, which has had impacts on issues beyond Kosovo (see text box, **The Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development [KOSID]**).

“Until KOSID came on the scene no one knew about EU standards—with KOSID every time there is a legislative decision we have forced government to clear the strategy or plans against EU standards.”

—Grantee (Kosovo)

The Kosovo Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development (KOSID)



KOSID held a press conference about its opposition to the New Kosovo Power Plant in January 2016.

Beginning in 2010, the RBF brought together a diverse group of Kosovar civil society organizations to discuss concerns arising from the plans to build a new coal-fired power plant, known as Kosovo C. Eventually, a civil society consortium known as KOSID was formed, bringing together RBF grantees **INDEP**, **GLPS**, **FIQ**, **BIRN Kosovo**, and **DokuFest** as key members. **KOSID** has developed a series of policy papers that spotlight potential problems with Kosovo C and present possible alternatives for energy security in Kosovo, such as renewable energy and energy conservation. **KOSID** has also engaged at the international level with the World Bank, the EU, and the U.S. Congress. As a result, the World Bank sent an inspection panel to look at whether its policies on resettlement were being followed. **KOSID** is also closely monitoring the World Bank's pending assessment of the environmental impact of developing Kosovo C with the option of petitioning for an additional inspection of whether the project complies with the Bank's environmental standards. Moreover, as a result of **KOSID**'s work, the government is now more aware of the need to consider international standards in relevant policies. **KOSID**'s advocacy forced the government to de-bundle investment in mining and Kosovo B and C lignite-powered plants, as it did not comply with the existing competition law; eventually, the package for proposed investment was withdrawn from the pipeline of privatization.

All government ministers involved in energy issues and relevant members of the international community now participate in **KOSID**'s annual conference.

In 2012, **INDEP** provided research and analysis to the Parliament's Economic and Development Committee regarding the existing law on energy efficiency, highlighting serious gaps in both policy and implementation and offering concrete recommendations. As a result, the government appointed **INDEP** to the working group charged with drafting replacement legislation, and 12 of **INDEP**'s resulting 13 recommendations were included in the new draft Energy Law, expected to be approved in 2016. The working group has subsequently published new research, including recommendations to establish an Energy Efficiency Fund in 2016.

DokuFest runs an annual documentary film festival in the city of Prizren, which, with RBF support, includes Green Dox, focusing on environmental issues. **DokuFest** has been working with **KOSID** to generate dialogue and awareness on issues of environmental degradation and renewable energy in Kosovo through screening and discussing the film, *The Kingdom of Coal*, with high school students, and through showing films that address Kosovo's emerging environmental issues in Prizren on television and in rural municipalities. It also trains youth on video activism. **KOSID** demonstrated the ability to mobilize public opinion by gathering 33,000 signatures in four days in April 2014 on a petition against electricity price increases, thus requiring Parliament to discuss the issue. **KOSID** has not yet succeeded in getting all the requests in the petition adopted, but it remains committed to pursuing the issue.



Mikro Art has raised public awareness on issues such as the Belgrade Waterfront Development. Pictured here is a protest against the controversial project in 2015. Photo courtesy of Mikro Art.

In Serbia, **Mikro Art** has focused on issues of public access to and use of public property. Along with other groups, including **CRTA**, **Mikro Art** has successfully raised public awareness on a number of issues, including the controversial Belgrade Waterfront Development³⁰ (see Goal 1 for more detail). Likewise, **Expeditio** in Kotor, Montenegro, has successfully managed to get the public engaged on issues of spatial urban planning and new construction at the municipal level.

Goal 4: Peacebuilding: Strengthening Constituencies for Reconciliation and Enduring Peace

This goal has the following strategies:

1. Supporting efforts to establish and disseminate the truth about atrocities and mass violations of human rights during the recent conflicts in the region.
2. Contributing to regional initiatives that engage diverse states and communities in conflict transformation to create conditions for enduring peace.

Since 2010, \$1.5 million, or 12 percent, has been allocated to this goal. Although the peacebuilding area had a number of grantees, **RECOM** was the principle initiative supported.

Impact Achieved

The RBF has been supporting the Coalition for **RECOM** since 2009 as an initiative that cooperates across the region to face the past (see text box, **Regional Commission for the Establishment of Facts about War Crimes and Other Serious Violations of Human Rights [RECOM]**). The Coalition for **RECOM** has close to 2,000 members across the region. All of the governments in the region, with the



The Humanitarian Law Centre collected signatures in Belgrade supporting the establishment of RECOM in 2014. Photo courtesy of the Humanitarian Law Centre.

³⁰ Herbert Wright, "Belgrade Waterfront: An unlikely place for Gulf petrodollars to settle," *The Guardian*, December 10, 2015. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/dec/10/belgrade-waterfront-gulf-petrodollars-exclusive-waterside-development>

exception of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have agreed to participate in the process of establishing **RECOM**—a regional commission designed to establish the truth regarding mass atrocities and violations of human rights during the conflicts between 1991 and 2001—and five of the countries’ presidents have appointed personal envoys dedicated to the process.

The RBF also gave grants to the **Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS)**, a Serbian think tank, for work on security sector reform in Serbia. **CEAS** is helping to keep alive public debate about the continued employment of senior security personnel who committed mass violations of human rights in the 1990s. It has repeatedly published research that clearly shows the need to reform the security sector if the transitional justice issues are to be dealt with in earnest.

Steps have been taken to establish a platform to enhance regional collaboration around shared sustainable economic development goals (**Balkan Forum**); however, we were advised that this initiative was too new for us to look at. There is also an emerging network, **Balkan Green Network**, coming together to advocate around energy issues, building on the success of **KOSID**. This is managed by the grantee **Balkan Green Foundation**, a nonprofit organization established in January 2014 in Kosovo to coordinate and work with regional organizations to advocate for sustainable development in the Western Balkans.

“We just had a high-level regional conference with the Ministry of Education in Montenegro ... with representatives from Serbia and also from Kosovo sitting at the same table and discussing issues of sustainable development. Seven or eight years ago, they wouldn’t do this. This is an achievement for the future for sustainability in the region but also with regards to peacebuilding in the region. Through a neutral platform we can build common goals together, and build mutual understanding across countries.”

—Grantee

The regional approach to the other goals also can have impact in this area. For example, in the work to reform educational curricula, **REC** brought together high-level officials from across the region to discuss common issues on sustainable development, something that would have been unlikely to have happened a few years ago (see quote above).

