

**OTI MACEDONIA  
CONFIDENCE BUILDING INITIATIVE  
EVALUATION REPORT**

**Office of Transition Initiatives**

**Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance  
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Submitted by:*

**SOCIAL IMPACT, INC.**

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## **ACRONYMS**

CBI	Confidence Building Initiative
CBU	Confidence Building Unit
CSHI	Community Self-Help Initiative
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DCHA	Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
EU	European Union
ISC	Institute for Sustainable Communities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KTI	Kosovo Transition Initiative
LOP	Life of Program
MCIC	Macedonian Center for International Cooperation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PSC	Personal Service Contractor
SO	Strategic Objective
SWIFT	Support which Implements Fast Transition Initiatives
TI	Transitional Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **EVALUATION PURPOSES AND METHODS**

The purpose of the final evaluation was to provide Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of its Confidence Building Initiative (CBI) activities in Macedonia.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the evaluation sought to provide OTI/Washington with an example of quantitative methodology for collecting impact data. The evaluation addressed the following fundamental questions:

- To what extent did CBI meet its stated goal and objectives?
- Did OTI's approach fill an important gap?
- Did OTI complement the efforts of other USAID offices and international organizations working to promote peace and support the democratic transition in Macedonia?
- How did the management and operation of the CBI program contribute to or detract from achievement of the program goal and objectives?
- What programmatic and management lessons can be learned from the CBI program that can provide useful guidance to other OTI programs in like environments?

An evaluation team, consisting of two evaluation specialists, developed an evaluation strategy that included a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. Relevant documents were reviewed for understanding the development and dynamics of the CBI program, individual interviews and focus groups were conducted to capture a qualitative sense of the CBI/OTI experience, and a formal survey was administered to a sample of CBI participants to more rigorously collect data that could be analyzed quantitatively.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

To what extent did CBI meet its stated goal and objectives?

With respect to the first three specific objectives of CBI: (1) supporting community-based interaction among diverse groups of people, (2) promoting citizen participation in community decision-making, and (3) fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability between citizens and local government, CBI carried out these activities very well and extensively, as supported by Focus groups, interviews with CBI staff, selected Community Building Unit (CBU) participants, one-on-one interviews with NGO/donor representatives and USAID personnel, and from the results of a survey of CBU participants. With respect to CBI's fourth objective (increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of views), the evaluation team was able to collect only anecdotal data suggesting this area had been improved in Macedonia. Certainly, the CBI program achieved its goal of promoting and instilling expanded democratic behaviors at the community level. However, in a broader sense, the CBI goal was to reduce and/or mitigate conflict. Indeed, the community survey findings clearly suggest that in those communities where the CBI operated, survey participants were willing to visit places and persons where they had previously been reluctant to do so. Nevertheless, the evaluators could not answer whether the CBI did

anything that directly resulted in reaching the program goal of conflict mitigation. This may be due in part to the fact that the causal linkage between the goal and program objectives was not explained clearly.

## **Discussion**

The macro goal of CBI, frequently mentioned in several of the OTI monthly reports, was to reduce tension and mitigate conflict through confidence building efforts during the implementation of the Framework Agreement. These terms were never defined with any consistency, making it extremely tenuous to attribute whether the CBI program had accomplished anything specific in these areas.

By contrast, CBI did meet its specific program objectives. The program responded to what people wanted quickly and efficiently. The program provided grant assistance that could meet specific needs of communities, while at the same time being quite flexible in how monies could be used to meet needs. The program intervened at the local community level where local citizens could become directly involved in the affairs of their community. And in doing so, even though CBI was only a two-year program, it did build local capacity that will persist after the program concludes. This is consistent with USAID/Macedonia's CSP and, in particular, Strategic Objective 2 calling for the development of "legitimate democratic institutions."

### Did OTI's approach fill an important gap?

Yes, given the necessity to respond quickly to U.S. State Department and USAID/Macedonia concerns about the need to inject resources into post-conflict local communities, OTI through its implementing partner efficiently and effectively carried out this mandate between October 2001 and September 2003. USAID/Macedonia did manage a portfolio of other community development activities, but the evaluators found that none had been as effective in moving resources to local communities in as narrow a time frame.

## **Discussion**

The USAID/Macedonia Mission did establish a community-based program for moving resources expediently into communities experiencing ethnic tension and possible conflict. However, the initial program, CSHI, was implemented slowly and once the Framework Agreement was signed in August 2001, OTI expanded its efforts in Macedonia by supporting a community program capable of providing resources quickly to specific regions of Macedonia that might experience ethnic conflict or the resumption of local conflict. The IOM/Skopje CBI program funded by OTI was very successful at injecting resources into these communities over the two-year life of the program. By way of contrast, other USAID programs have not been nearly as effective in moving resources into local communities in as narrow a time frame. There are no data to support whether the rapid infusion of resources actually prevented conflict, but the CBI program did ensure presence on the part of CBI staff and did in effect "buy time" as other USAID and donor programs geared up to meet the possible challenge of renewed ethnic conflict in the Balkans.

### Did OTI complement the efforts of other USAID offices and international organizations working to promote peace and support the democratic transition in Macedonia?

Yes, but only in a limited way given the rather unique operating structure of OTI and that of its implementing partner, IOM/Skopje.

## **Discussion**

USAID/Macedonia has a considerable list of contractors and PVOs that are assisting the Mission to implement its Country Strategic Plan. In the broadest sense, all of these organizations are working to promote peace in support of the democratic transition. Similar in some respects to the community program of CBI are the efforts of the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) working with local community NGOs. Development Alternatives, Inc., is managing the Local Government Reform Program aimed at improving the operations of municipalities in the area of public services, and Catholic Relief Services supports civic education for building a more viable civil society.

The OTI program was rather unique in its activities, with one exception—CSHI (originally started by the Mission using an OTI funding mechanism with OTI/Washington technical assistance). In many ways, the programs are very much alike—both worked to promote local communities to help themselves and use a community “process” approach. However, there were real differences. CBI was a relatively short-term effort, whereas CSHI is an ongoing five-year program. CBI supported social projects as well as infrastructure projects; CSHI does only infrastructure projects. More importantly, the CBI program was designed to promote ethnic collaboration through community engagement in troubled regions of Macedonia or where ethnic conflict had taken place.

By contrast, the CBI media component worked with the USAID/Macedonia Mission in support of ensuring that information was disseminated on the census as well as the elections. This office also worked with various media outlets (TV, radio, and print) to promulgate accurate information about the Framework Agreement.

### How did the management and operation of the CBI program contribute to or detract from achievement of the program goal and objectives?

In order to respond quickly to political imperatives mentioned above, the CBI program from the start emphasized the need to produce grants and subsequently move money at an assembly line pace. What was referred to as the “burn rate” became an end in and of itself. Frequently heard was the expression, “low-hanging fruit” meaning to CBI program officers that they had to quickly fund easier “targets of opportunity” in their respective communities in lieu of taking more time to develop more difficult grant proposals. Nevertheless, setting a target of 250 grants for the first year did indeed keep staff well-focused and even motivated to achieving results.

## **Discussion**

The workload was by all accounts overly demanding on CBI staff, leading to expressions of high stress, limited time to work with communities, and by the second year of the program to develop larger infrastructure grant designs—possibly to meet burn rate expectations. Staff also would have benefited from more training at startup instead of learning mostly “on the job.” While some time would have been sacrificed up front, the quality of work performance later in the program

life would have returned by way of greater efficiency. CBI staff certainly recognized the tradeoff involved in starting grant activities quickly versus having all the administrative procedures worked out for each office.

CBI made excellent use of information technology, linking the field and home offices, and enabling real time information flow. This facilitated local flexibility while at the same time there was centralized management oversight in the IOM/Skopje office and at the OTI/Skopje office. But several of the variables in the database were not clear; this was also true in terms of the overall goal of the program – the conceptual design or logic-in-use was weak and left each program officer the job of designing and implementing the CBI program in terms of his or her view of the local setting. Despite the availability of data, there was a dearth of information on individual project outcomes and the probable sustainability of these projects.

OTI/Macedonia and IOM/CBI staff frequently said the “process” of working with communities was paramount to simply turning out a “product.” But given USAID’s emphasis on achieving program results, process is not a substitute for generating a quality product.<sup>A</sup> Had there been greater attention paid to monitoring and evaluation, CBI might have been carried out with a stronger conceptual orientation rather than just getting the numbers. This oversight may well be a function of varying skills sets and backgrounds of IOM and OTI staff in Macedonia—most of the staff had backgrounds reflective of crisis management issues. However, in addressing conceptual design and monitoring and evaluation issues, outcomes and sustainability, and performance in general, CBI staff needed to possess more of a development perspective for even a short-term program like CBI.

Lastly, the contributions of the Media Office were impressive although the various projects were poorly integrated into the rest of the CBI program. In short, the objective of “a more balanced access to information” was anomalous to the CBI program from the start. It did not fit with the local community approach adopted by the CBI program. Media resources might have been better used for operating in another field site for a more tailored intervention.

What programmatic and management lessons can be learned from the CBI program that can provide useful guidance to other OTI programs in like environments?

It appeared to the evaluation team that the OTI/Macedonia office played more of an oversight role with its implementing partner rather than taking more of a management supervisory role.<sup>B</sup>

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<sup>A</sup> OTI strongly disagrees with this statement. As will be discussed in Section 4 under “Strategic Approach,” the process of communities working together to identify common problems and set priorities was evidence of conflict mitigation progress. By the time the grant was signed, the objectives of “supporting community-based interaction among diverse groups of people,” “promoting citizen participation in community decision-making,” and “fostering transparency, responsiveness and accountability between citizen and local government” had been met. Thus, the process was paramount to meeting the objectives of the program.

<sup>B</sup> OTI believes this characterization of the oversight vs. management-supervisory role is misleading. In OTI/Macedonia, IOM took responsibility for supervising the implementation of program activities. All strategic direction was the responsibility of OTI/Macedonia. This distinction was in keeping with OTI operating procedures under a cooperative agreement.

## **Discussion**

This was, perhaps, a function of the Cooperative Agreement arrangement with the implementing partner being too prescriptive in what roles could be played between the respective parties. It also behooves OTI/Washington to develop a more proactive approach on how its offices are engaged in a country, especially how relationships are to be established with local USAID Missions. OTI needs to be perceived as a team player no matter how well it performs. In Macedonia, due to the fact that there was no space within the USAID/Macedonia mission, the OTI office was physically separated from USAID and this reified the perception by other USAID contractors that OTI/Macedonia was running its own show.

In addition, despite several attempts to devise a strategy for the CBI program, the OTI/Macedonia office never fully developed an integrated strategic plan for the CBI program.<sup>c</sup> Moreover, in the area of Monitoring and evaluation, the OTI/Macedonia office failed to implement a comprehensive approach for assessing the impact of the CBI program. While the OTI/Macedonia office did finally develop a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), it was completed late in the life of the program and never fully implemented.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. OTI should develop a more proactive role within USAID in promotion of its skills in the area of “transition management.” Programs and activities both in Washington and the field should be closely integrated with Agency and/or Mission strategic objectives.

## **Rationale**

Given the reorganization of USAID over the last two years, OTI is now situated in DCHA where its skills relative to the other units in this bureau are unique. OTI is capable of reacting rapidly and with considerable flexibility in contrast to the other operating units in DCHA – but it is particularly different in that its efforts are mainly community-based and field-focused – permitting the organization to move beyond the veneer of political leadership in transition situations in order to work directly with community-based organizations, both formal and informal. OTI needs to continue refining its skills sets to address transition issues but in concert with overall Agency strategy and the Country Strategic Plan where OTI has a program.

2. As OTI is the Agency’s special unit for addressing transition issues, the recruitment and retention of staff become increasingly important and a stronger emphasis should be given to hiring more staff on a permanent basis rather than just as PSCs and/or consultants.