Regional Commission for the Establishment of Facts about War Crimes and Other Serious Violations of Human Rights (RECOM)

The Coalition for **RECOM** is a nonpolitical regional network of close to 2,000 civil society organizations and individuals that advocates for the creation of an intergovernmental body, officially recognized by all seven former Yugoslav states, that will take responsibility to establish the facts about atrocities and human rights violations committed within the Former Yugoslavia during the period 1991–2001. As such, it is the first attempt to have a regional truth or reconciliation commission and is notable for its bottom-up, grassroots nature. Considerable progress has been made in the process. Five of the seven countries in the region have nominated envoys to the process, and the final text of the *Statute for RECOM* has been agreed on. **RECOM** had gained written support from the presidents of two countries that haven’t nominated envoys: from Montenegro and the previous president of Croatia; however, recent

[continued on next page]

elections in Croatia and Bosnia mean that discussions will have to start again with the new president in Croatia and the two new members of the presidency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2011, progress on establishing **RECOM** has been mentioned by the European Commission progress reports.

The process of working to establish **RECOM** has also provided the following:

- An exercise in deliberative democracy by providing a platform for discussion among various groups at the regional, national, and local level. More than 6,000 people have engaged in various debates, many speaking in public for the first time. This process has challenged the post-communist norm of citizens who are not used to participating or having their voices heard.
- A process of consultation at different levels: community, national, and regional, and among community members, academia, victim associations, etc.
- A space for networking and collaboration between different groups. Links have been made between formerly opposed groups such as victims and former combatants. Victims associations and human rights associations have also started cooperating.
- Evidence-based challenges to ethnically divisive narratives that either overinflate or dismiss the extent of war atrocities. The initiative has published data on victims in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, according to RBF staff, have succeeded in “humanizing the numbers of the victims and eliminating the manipulation of the numbers that one side or the other would use for political games.”
- The opportunity to build social capital. There have been cases where victims and former combatants have met for the first time. One grantee suggested that meeting face-to-face means that “people over time become more moderate and reasonable.”
- The catalyst to establish new civil society organizations: According to members, 10–20 new organizations have formed as a result of hearings in their neighborhood to offer on-going support to survivors and victims or to advocate for the establishment of **RECOM**. Examples include Transitional Justice, Accountability and Remembrance in Sarajevo, and the Center for Transitional Justice and Democracy in Banjaluka.
- An increase in public knowledge about transitional justice issues and support for the establishment of **RECOM**: Half a million people have signed a petition calling for it to be established.

Despite the progress made by the initiative to establish **RECOM**, there is still a long way to go on getting the political elites and general population to accept that war crimes might have also been committed by their own side. One well-informed non-grantee expressed concern that “young people are becoming more nationalistic as they are only being exposed to one-sided narratives.”

Grantee activists are concerned that their “capacity is not enough to be sure the politics will establish **RECOM**” and are looking to develop more external political support. Two years ago, the initiative to establish **RECOM** explored, with the RBF, the possibility of organizing a meeting with European institutions to discuss how to move the initiative forward, but this did not happen at the time as European elections were due. Three areas for future support were suggested by

RECOM:

1. Establishing and maintaining the commitment of the EU and other actors for Transitional Justice. This is seen as an area where the RBF could take a very active role.
2. Recording the history of human losses, violations, locations of detention camps, etc.
3. Maintaining the concept and need for **RECOM** and transitional justice in the public sphere within countries in the Western Balkans.

Emerging Issues in the Region

Regional/Cross-Cutting

Prospects for EU membership for Serbia, Kosovo, and Montenegro might become questionable in the next several years. Enlargement fatigue in the EU, coupled with the growing interest and influence of non-EU powers (Russia and Turkey), could lead to a more robust “Euro-skepticism” within the Western Balkans. Some fear that by promoting reforms purely as necessary for EU accession, rather than as having intrinsic benefits for a country, one risks a failing commitment if it becomes clear that EU accession is no longer on the table.

Owing to the geopolitical rivalry between the EU and Russia, we will likely see a greater trend of the EU looking the other way to abuses of power by governments of the Western Balkans seeking to gain admission to the EU. The Kosovo-Serbia Brussels dialogue is one such example: The EU is likely to continue to reward both governments with leniency on fulfilling the accession criteria as long as they agree to keep the dialogue process alive.

It will be extremely challenging for the EU to effectively exert pressure on the governments in the region to deal with the transnational criminalized power structures and change the prevailing political culture. Even if pressure was applied, it is not likely that the governments would be willing to take meaningful steps in the direction of accountability, considering the overlap between governments and criminalized power structures. Too great a focus on accession at any price can distract attention away from some of the deeper reforms that are needed to achieve real change.

New lignite-fired power plants are in the pipeline in Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is likely that the EU accession process will be the most effective tool for activists willing to oppose these projects along the lines of **KOSID**'s success. The involvement of China in the projects in Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is likely to create additional geopolitical complications for the sustainable development activists.

Rapid deterioration of media freedoms in Serbia sets a dangerous precedent for the rest of the region. The need for donor support and international intervention in helping to preserve free and independent media within the whole region is likely to grow. Internet-based media will continue to increase in importance across the region, especially in Kosovo, where 82 percent of households have Internet access and 63 percent use Skype. One reason for this is the size of the Kosovar diaspora.

As the EU accession process progresses, governments will have more influence on the allocation of democracy assistance. This will likely make democracy activists more vulnerable to government interference. RBF support will likely become even more crucial, and coordination with the funding efforts of private U.S. donors, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, Charles Stewart Mott, and the Open Society Foundations, could become even more important.

Kosovo

In the near to medium term, the debate in Kosovo will likely revolve around the question of independence and membership in international bodies, especially the United Nations. As things stand now, the only way for Kosovo to get full recognition is for Serbia to recognize it as an independent state. Should Serbia continue refusing to do so, it is possible that Kosovar Albanians

will become more open to the opposition parties' arguments opposed to resolving lingering disputes with Serbia in order to join the EU.

As the country moves closer to the EU, the rest of the international community's presence will very possibly be reduced. The vacuum left could lead to the worsening of the media situation, especially given the low level of professionalism of public service media. Also, investigative journalism will continue to be heavily dependent on international donors since it is unlikely that it will be able to generate significant advertising revenue.