## **Rationale**

The development of skills sets designed to confront transition issues will require staff that obviously possess these skills. Since virtually all OTI staff now work as PSCs, there is no assurance that once skills are learned that staff will not move on to other positions as opportunities arise. A

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<sup>c</sup> While OTI Macedonia objectives were not fully incorporated into the USAID/Macedonia mission, OTI Macedonia did have a strategic plan with goals, objectives and activities clearly identified. The OTI Macedonia program was designed and implemented in order to complement and supplement the program of the Mission.

cadre of key staff with managerial and field skills in transition management would ensure that skilled personnel are available on short notice. Depending on short-term staff, whether PSCs or consultants, may be cost-effective but not necessarily conducive to building an effective program over time.

3. More attention should be given to ensuring that, in every OTI program, a conceptual design is in place that includes a performance management plan for achieving goals and objectives. OTI/Washington should ensure that PMPs are developed early on in the program life of each and every field office.

### **Rationale**

It is increasingly important that in each and every case where OTI intervenes that a clear conceptual strategy is developed to identify the goals and objectives of the intervention. It is not enough to simply show up and distribute small grants, but rather each and every OTI intervention requires a program concept design that can evolve into an operational PMP for guiding the intervention and assessing its implementation over time. Moreover, given the brevity of most OTI interventions, the respective country PMP needs to be completed no later than the third month of the program so that it can function as a working management plan.

4. Monitoring and evaluation activities should be implemented as soon as possible in OTI field programs that emphasize quantitative data collection procedures as well as qualitative data collection.

### **Rationale**

Providing small grants to communities can play a critical role in addressing possible areas of conflict, getting different community groups to cooperate and work together, and in general plays a role in improving community life. However, documenting the results of OTI programs requires that attention be paid not only to collecting anecdotes about intervention activities, but also collecting numeric data for measuring the outcomes of OTI interventions.

5. The variables (data fields) of OTI's Worldwide Database should be thoroughly reviewed with respect to how rigorously each variable is defined and the logical consistency by which data are being entered into the database. Redundant and confusing data fields should be deleted making for a more friendly as well as productive data management system.

### **Rationale**

The evaluation team found that many of the data fields were confusing and data were being entered in some fields quite inconsistently. The OTI database is a valuable tool for tracking its programs individually and for comparing across programs. But if data fields are not clear to persons entering data, then data quality is in jeopardy. It might be useful to provide value labels for many of the fields so as to improve data consistency and reliability.

6. OTI/Washington should develop a field office management manual delineating the lines of authority to be followed in field offices – in particular, detailing the rules of the road in work-

ing with contractors under contract and with NGOs or International Organizations working under a Cooperative Agreement.<sup>D</sup>

### **Rationale**

The OTI/Macedonia relationship with its implementing partner was quite collegial in the management of the CBI program, but the exact role of the OTI/Macedonia office was somewhat unclear. Yes, the office did a good job acting as liaison with USAID/Macedonia, and the OTI Country Representative approved or disapproved grants. But the Cooperative Agreement language, other than calling for reports, did not define what kind of relationship should exist with the implementing partner. With the current rotation of staff in and out of OTI offices (either on TDY from Washington or PSCs assigned to an office), the development of a Field Office Management Manual would provide guidance for how to interact with contractors and implementing partners. Decision-making and management responsibilities require a structure from which authority is defined and assigned for discharging responsibilities.

7. OTI should be more thoughtful about appending program categories (e.g., media) whose objectives are incongruous with the overall conceptual design of a program.

### **Rationale**

While the media component of the CBI program was, in essence, a crosscutting set of activities to support community-based activities, the evaluation team found it extremely difficult to assess media projects in terms of outcomes. There was no way to attribute what role media projects played either in individual communities or in the country at large beyond relying on anecdotal and/or impressionistic data. Thus, for OTI programs that have media, conflict mitigation, tension reduction components, etc., these components should be integrated into the overall OTI intervention concept design with verifiable objectives capable of being assessed for determining actual outcomes/impacts.

8. More training should be provided to OTI staff in the area of organizational theory, community development, and socio-economic change so that staff has a better understanding on how to identify performance indicators and measure the results of their programs.

### **Rationale**

Considerable variation was apparent in the skills and backgrounds of the CBI program staff as they devised and implemented community intervention programs. Perhaps, assessing the program effectiveness of CBI intervention strategies went beyond the skills of the staff. However, since monitoring and evaluating program outcomes and results is an Agency-wide goal, staff training in certain topical areas (i.e., organizational theory, community development, and socio-economic change) could have assisted OTI staff in the assessment of the CBI program results. Certainly, this training would also be useful to future staff for assessing other OTI intervention programs.

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<sup>D</sup> OTI questions this recommendation. An OTI Field Office Manual does exist. Moreover, legal agreements with implementing partners specify lines of authorities. That said, OTI is currently exploring ways to improve communications between sub-offices in the field and the OTI country program office.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### COUNTRY SETTING

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked state in the heart of the Balkans.<sup>2</sup> It is bounded by Greece to the south, Albania to the west, Serbia to the north and Bulgaria to the east. The country is mountainous with numerous fertile valleys that support the production of crops (e.g., wheat, corn, oats) as well as fruit orchards and vineyards. The climate in the mountainous north is moderately continental and in the south the climate is Mediterranean. The largest lakes in Europe are located in the southern part of Macedonia and are noted for early Paleolithic settlements. Indeed, over many centuries, the country has functioned as a crossroads between the East and the West – it was the Macedonian and Greek armies of Alexander the Great (circa 300 BC) that introduced Western Civilization to Asia and almost 2000 years later Turkish armies returned the favor as they marched on Vienna. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a turbulent period for the country; after World War I parts of the territory were given to Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. At the conclusion of World War II, Macedonia became a republic as part of Tito's greater Yugoslavia.

2.1 Map of the Republic of Macedonia



Ethnically, the nation is comprised of predominantly Macedonians (67 percent), Albanians (23 percent), Turks (4 percent), Roma (2 percent), Serb (2 percent), and other nationalities (2 percent). The official national language is Macedonian – however, in those communities where at

least 20 percent of the population speaks another language (e.g., Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Serbian, Vlach), they have become de facto official languages.<sup>3</sup> Religious affiliation closely follows ethnic affiliation: 67 percent of the population are Macedonian Orthodox, 30 percent are Muslims, with the remaining 3 percent cited in the census as other.<sup>4</sup>

**Republic of Macedonia**  
**Demographics**

Size: 9,779 sq. mi. (25,333 sq. km)  
Population: 1.98 million (1998),  
2.054 mil. (Nov 2001)  
Age Cohorts: 0-14 yrs: 22.4%  
15-64 yrs: 67.2%  
over 65 yrs: 10.43%  
Sex Ratio: 1:1 males to females  
Annual Growth Rate: 0.41%  
Annual Death Rate: 7.74/1000  
Net Migration: 1.49 migrants/1000  
Infant Mortality: 12.5/1000  
Under 5 yr mortality: 143/1000  
Life Expectancy: 74.3 years  
Males: 72.01; Females: 76.7  
Fertility: 1.77 children/female  
Source: World Fact book 2002

The country has a relatively small population (see inset) occupying a region slightly larger than the state of Vermont. The capital of Macedonia, Skopje, is located in the north central part of the country. It has an estimated 600,000 inhabitants or over a quarter of the national population. While the national growth rate is low, there is also a small, but discernible, out-migration of young people—especially trained professionals—leaving for other parts of Europe, the United States and other developed nations calling for special skills.

Since its declared independence from Yugoslavia, the country has experienced considerable economic upheavals and decline. This region was the least developed part of the Federation and highly dependent upon trade with other regions of Yugoslavia. Given ten years of incessant violence in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo, agricultural trade was greatly reduced. Additionally, overall goods produced within the country decreased as Macedonia struggled to move from a managed economy to that of a free market economy. In fact, the government estimated official unemployment in 2002 to be 35 percent with 25 percent of the national population living below the poverty line.<sup>5</sup>

## **INTERVENTION BACKGROUND**

In March 2001, armed conflict erupted in northern Macedonia forcing more than 100,000 persons to flee their home. Subsequently, the United States Ambassador declared a civil-political crisis. In turn, the State Department provided \$2 million in additional SEED funding to the USAID Macedonia Mission to help respond to the conflict. In response to this conflict, various offices within the U.S. government requested that USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives intervene in the country to help minimize further conflict and support the country's democratic transition. In March/April 2001, OTI and the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) conducted a joint assessment mission.<sup>6</sup> OTI subsequently provided technical assistance and \$800,000 in Transitional Initiative (TI) funds from May through August 2001 to help the USAID mission program additional SEED funds through an existing program; the Community Self-Help Initiative.<sup>7</sup>

Fearful of another war in the Balkans, the European Union (EU) and U.S. brokered a Framework Agreement between the Macedonia government and ethnic-Albanian insurgents in August of 2001. Each party agreed to end the fighting and work out an arrangement to share political power in a movement toward democratization and decentralized authority. USAID/Washington, the National Security Council, the State Department as well as USAID/Macedonia were also aware that

the situation in part of the country was still quite tenuous and in need of some type of well-crafted intervention to assist in re-establishing harmony in communities affected by ethnic conflict.

Indeed, there was genuine concern in the international community that for the Framework Agreement to work, it was imperative to improve the Macedonian public's perception of the Framework Agreement as well as improve ethnic relations in communities where the potential for conflict was the strongest. As one observer put it, "The confidence of the population in the future of the country had to undergo a transformation if the opportunities for peace were to be achieved." In Washington, the State Department and the National Security Council expressed the view that OTI should become more directly involved (as in Kosovo and East Timor); however, the U.S. Embassy/Macedonia was reluctant to see the emergence of a new program with a strong field presence – and the USAID/Macedonia Mission felt that their CSHI program was already sufficient for carrying out community activities.<sup>8</sup>

By late August 2001, to further support the political settlement, the U.S. government determined that Macedonia merited a more robust response. As part of that response, OTI agreed to invest significant TI funds and establish a new and separate contracting mechanism in order to quickly disburse those funds. The new program would be focused on community-level confidence building measures, small infrastructure projects and media campaigns, and would provide a flexible response that would address critical needs arising out of the implementation of the Agreement.<sup>9</sup>

To expeditiously develop this new program, OTI drew on its prior experience with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kosovo. The OTI/IOM program known as the Kosovo Transition Initiative (KTI) was a community-oriented initiative. Given IOM's experience with KTI, OTI management felt IOM could quickly implement a similar program initiative in selected regions of Macedonia. Anticipating that a new community program would be approved for Macedonia, IOM submitted an unsolicited proposal to OTI. The proposal was approved resulting in a one-year Cooperative Agreement that was signed with IOM on September 5, 2001.<sup>10</sup> By the end of September, with oversight provided by a local OTI office, IOM began assigning staff to work on the project. By October 10<sup>th</sup>, the first IOM staff began logistical operations in Skopje for launching what became known as the Confidence Building Initiative (CBI) program.<sup>11</sup>

Operationally, the Mission continued its support for CSHI as part of its overall strategic framework to develop "more legitimate democratic institutions." OTI's program, from the start, was designed as a short-term effort "to mitigate political and ethnic tensions during the implementation of the Framework Agreement by supporting rapid implementation of community identified projects as well as other confidence building efforts (e.g., media projects) therein allowing time for political reforms to be enacted."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the CSHI program was designed as a nationwide effort, while OTI's CBI efforts were to be targeted to the most troubled areas of the country and where ethnic conflict had occurred.

More importantly, the promotion of interethnic collaboration and community engagement was a key criterion for the CBI program. To assist in managing the CBI program, OTI/Washington established a separate office in Skopje to work with the IOM/CBI program manager and program officers in getting the CBI program up and running in Macedonia. Based on the Cooperative

Agreement (p-12), IOM had committed to “establish, staff, and operate five sub-offices within one month of start up.” OTI/Macedonia, in close collaboration with the USAID Macedonia Mission and the U.S. Embassy in Macedonia, identified and oversaw the establishment of five field offices in the main cities located in regions either where ethnic conflict had taken place or the potential for conflict was deemed high as well as in municipalities that had sizable populations of Macedonia’s respective ethnic groups.<sup>13</sup> Community assistance activities were carried out in these regions from October 2001 through September 2003, although several media projects covering the entire country were managed from the IOM office in Skopje.