The constitutional provision allowing civil society to force Parliament to put on its agenda issues raised in a petition signed by 33,000 citizens is a powerful tool that could be used again to force the Parliament to act.

Montenegro

2016 will be a crucial year for Montenegro's democratic future. First, the country will become a NATO member. Second, there will likely be a parliamentary election shortly before that. Keeping in mind that historically there have been serious issues with the way that the elections have been conducted, it will be vital for the next parliamentary election to be fair and perceived as such by the opposition and the international community. Opposition parties, which enjoy about 40 percent of support, feel very strongly that the country should not enter NATO. If the election is not perceived as fair, we could see more violent protests, which could seriously destabilize the country.

Russia has considerable influence in Montenegro. It has openly supported the opposition parties' protests and issued public statements condemning NATO membership.

Serbia

Government pressure on the opposition and critical media outlets will likely grow. Having in mind that very few donors (except for small grants by NED and USAID) provide direct support to private media outlets, the space for voices critical of the government to be heard will shrink even more. Donors' goals for the medium term in Serbia must be realistic. The best that can be hoped for in the next several years is that Serbia does not regress democratically, following suit with its northern neighbor, Hungary.

Lessons, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This section draws out lessons from the RBF approach in the Western Balkans that might be applicable to programs in another location, then looks at conclusions that are specific to the Western Balkans program. It ends by making specific recommendations for the next phase of this program.

Lessons

These are the lessons that we believe would be applicable to new RBF programs working in countries that suffer from democratic challenges similar to those faced in the Western Balkans:

- When dealing with a political system based on impunity and patronage, as is common in the Western Balkans, change will require effort on many fronts from many actors. Key areas that will need attention include judicial reform/ensuring rule of law, ensuring an independent media, and close scrutiny of the management or privatization of publically owned enterprises.

- The civil society triangle concept, which brings together think tanks, investigative journalists, and grassroots organizations, can be a powerful instrument for attaining many of the RBF's goals in these circumstances.
- The civil society triangle concept works best when organized around a common issue (e.g., **KOSID/energy**) with organizations that have specific interests in these issues.
- To be most effective, the civil society triangle concept benefits from the members developing a joint strategy focusing on how to collectively achieve impact. This strategy may include using approaches that expose misconduct, such as strategic litigation; ones that develop support, such as appealing to outside actors (e.g., embassies) or linking with international civil society; and ones that support those in government trying to do a good job.
- The RBF can make major contributions to the efforts of such civil society triangles by using its existing networks and convening power to link the triangles with international actors (international organizations, think tanks, state actors) who can support their efforts. This may mean collaborating among different programs in the RBF.
- Engaged journalism, as described in text box, Strategic Litigation, is an appropriate approach for establishing government accountability.
- In countries that are working towards EU accession, compliance with Chapter 23 on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 on Justice, Freedom and Security of the *acquis* are important sources of leverage for RBF grantees to promote accountability.
- A few of the RBF's aims can be accomplished without using the civil society triangle approach. For example, where the issue does not challenge unaccountable power or vested interests, but where there is a need for capacity support or motivation. A good example of this in the Western Balkans was the work on integrating sustainable development into new educational curricula. Here, the governments in the region had expressed an interest in doing the work, and expert help was able to move things forward.

Conclusions

This section draws together our overall assessment of the impact and design of the RBF program in the Western Balkans.

Overall, we conclude that the program is having considerable positive impact in certain areas and, in general, is relevant to the issues facing Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and the rest of the region. We believe that the program is well designed and is achieving a lot with a relatively small amount of money.

The Relevance of the Program

We consider that overall the program is relevant because of the following:

- The choice of the Western Balkans as a pivotal place is an appropriate one as it is one of the least stable parts of Europe.
- The four goals of the program are directly relevant to the RBF's overall purpose as an organization and allow the organization to play to its strengths.

Cross-Cutting Conclusions

- The program is framed around supporting the countries to meet their aspirations for EU integration. This will not happen before 2020 and could take considerably longer.
- There are potential trade-offs in the process of EU integration between higher geopolitical interests, such as the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo or the refugee crisis, that may come into conflict with and attainment of objectives such as democratic practice, transparency, and accountability. For example, one political commentator told us that some EU Member states felt Serbia should be rewarded for its helpful posture on the refugee crisis by opening Chapters 23 and 24 in the EU accession process.
- The four goals have the potential to be mutually reinforcing: **KOSID**, for example, emerged out of a focus on energy within the goal on sustainable development but has shown how work on decisions around major infrastructure projects immediately takes the work into also dealing with issues of democratic practice.
- The concept of the civil society triangle is useful as a funding strategy to ensure that a full spectrum of different kinds of civil society organizations are operating.
- The civil society triangle concept can be a powerful instrument for attaining the RBF's goals. **KOSID** is the best example of this.
- The program has put focus on ensuring that there is diversity within the mix of grantees in terms of kinds of organization, experience, and geographic location.
- We agree with the approach of supporting nascent or less well-known CSOs to bring new life and diversity into the CSO sector. This has helped re-invigorate civil society in the countries where the RBF works, though there is some inevitable backlash, partly expressed through opposition to the **Civil Society House** proposal.
- The program has taken a long-term perspective (initially, 10 years) and does not expect to see quick results. We consider this to be appropriate for the kind of work being undertaken.
- From the start, the program has considered issues of the RBF's exit from the Western Balkans and adopted strategies, including the **Civil Society House**, to plan for this. This is to be commended.
- **Civil Society House** appears to be a good idea to give RBF grantees that comprise the components of it a sure location from which to work, the ability to coordinate their efforts because they are in the same location, and considerable cost saving on rent, and so forth. There has already been significant work done on planning the initiative, and it is intended that business plans will be done in the next phase of development. As yet we are not convinced that the **Civil Society Houses** are likely to generate income as envisaged in the grant docket, but even without this, we believe the idea has value.
- Funding civil society based outside the capital city is also important for a number of reasons: to ensure that civil society is linked to the whole of society; to take advantage of opportunities for influence on democratic practice at the municipality level; and to support local economic development. **Dokufest** and **Expeditio** are both good examples of effective work outside the capital city.



DokuFest, a documentary film festival takes place in Prizren, Kosovo, annually. Photo courtesy of DokuFest.

- Watchdog and advocacy organizations in civil society need to have a means to inform the public about their findings.
- The media angle is very important. This goes beyond supporting investigative journalists (which the program has done very successfully) to also ensuring that journalists and others have access to mainstream television, radio, newspapers, and websites to achieve wide distribution of their stories. One possible way to do this is to either give direct grants to media or to buy air time for grantees in the mainstream media.
- There is considerable concentration of funding in certain areas. Sixty percent of funding went to 12 grantees and RBF direct activity. This leaves \$5 million (40 percent) of funding spread out among 72 grantees and finance for meetings at The Pocantico Center; 29 of these got one-off grants of \$30,000 or less. As a result, we consider that, in some areas, the work is being spread too thin for impact to be achieved. Furthermore, there are some examples of projects where their contribution to the program goals requires a very broad interpretation of the goal, thus contributing to spreading the work very widely (e.g., **ENCOMPASS** and **Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development**, which fall under Goal 2, are said to contribute to the development of general human capacity as a necessary requirement for civil society capacity in the long run).
- There is insufficient regional cooperation on issues of impunity and organized crime across borders.

Conclusions on Strategies

Goal 1

The third strategy under Goal 1 includes “strengthening the capacity of government ... to conduct sound policy analysis,” which the program is not actually directly doing, though there are indirect routes through which government capacity can improve. We do not believe that the RBF should be working directly with governments on this and would suggest that the wording of the performance framework be amended to align with the de facto approach.

Overall, despite some examples of impact in Serbia, there remain questions about the extent of any improvements or whether grantees’ achievements are largely around keeping things from getting worse.

“Imagine a frozen lake. Skate on it and you only leave traces. As far as civil society goes, Serbia is a big, dark mess below the surface that we can’t reach.”

—Grantee (Serbia)

Goal 2

Goal 2 is too ambitious for the resources and time frame of the program in that it is worded to cover the whole of civil society and broad changes in culture (e.g., solidarity and philanthropy) that would require a lot of resources and time to achieve. The underlying intention and theory of change is implicit and has emerged from discussions rather than being explicit. We understand the goal to be about strengthening the sustainability of the civic sector as a vital part of a healthy democracy. In the last five years, the work under this goal has focused on the two strategies: work on the legal framework and the development of philanthropy—with more emphasis on the second of these.

Our discussions did not find that the legal framework, per se, is the major issue facing civil society, although implementation remains a challenge and the framework for philanthropy is weak. The three foundations that the RBF supports have been working on this area and should continue to do so.

The legal framework for philanthropy could be improved, particularly around tax incentives for giving, and all the foundations are working on this.

There is a key issue pertaining to money for civil society that is administered by the government, some of this coming from the EU, with many CSOs complaining this is not allocated transparently.

Promoting philanthropy works to the RBF's strengths as an organization founded by the Rockefellers.

Goal 3

Building a culture and practice of sustainable development is also very ambitious, and we believe that more could be achieved by focusing on a limited number of areas within this issue. We are not convinced that focusing on the development of a national-level sustainable development strategy, the first strategy under this goal in the program framework, is the best use of effort. Adopting a strategy in this context doesn't necessarily mean that it will be implemented. Instead, we suggest that the entry point should be a focus on energy (see Recommendations). We are not suggesting

“Within the broader educational reforms which happen as part of the EU integration process ... doors are already open and with a small sum of money you can have a big impact.”

—Grantee

that the RBF stops supporting work such as that done by **Expeditio** and **Mikro Art**, as this appears to be having impact. However, core to this work are issues of democratic practice, and accountability and transparency pertaining to the use of public spaces, thus it could as appropriately fall under Goal 1.

The second strategy to date has focused on the curriculum for sustainable development where work to incorporate these issues into curricula is close to completion in all three countries. We were not able to evaluate the impact of the changes in curricula in terms of changing behaviors as this will require more time; however, given the relatively small amount of money invested compared to the potential final impact (the curricula will be there for some years and reach many children), it appears to be good value for the money.

We believe that the approach adopted towards introducing and encouraging energy efficiency and environmental protection approaches in economic and infrastructure development, through looking at the energy sector, is a strategic one, and that **KOSID** is the clear example of impact toward this goal.

We believe that one of the reasons **KOSID** has been so effective is that it focuses on one particular aspect of sustainable development: coal-fired power plants and alternatives to that. If the RBF were to try to support grantees to pursue the whole spectrum of sustainable development, there is a risk it would spread its support too thinly.

The creation of a position in Washington and facilitating links with organizations in the United States has been extremely important for **KOSID**. **KOSID** has also been a good example of different parts of RBF working together and developing synergy between their different programs.

For the future, it will be important to take account of the need for energy security and the environment to be addressed at a regional level.

In our opinion, some projects that are funded under this goal do not appear to contribute to achieving what is in the program framework or fit well under this strategy. This will particularly be the case if it becomes more focused as we are recommending. Although the RBF cites the **Optimist Association** and **Fenomena** as examples of small-scale projects intended to encourage the culture and practice of sustainability that could be replicated elsewhere, our discussions with them suggested that the impetus of the work they did with RBF grants was focused mainly around their sustainability as organizations, and thus we believe that they would be more appropriately funded under Goal 2.

Goal 4

We agree with the overall approach to Goal 4. The first strategy of supporting efforts to establish and disseminate the truth about atrocities and mass violations of human rights during the years of conflict in the region has been done largely through supporting members of the Coalition to Establish **RECOM**, which we consider to be appropriate.

The actual approach to engaging diverse states and communities has been to involve them in discussions around common interests rather than focusing on issues around conflict. This would appear to be a suitable approach to peacebuilding in the context.

“RBF is one of the few organizations we feel as partners rather than donors. We build and do things together rather than ticking boxes.”

—Grantee (Serbia)

Conclusions on the RBF’s Approach to Grantmaking

The RBF’s approach to grantmaking is something that the grantees appreciate:

- The RBF’s flexible funding, in particular when it gives institutional rather than project grants, maximizes the utility of the funds as it allows organizations to respond to issues as they arise. This kind of funding is hard to come by and particularly important in the current political context where things are changing very fast.
- The RBF is noted as a donor that does not impose onerous conditions but does challenge grantees as to their approach in a constructive way, in particular around how grantees will achieve impact and how they might work collectively with others. It acts as an engaged grantmaker. This is valued.
- The RBF’s flexibility also allows grantees and their partners to design work in a way that suits them and thus take ownership of it (see quote above).
- Grantees value their long-term relationships with the RBF, but for those that are not currently supported by the RBF, it was reported by one external interviewee as generally seen as “hard to break into the inner circle.”
- The RBF’s agility is also a factor in enabling it to identify and fund larger opportunities that respond to emerging conditions, at times working with specific partners to this end. The work with **REC** on education curriculum reform is a good example of this. Also, this allows the RBF to experiment and take risks, by supporting new and emerging organizations such as **Mikro Art** or being more operational than donors sometimes are (e.g., **Philanthropy for Green Ideas** and **Balkan Forum**).