Officially, OTI’s Cooperative Agreement with IOM was in effect from October 2001 and concluded on September 30, 2003. OTI, consistent with USAID’s policy of evaluating all of its programs in terms of the results achieved over the Life of the Program (LOP), authorized a final evaluation of the Macedonian Confidence Building Initiative to be carried out during the last quarter of the program.

### **III. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the final evaluation was to provide OTI and USAID with an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and probable sustainability of CBI activities.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the evaluation sought to provide OTI/Washington with an example of quantitative methodology for collecting impact data.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The Evaluation Scope of Work (See Annex 1) identified five fundamental questions to be answered by the evaluation. As stated, these are:

1. To what extent did CBI meet its stated goal and objectives?
2. Did OTI’s approach fill an important gap? Did it complement the efforts of other USAID offices and international organizations working to promote peace and support the democratic transition in Macedonia?
3. How did the management and operation of the CBI program contribute to or detract from achievement of the program goal and objectives?
4. What programmatic and management lessons can be learned from the CBI program that can provide useful guidance to other OTI programs in like environments?
5. Based on the evaluation findings, what are at least five recommendations for ways OTI can improve its programs?

#### **EVALUATION METHODS**

The evaluation scope of work called for developing an evaluation strategy that would include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. Relevant documents were reviewed for understanding the development and dynamics of the CBI program, individual interviews and Focus groups were conducted to capture a qualitative sense of the CBI/OTI experi-

ence, and a formal survey was administered to a sample of CBI participants to more rigorously collect data that could be analyzed quantitatively.

As detailed in the Evaluation Work Plan (see Annex 2) developed for OTI/Washington, the evaluation would consist of six operational tasks:

1. Conducting a thorough review of OTI documents on the Macedonia CBI.
2. Developing site visit questionnaires consistent with answering the five broad evaluation questions.
3. Conducting site visits to five regions in Macedonia where OTI and IOM carried out CBI activities.
4. Processing and analyzing collected data on Macedonia CBI operations.
5. Submitting a draft evaluation report to the Evaluation CTO.
6. Preparing the final report for USAID/DCHA/OTI responding to review comments provided by the OTI CTO.

Task 1: Document Review: OTI provided the evaluation team with a complete backlog of documents on the Macedonia program. The team reviewed most of these documents prior to departing for Macedonia, along with conducting interviews with individuals who had been directly involved in establishing the OTI/Macedonia CBI program. The team also consulted the OTI database on the CBI program along with additional documents in the field that were provided by OTI and IOM office managers.

Task 2: Develop Evaluation Questionnaires: It was originally envisioned that field protocols could be developed prior to departing for Macedonia; however, only focus group protocols were developed for capturing general information across CBI offices and among local project participants. A formal survey instrument was developed and pre-tested in the field after conducting numerous interviews from which a clearer picture of CBI issues were more fully understood by the evaluation team. The English version of this instrument is presented in Annex 5B although for administration, the instrument was translated into both Macedonian and Albanian. Both versions were pre-tested with representatives of each ethnic group.

Task 3: Site Visits to all Field Offices: Over the course of a little more than three weeks, evaluation team members carried out interviews with IOM managers and staff in each field office and at IOM Headquarters. OTI managers were interviewed at their office along with USAID and NGO managers involved in community development and democracy building programs. During the site visits, logistical arrangements were put into place for carrying out a field survey of CBI project participants.

Task 4: Process and Analyze Collected Data: As the evaluation team conducted its work, the team processed information to ascertain whether data gaps existed with respect to the evaluation questions. At the end of week two, the team provided OTI and IOM staff with a brief summation of their initial findings. Once the field survey was completed, the data were sent to the evaluation team leader who analyzed these data using a SPSS/Windows statistical program. Subsequently, all of the collected information (qualitative and quantitative data) was reviewed and integrated into the draft evaluation report.

Tasks 5-6: Reporting: Preparation of draft final report and final report to OTI/Washington.

### **TEAM COMPOSITION**

The evaluation team consisted of three individuals. There were two expatriate evaluation specialists, one of whom was a senior level evaluation specialist familiar with USAID evaluations and the second an evaluation specialist with experience in conflict mitigation projects. The third evaluation team member was an in-country national familiar with social science methods and sensitive to research modalities in Macedonia. The team also acquired the services of an interpreter fluent in both Macedonian and Albanian; this individual also had worked on other USAID programs.

### **EVALUATION SCHEDULE**

The activities of this evaluation were carried out over a four-month period from mid-June through mid-September 2003, although only three weeks were spent in the field. A complete itinerary detailing the evaluation team's activities is provided in Annex 7.

### **EVALUATION LIMITATIONS**

The Final Evaluation Report of OTI/Macedonia's CBI program draws on data (e.g., financial information, CBI projects funded and completed, project types, etc.) provided by OTI/Washington, OTI/Macedonia and IOM/Skopje through July 2003. With respect to the OTI/Macedonia CBI database, the team was forced to rely on information through June 2003 since the team had all but completed its fieldwork by the time the July version of the database was released after the team departed Macedonia.

### **REPORT ORGANIZATION**

The evaluation team focused on identifying major successes, constraints, lessons learned and unanticipated effects encountered by OTI and IOM in implementing and managing the CBI program. Accordingly, the Final Evaluation Report that follows this section is organized in terms of presenting: A) how the program was implemented; B) what were the program outcomes; and C) how well the program was managed. For example, Chapter IV covers the evaluation findings by addressing the following issues:

Program Implementation – Strategic approach used to implement CBI; CBI program activities through July 2003; and other community programs similar to CBI.