- The RBF team in the Western Balkans has successfully managed to instigate cooperation and synergy among civil society actors. This is a very positive reflection on their ways of working, including identifying appropriate partners and interacting with them in an engaged and supportive manner. We believe the RBF has effective staff.

“One thing very good about RBF is its flexibility ... [the RBF says they] will be flexible about activities if we achieve the results. This gives a lot of opportunities to do good work. It also means we don’t have to dictate to the countries concerned. Ultimately [the countries] decide what is needed for the countries. Because of this ... [the countries] create ownership. When you have ownership by ministries and national institutions then you will have good results. If [the countries] feel it is just another project forced on them, you never have sustainability.”

—Grantee

Recommendations

The following are the team’s recommendations for the next phase of the RBF’s Western Balkans program.

Length of Engagement

The RBF should expect to remain engaged in the Western Balkans for at least another 10 years.

The following conditions are indications that it could be time to exit this program:

- All three countries have joined the EU. The experience of Hungary demonstrates, however, that this is insufficient in itself to preserve democratic practice.
- If the legal system, and political processes more generally, can bring the most powerful to account, and deal with impunity.

Program Framework

Our overarching recommendation on the program framework is that the program should be revised to **focus more**.

We recommend that this is done by **investing more in Goal 1 and on work on the energy sector in Goal 3**. Funds for this increased investment can be found by graduating the work on curriculum, where we do not see it as the role of the RBF to fund roll-out, and by reducing support to the foundations for regranting as they are now successfully accessing funding from elsewhere to do this.

Within Goals 1 and 3, the work should also be focused more in the following ways:

- Focus Goal 1 on the work of CSOs (including grassroots organizations, investigative journalists, and think tanks) to check the abuse of state power instead of “service delivery” and “strengthening government capacity to perform sound policy analysis.”
- Part of this should include looking at strategies to ensure that investigative journalists have a medium to publish to a wide audience. This is particularly important in Serbia. They should

not only be publishing their findings on social media and the Internet, which are likely to grow in importance in the future, but also on television, which remains important at the moment. This may mean funding content to be shown, especially on television channels. It may also be worthwhile to support think tanks and others to consider how to make their findings more accessible to mass audiences—possible approaches include: linking with investigative journalists and media editors, and developing communication strategies or skills.

- Focus Goal 3 more narrowly on energy policy. This has been very successful in Kosovo and has the potential to emerge as a significant body of work within the region. This is a key area to work on as: a) it is timely; b) it is an area with the potential for significant corruption; c) opening up the decision-making process on this kind of investment decision could have broader impact on decision making in general; d) it promotes EU integration; and e) it offers opportunities for leverage due to the role of international organizations and the engagement of international civil society.

Working on promoting philanthropy is an obvious niche for the RBF, given its history, reputation, and convening power. **We consider that, for the future, Goal 2 should be recalibrated to focus on two areas:** the development of philanthropy and the long-term sustainability of the RBF's major grantees. The RBF has adopted a promising strategy for accomplishing the second of these (i.e., the development of **Civil Society Houses**) and appears to have the resources to do this.

The program framework should be revised to reflect our recommendations above. As part of this, the underlying theory of change should be clearly articulated and attention given to ensuring that there are appropriate indicators that focus on impact rather than activities. While monitoring and reporting on the new program framework, staff should specify the total amount invested to date in major areas of work so that strategic discussions can be had regarding the most appropriate balance of funding (e.g., total funds that have been invested in regranting, **REC, KOSID, Philanthropy for Green Ideas**, etc.).

The RBF should continue framing the program around the countries' aspirations to join the EU as it provides potential for leverage on the RBF's core goals. However, the RBF should hedge against the possibility that the EU accession process may stagnate and become perceived as unattainable by also promoting the RBF goals of accountability, transparency, sustainable development, and peacebuilding as intrinsic "goods" in their own right.

Funding Approach

National

Continue to catalyze, facilitate, and fund collaboration at the national level between different civil society actors to work collectively on issues of accountability, transparency, and energy with a focus on how they can achieve greater impact together. The intent would be to instigate functioning civil society triangles around these issues, if necessary.

Strategic litigation, which has been used with notable success in Kosovo, has the potential to be used in Serbia and Montenegro. This can be combined with the EU judicial reform process to provide litmus tests that must be handled successfully if the country is to move forward with Chapter

23 on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 on Justice, Freedom and Security of the *acquis*.³¹

Regional

Increase efforts to support cross learning and collaboration between civil society organizations working in different parts of the Western Balkans on energy and anti-corruption. This could be a joint effort with like-minded donors. There may also be further opportunities for networks to apply for funding from the EU.

Explore the possibility of building on existing work that covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, and make it a more explicit part of the program's future geographic focus as it is key for the transnational issues the RBF is working on (e.g., energy, regional stability, facing the past, and anti-corruption).

International

The RBF should support representation in Brussels to advocate for the position of grantees and link grantees with relevant decision makers in support of all four goals. This could be along the same model as **KOSID's** consultant or **EDI** in Washington. The work should reach beyond European civil servants and members of the European Parliament to include linking with European think tanks and civil society.

Acknowledgments

The team would like to thank the many people who have contributed to this evaluation and who have generously given significant amounts of their time to share their insights and perspectives with us. In particular, we would like to thank Dragana Ilic for making all the logistical arrangements and dealing with a number of unexpected last-minute changes, and Biljana Dakic Djordjevic, Natasa Kandic, Maja Boljevic, and Visar Azemi for arranging and/or hosting invaluable group discussions.

³¹ In order to join the EU, candidates have to adopt, implement, and enforce all current EU rules (the "acquis"). These are divided into [35 different policy fields \(chapters\)](#) each of which is negotiated separately. The content is not negotiable: Candidates agree on how and when to adopt and implement them, and the EU obtains guarantees on the date and effectiveness of each candidate's measures to do this. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index_en.htm

Appendix A: Examples of Impact Against the Performance Framework

Goal 1: Democratic Practice: Improving the Performance, Accountability, and Transparency of Government <i>Approved June 2010; Review 2015</i>		
Strategy	Key Indicator of Progress in 3–5 Years	Examples of Impact
1. Enhancing the capacity of civil society to monitor the quality of public sector governance and service delivery	Strategic collaboration among grassroots organizations, policy think tanks, and investigative journalists established in three countries (“triangle approach”) (C) <i>Relates to strategies 1, 2, and 3</i>	Collaboration among the three components has been established in all three countries, but the extent of collaboration among the components varies. It functions most effectively in Kosovo.
	Government budget planning and spending is done with increased transparency at central and local levels (B)	In Kosovo the ability of the Assembly to perform its oversight function has been advanced by the Group for Legal and Political Studies , and in Serbia, CRTA is making municipal budgets are more transparent.
	Increased public scrutiny of priority public investment areas (E)	There are concrete examples of increased public scrutiny in all three countries (e.g., KOSID’s work on investments in the energy sector in Kosovo, BIRN’s work on investment in Serbia’s energy sector, and Expediatio’s work in Montenegro).
	Civil society plays active role in Europeanization of electoral law, political party financing, and monitoring the quality of elections	Legislation has been enacted in Montenegro at the instigation of the Center for Democratic Transition that restricts the government’s ability to use public funds as a source of patronage (i.e., employment and services) during the run-up to an election.
	Country-specific networks cooperate across the region to work toward EU Integration (C)	We did not find progress against this indicator.
2. Strengthening the investigative and educational practices of media and nongovernmental organizations	Public demands changes in corrupt behaviors as a result of investigative reporting (U,E)	This is the metric where the greatest impact has been achieved in Goal 1. In Kosovo, BIRN has provided effective venues for the public to demand redress for corrupt government practices (i.e., Life in Kosovo, Justice in Kosovo and Kalxxo). In Montenegro, according to the U.N. system, Civic Action’s Robin Hud has assisted an estimated 10 percent of the population that has suffered from government malfeasance. In Serbia, the public has been mobilized by CRTA and Mikro Art to protest suspicious government use of public property.

INDICATOR FOCUS KEY

(B) Behavior | (C) Capacity | (E) Public Engagement | (P) Public Policy | (U) Understanding

	Judiciary more effectively plays its role (U, E, C)	BIRN Kosovo has achieved exceptional success in its strategic litigation by gaining a ruling from the Constitutional Court that the prime minister must reveal his invoices for expenses claimed on travel. The court monitoring program that BIRN has run for seven years has also had a salient impact on the willingness of some judges to confront threats from dangerous defendants.
3. Strengthening the capacity of government and nongovernmental institutions to conduct sound policy analysis	Participatory processes and expert analyses needed for sound political, social, and economic policies are in place (C)	In Kosovo, CSOs have specialized in specific policy areas affording them a comparative advantage over the government that they are using to influence policy. In Montenegro, one-quarter of the Parliament has graduated from Civic Alliance's School for Democratic Leadership, providing access for participation in legislative deliberations.
	Legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the government develop independent positions supported by sound policy analysis (C)	
Goal 2: Democratic Practice: Building Civil Society Capacity and Effectiveness to Strengthen Participatory Democracy <i>Approved June 2010; Review 2015</i>		
Strategy	Key Indicator of Progress in 3–5 Years	Examples of Impact
1. Strengthening the organizational and financial capacity of the civic sector	Civil society has secured the legal framework to allow it to thrive and develop (P)	The European Foundation Centre found that there is an enabling legal framework for the establishment and operation of foundations. TRAG was reported to be a key actor in developing Serbia's 2010 law on foundations. Supportive legal and fiscal frameworks for civil society financial sustainability remain an issue, particularly around tax incentives for giving. Trag , FIQ , and fAKT are working on this.
	Measureable increase in the level of local contributions to the civil society sector (U, B)	Data are not available for the overall level of local contributions to civil society. Anecdotal evidence suggests there has been some increase in all three countries.

INDICATOR FOCUS KEY

(B) Behavior | (C) Capacity | (E) Public Engagement | (P) Public Policy | (U) Understanding

2. Stimulating indigenous philanthropy and solidarity in society	Indigenous foundation are fully established and operational in all three countries (C)	The three foundations supported by the RBF (Trag , FIQ , and fAKT) are fully established and operational.
	Similar foundations have emerged in other countries, such as Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (C)	The RBF was a key influence in the 2013 establishment of ARNO in Macedonia. The RBF has also supported Partners Albania (established in 2001).
	Culture of individual and corporate giving for the common good established across the region (U, B)	There is anecdotal evidence of a somewhat stronger culture of individual and corporate giving in the three focus countries.
Goal 3: Sustainable Development: Building a Culture and Practice of Sustainable Development <i>Approved June 2010; Review 2015</i>		
Strategy	Key Indicator of Progress in 3–5 Years	Examples of Impact
1. Contributing to participatory and inclusive approaches to the design and implementation of strategies for sustainable development	All three countries adopt sustainable development strategies that are created and implemented with the participation of representative stakeholders from their societies (P, E)	Montenegro has drafted a 2015–2030 National Sustainable Development Strategy. RBF grantee, Expeditio , played a very important role in the process and the Monitoring Mechanism was developed with Expeditio input. Serbia has not made considerable progress in this area. Kosovo still does not have a national strategy, but there is improvement, especially in the area of energy policy, thanks to RBF grantees in KOSID .