Program Outcomes – Focus Group summaries from field staff and project participants; survey data collected from project beneficiaries; and probable sustainability and legacy of the CBI program.

Program Management – Operations and planning procedures; information technology and logistics; financial management; and program supervision.

Chapter V presents the evaluation conclusions in answer to the key questions presented in the SOW, and recommendations for improving existing and future OTI programs.

## **IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

From the beginning, IOM/Skopje and OTI/Macedonia set a very high bar of performance for the CBI program and its staff. Over the two-year LOP<sup>15</sup>, OTI and IOM held ongoing and recurrent discussions over issues such as the number of grants approved and completed versus the quality of the grants approved and completed. A question asked was: Was it more important to fund projects that resulted in a valued product within the community or was it more important that processes be engendered that would be sustained in communities addressing their local problems? According to the USAID/OTI Cooperative Agreement with IOM, the stated goal of the proposed Conflict Mitigation Initiative (CMI) program (later renamed the Confidence Building Initiative or CBI) was:

. . . to mitigate conflict and promote stability by maintaining and bolstering community cohesion, encouraging and validating formal and informal moderate leadership at the local level, and strengthening citizens' relationships with their elected officials. To achieve these objectives, CMI will build and implement a targeted and flexible community based mechanism that strengthens cooperative working relationships among and within different communities and validates community building efforts through a portfolio of assistance, largely in the form of conflict mitigation grants that are quick-to-ground, community-driven, and achieve maximum short-term impact. Within one month of program start up, CMI will establish staff and operate five sub offices across Macedonia, and within the first year CMI will fund and implement 250 Conflict Mitigation Grants.<sup>16</sup>

Drawing largely from its experiences in Kosovo, the OTI/IOM program objectives originally were to:<sup>17</sup>

- Maintain and bolster community cohesion;
- Encourage and validate formal and informal moderate leadership at the local level; and
- Strengthen citizens' relationships with their local officials.

By the end of November 2001, IOM had renamed CMI to CBI for three reasons. First, in the State Department's (classified) matrix describing what each government agency was doing to support the US-brokered (and, at the time, extremely unpopular) political settlement, the box for "confidence building" remained blank in August 2001. Both the U.S State Department and the NSC wanted OTI to fill it. Changing the name of the program was partly in response to this. Second, the original name of the program (Conflict Mitigation Initiative) played poorly with Macedonians (as did anything with the name "conflict" in it in the immediate aftermath of the conflict). Third, the two OTI staff sent to launch the program in October 2001 found that Macedonians liked the multiple meanings of the word "confidence." OTI liked the multiple levels on which they could explain the name of the program because, at the time, everyone they came in

contact with could agree on the need to build confidence on multiple levels: between Macedonia and the international community/USG; between diverse groups of people/different ethnic groups; and, between communities and their local government officials. OTI/Washington decided to change the name at the end of October 2001, but given the full workload in the Office of Procurement, chose not to officially modify the Cooperative Agreement to reflect the name change until the Agreement was modified to continue for a second year.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the program objectives were later revised to be more consistent with an earlier assessment carried out by OTI consultants.<sup>19</sup> The revised objectives were:

1. Supporting positive, community-based interaction among diverse groups of people.
2. Promoting citizen participation in community decision-making.
3. Fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability in the relationship between citizens and local government.
4. Increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of view.

These objectives, as restated, were much more consistent with the needs of communities in Macedonia – especially given the more diverse ethnic composition of the country, the need to involve local citizens in community activities, and to ensure accurate information was being shared with the many and varied publics throughout the country<sup>20</sup>. Five field offices were established in areas that had either experienced ethnic and/or political conflict or where the possibility of conflict was considered high by international observers and/or local authorities. A Media Office was also established inside IOM’s main office in Skopje.

OTI and IOM/CBI managers correctly recognized that the Macedonian program, in contrast to Kosovo, would involve more than conflict mitigation efforts. Indeed, the macro goal of CBI was to get individuals to work together again for solving problems of common interest to all members of a single community and to promote the dissemination of information of interest to the nation at large through various media (e.g., TV, radio, newspapers, etc.). The revised CBI program objectives captured these issues very nicely. Curiously, when IOM/Skopje decided to adopt the term “confidence/confidence building,” apparently only a limited discussion with their team ensued over the definitional use of this term.<sup>21</sup> During the course of the site visits, the evaluation team found considerable inconsistency in the way field personnel used the term and how different communities viewed the use of “confidence” and/or “confidence building.” However, overall, program staff said they had little or no difficulty in applying the new objectives of confidence building in identifying potential grantees in their respective regions.

### **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

The following table reflects the CBI program status through July 11, 2003 for Fiscal Years (FY) 2002 and 2003:

#### **4.1 CBI Funds Distribution**

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Available Program Funds and percent</b>	<b>Approved and Completed Grants</b>	<b>Balance Remaining for New Grants</b>
CBI Fund	\$11,816,067.05 (74.4%)	\$11,699,204.77	\$ 116,862.23
Operations/Admin	\$ 4,059,957.00 (25.6%)	\$ 3,289,598.00	\$1,224,544.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$15,876,024.05</b>	<b>\$14,988,802.77</b>	<b>\$1,341,406.23</b>

Source: IOM: CBI Program Funds Control Sheet, July 11, 2003.

Remaining funds were to be allocated to close out any remaining grants by the end of July 2003; any shortfalls would be forthcoming from the Ops/Admin funds.<sup>22</sup> Overall, OTI funds for Macedonia totaled almost \$18 million (FY 2001 \$918,000 OTI expenditures for CSHI; FY 2002 \$10.4 million; and FY 2003 \$6.6 million). Not listed in Item 4.1 are the OTI/Macedonia operational funds to run the office in Skopje and OTI/W costs. The OTI/Macedonia Country Representative estimated that the amount for the local office operation was approximately \$400,000 annually.