INDICATOR FOCUS KEY

(B) Behavior | (C) Capacity | (E) Public Engagement | (P) Public Policy | (U) Understanding

<p>2. Supporting educational reforms to include sustainable development concepts and practices as part of curriculum</p>	<p>Sustainable development is part of the school curriculum with government support (C, U)</p>	<p>Kosovo: Draft curriculum with associated learning outcomes has been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). Government support is indicated by MEST providing direct financial support to train teachers, prepare a teaching manual, and develop content. (RBF grantee REC was directly involved.)</p> <p>Montenegro: Inter-subject themes and topics related to sustainable development have been officially approved by the National Bureau of Education and made part of the curricula for pre-school, primary school, high school, and vocational school. Teachers are now obliged to cover climate change, green economy, human rights, environmental protection, sustainable cities and communities, biodiversity, and environment and health in their lessons. (RBF grantee REC was directly involved.)</p> <p>Serbia: The national curriculum in primary and secondary education has been reformed to integrate sustainable development learning outcomes into each subject and the concept of environmental responsibility has been integrated into the official school curriculum. Environmental protection criteria are now included in performance assessment indicators for educational institutions and sustainable development principles are incorporated into indicators for assessing teachers' professional development. (RBF grantee REC was directly involved.)</p>
<p>3. Introducing and encouraging energy efficiency and environmental protection approaches in economic and infrastructure development</p>	<p>Energy efficiency and environmentally friendly practices in place (U, B)</p>	<p>There are some signs that the international initiatives are starting to take into account energy efficiency in Kosovo thanks to work of KOSID.</p>
	<p>Increase in citizens' understanding of the benefits of energy efficiency; citizens begin to take action (U, B)</p>	<p>Citizens are taking action on this issue in Kosovo partly thanks to the activism of KOSID members.</p>
	<p>International initiatives and processes support low-carbon economies and reflect the role of civil society (C, U)</p>	
	<p>Global environmental advocacy institutions use lessons from the Western Balkans for successful advocacy in other regions (U,B)</p>	

INDICATOR FOCUS KEY

(B) Behavior | (C) Capacity | (E) Public Engagement | (P) Public Policy | (U) Understanding

Goal 4: Peacebuilding: Strengthening Constituencies for Reconciliation and Enduring Peace <i>Approved June 2010; Review 2015</i>		
Strategy	Key Indicator of Progress in 3–5 Years	Examples of Impact
1. Supporting efforts to establish and disseminate the truth about atrocities and mass violations of human rights during the years of conflict in the region.	Country-specific networks cooperate across the region to face the past (C, E)	There are networks in all three countries that cooperate regionally on the issues.
	Governments formalize the process of establishing truth commissions (C, B)	All three countries have signed up to participate in the creation of RECOM .
2. Contributing to regional initiatives that engage diverse states and communities in conflict transformation to create conditions for enduring peace.	New platform to enhance regional collaboration around shared sustainable economic development goals among countries of the Western Balkans	Regional energy initiative is the new platform which supports the shared sustainable development goals.
	Countries of the Western Balkans exchange knowledge and methodologies for preventing and transforming conflicts and supporting progressive leadership with similar regions (C, B)	

INDICATOR FOCUS KEY

(B) Behavior | (C) Capacity | (E) Public Engagement | (P) Public Policy | (U) Understanding

Appendix B: Interviewees

RBF Interviewees

Haki Abazi, Western Balkans Program Director
Anne Bartley, Trustee
Betsy Campbell, Vice President for Programs
Stephen Heintz, President
Dragana Ilic, Program Assistant
Tom Kruse, Global Governance Program Director
Ariadne Papagapitos, Peacebuilding Program Director
Valerie Rockefeller Wayne, Chair

Current and Former Grantees

Kosovo

Visar Azemi	Balkan Green Foundation/KOSID	KOSID/Triangle Approach
Dajana Berisha	Forum for Civic Initiatives	KOSID/Triangle Approach (Civil Society House)/Philanthropy for Green Ideas
Genc Broqi	Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development	Diversity (empowering Roma through education)
Agron Demi	Institute for Advanced Studies GAP	Triangle Approach
Dren Doli	Group for Legal and Political Studies	Triangle Approach
Burim Ejupi	Institute for Development Policy	Triangle Approach
Rinora Gojani	Institute for Development Policy	Triangle Approach
Fisnik Korenica	Group for Legal and Political Studies	Triangle Approach
Veton Nurkollari	Dokufest	KOSID and art and culture
Jusuf Thaci	Centre for Social and Psychological Studies and Services (ENCOMPASS)	Building civil society capacity
Jeta Xharra	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network	Triangle Approach
Edona Zogu	Centre for Social and Psychological Studies and Services (ENCOMPASS)	Building civil society capacity

Group Discussion in Kosovo

Visar Azemi	Balkan Green Foundation/KOSID	KOSID/Triangle Approach
Burim Ejupi	Institute for Development Policy	Triangle Approach
Rinora Gojani	Institute for Development Policy	Triangle Approach
Fisnik Korenica	Group for Legal and Political Studies	Triangle Approach
Jeton Mehmeti	Institute for Advanced Studies GAP	Triangle Approach
Kushtrim Puka	FIQ	

Montenegro

Maja Boljevic	Fund for Active Citizenship	Triangle Approach (Civil Society House)/Philanthropy for Green Ideas
Vanja Calovic	The Network for the Affirmation of the NGO Sector MANS	Triangle Approach
Biljana Gligoric	EXPEDITIO	Outside capital sustainable development
Ajsa Hadzibegovic	Civic Alliance	Triangle Approach
Elvira Hadzibegovic Bubnja	Forum Mladi I Neformalna Edukacija	
Darko Ivanovic	Civic Alliance	Triangle Approach
Milica Kovacevic	Center for Democratic Transition	Triangle Approach
Dejan Milovac	The Network for the Affirmation of the NGO Sector MANS	Triangle Approach
Tanja Rajic	EXPEDITIO	Outside capital sustainable development
Boris Raonic	Civic Alliance	Triangle Approach

Group Discussion in Montenegro

Maja Boljevic	fAKT	Triangle Approach
Ajsa Hadzibegovic	Civic Alliance	Triangle Approach
Milica Kovacevic	Center for Democratic Transition	Triangle Approach

Serbia

Vukosava Crnjanski	Civic Association CRTA-The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability	Triangle Approach
Jelena Curuvija	Slavko Curuvija Foundation	Triangle Approach; diversifying CSO sphere
Biljana Dakic Djordjevic	Trag Foundation	Triangle Approach (Civil Society House)/Philanthropy for Green Ideas

Ilir Gashi	Slavko Curuvija Foundation	Triangle Approach; diversifying CSO sphere
Dinko Gruhonjic	Independent Journalists' Network of Vojvodina	Outside capital investigative journalism
Gordana Igric	Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network	Triangle Approach
Natasa Kandic	Humanitarian Law Center - Documentation and Memory	RECOM
Sonja Licht	Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence	Former grantee
Marko Orlović	Fenomena	Noncapital grantee
Jelena Milic	Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies	Triangle Approach
Marija Petronijevic	Fenomena	Noncapital grantee
Maja Stojanovic	Civic Initiative	Former grantee
Vladimir Stojanovic	Optimist Association	Philanthropy for Green Ideas (non-winner); diversity and community engagement
Dragana Veljovic	Fenomena	Noncapital grantee
Mladen Velojic	Media and Reform Centre Nis	Triangle Approach outside capital
Dobrica Veselinovic	Mikro Art	