### **STRATEGIC APPROACH**

Strategy typically refers to an “action plan” for carrying out or achieving a particular goal. In the case of the OTI/IOM CBI program, the evaluators detected no overt or consistent strategy by which field offices implemented the CBI program.<sup>E</sup> From the start, the CBI program was structured as a combination of regional community focused projects, each managed by an expatriate CBI office program officer (PO). Program officers were directed to initiate grant activities consistent with CBI objectives that moved monies rapidly and efficiently to local community grantees. This was colloquially referred to as “the burn rate.” The emphasis was on production in terms of the number of grants submitted to the IOM/Skopje office for approval and subsequently approved by the OTI/Macedonia Country Representative.

What this meant practically was that each field office and the Media Office in Skopje were expected to move approximately \$1,000,000 a year in order to “burn” half of the grant funds. Accordingly, to meet a target of “funding and implementing” (not completing) 250 grants in the first year would require funding approximately 40-42 grants with an average grant award of \$24,000 – essentially four grants a month with an estimated funding level of \$100,000.

The other strategy – really an approach – suggested by OTI/Washington Personal Service Contractors (PSCs) was to move monies quickly to communities where needs could be immediately identified.<sup>23</sup> This was often referred to as “the low-hanging fruit strategy,” which could create a preponderance of activity, therein buying time and avoiding local conflict. According to OTI Field Report #12 (October 2002):

CBI’s aim during its first year was to quickly implement a wide range of grants to gain credibility and trust within communities. Program staff worked to understand the dynamics within each community in order to target assistance to sources of conflict. The program strategy emphasized broad geographic coverage, while also deepening relationships with established contacts.<sup>F</sup>

To be sure, there was tension among the POs and IOM management between the goal of rapidly approving projects while concurrently taking the time necessary to properly sensitize diverse community groups. From the start of CBI, POs were encouraged to implement what was called the CBI Process (see inset). Numerous meetings were often

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<sup>E</sup> OTI’s strategic approach often gives considerable latitude to each country program and to its sub-offices (referred to as field offices by the evaluators) to adapt its activities to the needs and conditions of its own operating environment. This flexibility is key to OTI’s de-centralized model and OTI believes that consistency among the sub-offices is not always in the best interests of the overall country program.

<sup>F</sup> OTI wishes to point out that this statement is the basis of its initial strategy in Macedonia.

required before groups could come to agreement on community problems and possible solutions to them.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the demand to devise social interaction procedures not traditional to rural Macedonia (i.e., public meetings for discussing local issues, community decision-making, and petitioning local government officials), combined with the pressure of high burn rates, the POs performed remarkably well in the first year of CBI. Of course, there was considerable variation among the different field offices as displayed in Item 4.2.

#### 4.2 Grants Approved by Field Office (Oct 2001 – Oct 2002)

Field Office	Number of Grants Approved	Average Number of CBU Grant Members	Average Number of CBU Grant Meetings	Grants Approved (U.S. \$)
Bitola	58	25.6	6.1	1,388,657.00
Kicevo	33	22.0	4.6	708,196.00
Kocani	56	12.5	8.1	1,498,843.00
Skopje	20	12.5	7.3	571,889.00
Tetovo	81	11.4	3.9	1,268,271.00
Media	53	11.6	2.9	1,040,322.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>6,476,178.00</b>

Source: OTI/IOM CBI Database June 2003;<sup>25</sup> CBU refers to diverse civil society organizations (called Confidence Building Units or CBUs)<sup>26</sup> in communities receiving grants; outlier figures were dropped in the Category “average number of CBU grant members” derived from the CBI June Database. See also OTI Field Report #12, Oct 2002.

The actual number of grants completed by the end of October 2002 was 197, with the completed 250 target reached in February 2003. While 13 grants were received and approved before December 31, 2001, only two grantees started their projects in 2001. Most field offices didn’t really begin funding and implementing grants in earnest until February 2002. In short, it took three months for the offices to be fully operational and sufficiently knowledgeable about local community conditions. Nonetheless, POs and CBI managers did a remarkable job in identifying and approving 301 projects in basically nine months – not to mention obligating \$6.47 million dollars.<sup>27</sup>

#### CONFIDENCE BUILDING INITIATIVE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

By engaging and subsequently processing identifiable community groups, the CBI staff worked hard to have these groups or Confidence Building Units (CBUs) arrive at consensus about problems in their community and what possible solutions could be agreed upon to solve, or at the very least, address the problem. Of course, the CBI process was designed and intended to provide small grants to community groups. These grants, reflecting the program’s objectives, consisted of:

- Community Initiative Grants: CBI focused on assisting informal groups of citizens in recognizing their community’s shared priorities and finding constructive ways to address them. Once recognized, it was left to the community group to come up with solutions—such as rehabilitating schools or community centers—where citizens could continue participatory deci-

sion-making at the local level. The CBI process involves approaching communities and/or being receptive to community groups' initiatives to undertake a project. The following conditions are stipulated: diversity of group; citizen participation/dialogue in identification of needs and making decisions; working with local government to obtain necessary permits; public tendering of bids for contract; community contribution of labor or materials; and transparency of budget and decision-making process. These conditions must be met before a grant is awarded and work on the project begins.

- Civil Society and Local Governance Grants (i.e., transparency and accountability): Grants were made by CBI staff to facilitate a closer working relationship between local elected leaders and community citizens (usually through informal associations) in order to address issues of common concern. CBI also supported formal civil society groups, such as local associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote and improve citizen access to local government institutions;
- Media Grants: The CBI Media Office supported a wide range of media activities including print and electronic news media, film, music, cultural performances and other artistic means of communication and expression. Media grants were intended to serve as crosscutting grants for providing balanced information to a wide audience therein reducing misinformation and reducing tension among different ethnic groups;
- Other CBI Grants: The program retained the option of flexibility to support activities that were deemed by POs capable of reducing tension in neighborhoods, communities, or among groups in various types of settings.