Group Discussion in Serbia

Vukosava Crnjanski	Civic Association CRTA - The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability	Triangle Approach
Biljana Dakic Djordjevic	Trag Foundation	Triangle Approach (Civil Society House)/Philanthropy for Green Ideas
Ilir Gashi	Slavko Curuvija Foundation	
Gordana Igric	Balkan Investigative Reporting Regional Network	Triangle Approach
Mladen Velojic	Media and Reform Centre Nis	Triangle Approach outside capital

Group Discussion on RECOM

Milan Antonijevic	YUCOM Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
Jelena Grujic Zvindovic	Website RECOM.link
Midhat Izmirlija	Transitional Justice School and WG for creating RECOM Statute
Natasa Kandic	Humanitarian Law Center - Documentation and Memory
Jelena Krstic	Coalition for RECOM
Maja Micic	Petition for Establishing RECOM
Sven Milekic	YIHR Croatia

Interviews with Grantees Outside of the Western Balkans

Kurt Bassuener	Democratization Policy Council	Amplifying regional voices and understanding context	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Lejla Bicakcic	Center for Investigative Reporting	Regional Context (BiH)	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Brendan Kenneth Duprey	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe	Regional Environmental Centre	Hungary
Juliana Hoxha	Partners Albania	Philanthropy for Green Ideas	Albania
Irina Janevska	ARNO Social Innovation Macedonia	Philanthropy for Green Ideas	Macedonia
Matthias Puhlinger	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe	Regional Environmental Centre	Hungary
Marta Szigeti Bonifert	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe	Regional Environmental Centre	Hungary
Evgenia Tairyan	Representative for KOSID	Washington Rep for KOSID	Washington
Bodo Weber	Democratization Policy Council	Amplifying regional voices and understanding context	Germany

External Interviewees

Regional and Outside Region Perspective

Ivana Bajrovic	National Endowment for Democracy	Sarajevo
Nicola Bertolini	EC Kosovo and Serbia Desk officer	Brussels
John Coequyt	Sierra Club	USA
Victoria Pirker	Assistant to Urlike Lunachek, Vice President of EU Parliament, Green MP from Austria	Brussels
Juraj Sevela	On team of Eduard Kukan, EU Parliament, Slovak Socialist MP	Brussels
Aleksandra Toma	Peace and Security Funders Group	USA
Walter Viers	Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	London
Mishka Zaman	World Bank Inspection Panel	USA

Kosovo outside perspective

Ferid Agani	Minister for Spatial Planning	Prishtina
Goran Buldioski	Open Society Institute	
Luljete Gjonbala	USAID Mission	
Bela Luci	Kosovo 2.0, think tank	
Nenad Maksimovic	Director, Center for Peace and Tolerance	
Randall Olson	USAID Mission	
Dusan Radakovic	Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture	
Luan Shlaku	Kosovo Fund for Open Society	Prishtina
Ardita Zejnullahu	Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo	

Montenegro outside perspective

Bix Aliu	DCM at U.S. Embassy	
Romain Boitard	EU Delegation	
Dragutin Drago Dekovic	City Manager, Podgorica	
Ana Drakic	Former USAID	
Jelena Janjusevic	UNDP	
Ivan Kuzminovic	Norwegian Embassy	Belgrade
Misela Manojlovic	Local Self-Government Secretariat, Podgorica	
Boris Mugosa	Deputy Mayor of Podgorica	
Aleksandar Sime Dedovic	ALPHA Centre	
Marija Vucinovic	Minister Without Portfolio	
Bosiljka Vukovic Simonovic	Head of the Division for Climate Change and Air Quality at Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	

Serbia Outside Perspective

Sonja Biserko	Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
Petar Blagojevic	Juzne Vesti
Ivana Cirkovic	Former Office for Cooperation with Civil Society
Ana Firtel	Foreign Investment Council
Paola Petric	Heinrich Böll Foundation
Yolanda San Hose	EU Delegation

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Appendix D: Additional Data on the Trag Foundation

Regranting

The following table summarizes the funds that Trag receives for regranting to other organizations.

Donor (funding cycle)	2010 (USD)	2011 (USD)	2012 (USD)	2013 (USD)	2014 (USD)
CNF (2005-2012)	\$491,533.38	\$521,721.88	\$441,235.85	\$8,394.29	N/A
Mott (2004 onward)	\$28,391.38	\$38,187.42	\$27,138.44	N/A	\$1,715.59
BTD ((2004 onward)	\$16,686.78	\$17,275.14	\$21,488.32	\$10,950.57	\$80,319.54
USAID-ISC (2006-2014)	\$186,751.20	\$148,508.38	\$62,074.23	\$284,560.56	\$418,705.53
USAID (2014 onward)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$114,918.50
EU (2013 onward)	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$297,203.21	\$11,904.75
UNICEF (2012-2013)	N/A	N/A	\$63,991.44	\$7,345.59	N/A
ERSTE (2006-2014)	\$27,474.02	\$35,441.13	\$30,322.36	\$29,031.59	\$1,734.46
Other donors	\$150,528.37 (DFID alone 143,528.36)	\$51,791.83	\$100,175.85	\$10,565.29	\$29,269.11

Data on Trag local fundraising

2010 – **\$61,217.75** (corporate donors such as ERSTE, Telenor, Coca-Cola, Asus, State Lottery)

2011 – **\$50,558.94** (ERSTE, Tech, UGO-V, etc.)

2012 – **\$61,166.13**

2013 – **N/A**

2014 – **\$237,855.08 + \$20,465.20** (raised for floods relief) + **\$35,379.15** (for Endowment Fund)

2015 – **\$51,365.91 + \$14,914.84** (raised for Endowment Fund)

Local fundraising done by the grassroots CSOs TRAG supports:

2010 – **\$8,506.87** (SF program – 7 CSOs)

2011 – **\$32,627** (VIA program – 9 CSOs)

2012 – **\$27,203** (SF program – 7 CSOs)

2013 – **\$5,035** (SF program – 1 CSO)

2014 – **\$172,430** (SF program / 2 rounds; SA and PPP – 36 CSOs)