Broadly speaking, grants were divided between infrastructure and social efforts. In fact, some CBI staff made the distinction in terms of "*places and spaces*" saying this approach was developed in recognition that ethnic and political polarization in many areas could be attributed to two different dimensions of separation: the lack of physical public places where people could get together and the lack of "mental" or "ideological" space where people could focus on commonalities rather than differences.<sup>28</sup> The two divisions were addressed, often simultaneously, by working with communities on projects to create shared public spaces (community centers, parks, schools, etc.) and getting all factions and sides to work together toward the common goal thus opening up the possibility for a shared and safe ideological social space.<sup>29</sup> However, this was apparently a very confusing concept with several staff often referring to *places and faces*—not *places and spaces*. The evaluation team chose to avoid this definitional quagmire and simply viewed grant activities as social in nature or as infrastructure projects.

Moreover, in the OTI database, the assignment of grant activities is also complicated. For example, there is a Program Focus and all grants are listed as "Democratic Processes." Next is "Program Category" which corresponds to the grant activity types cited above—that is, civil society/organization support, transparency/ good governance, and community impact. Each grant is also assigned up to three program themes; although these data fields appeared to be completed inconsistently. Of course, POs had the option of assigning new themes to fit the type of situation

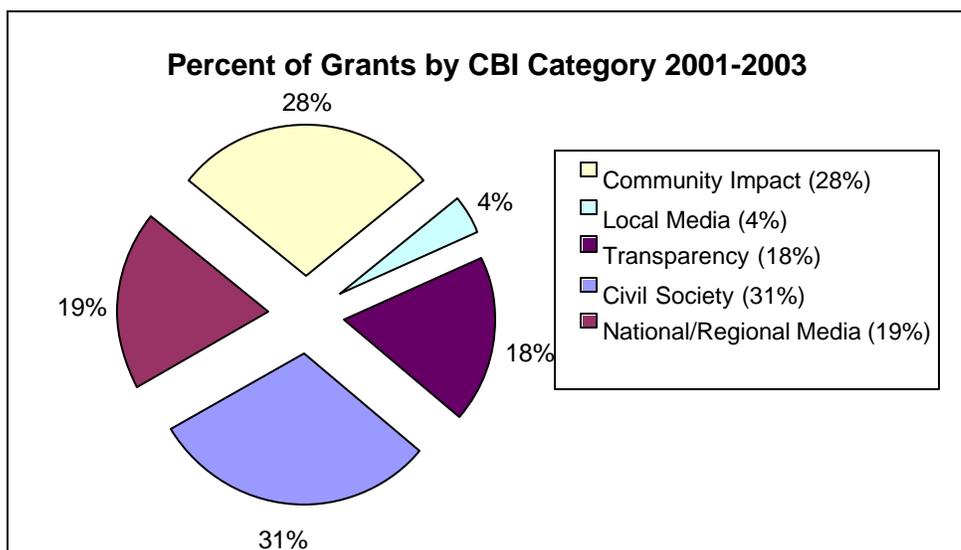
being funded by a grant. The activity assignment system was flexible, but all too often inconsistent across field offices and even within the same field office.<sup>G</sup>

Grant Category	No.
Civil Society	156
Transparency	98
Community Impact	145
Local Media	22
National/Region Media	91

Grants were also assigned a sector—in the case of a program designated as community impact (i.e., infrastructure), the labels were descriptive of the funded activity (e.g., electricity, schools, water/sanitation, transportation) to be carried out whereas non-community impact grants were simply designated as non-applicable social impact grants.

Items 4.3 and 4.4, respectively, show the types of approved grants funded by category through July 2003. With respect to the types of grants funded at the local-community level (including Skopje) but exclusive of national/regional grants, infrastructure grants (34 percent) were funded at about the same rate as civil society grants (37 percent).

#### 4.4 Percent of Grants by Category



Source: OTI/IOM CBI Database, June-July 2003; n=512

As noted earlier, POs had considerable flexibility in deciding which community groups to support through the CBI process and grant development process, so long as resources were being moved into the community. Item 4.5 verifies this point and demonstrates the variation by grant category in the CBI field offices.

<sup>G</sup> The OTI Grants Tracking Database, which was completely rewritten in 2003, is often adjusted to meet the needs of each country program. In the case of OTI/Macedonia, an older version was used. OTI acknowledges the need for more training of local staff to both configure the database to meet each country's specific program needs and to select the most appropriate descriptors. This training is now required for each new program startup.

#### 4.5 Grants Submitted by Category in Each CBI Field Office\*

CBI Field Office	Civil Society	Transparency	Community Impact	Media
Bitola	41	27	30	0
Kicevo	26	10	24	3
Kocani	18	24	42	1
Skopje	20	12	19	1
Tetovo	50	25	30	17

Source: OTI/IOM CBI Database June-July 2003. \* The Media Office at IOM/Skopje had 92 grants one of which was listed as Civil Society.

Of course, each CBI grant represented a real activity serving the needs of a community, not just a data point. The CBI program worked hard at achieving community impact. For example, in Bitola, where ethnic conflict resulted in the destruction of much of the downtown area, CBI funds were instrumental in providing new streetlights as well as funds to rehabilitate ethnic-Albanian shops burned during the street violence. The grant proposal requesting funds for streetlights stated, "This local initiative is a strong example of CBI's contribution to restoring confidence in the wake of ethnic conflict." After nearly a year of community meetings between local officials, residents and CBI representatives, agreement was reached on supporting a restoration project for bringing diverse groups together between the city's many factions. In another case, CBI supported a grant application from a local PTA for purchasing materials to replace windows and install a heating system for a multiethnic student body. As their contribution to the project, more than 200 parents and teachers were involved in providing the skilled and unskilled labor required to complete the project (see OTI Hot Topics, Oct. 2002).

CBI also promoted many types of civil society projects. In Kicevo, the CBI office supported the Kicevo Children's Parliament that launched the "Multiculturalism in a Multicultural Society" project involving over 200 youths. The same office also supported local media efforts to report on interethnic collaboration in community schools and encouraged public figures to speak out against the ethnic segregation of schools in Macedonia. Similarly, in Kocani, CBI sponsored a "Democratic Leadership Camp" for preparing young people for future leadership roles in their communities.

Even in Tetovo, where residents experienced more conflict than most other areas of Macedonia, CBI was able to work with community leaders to provide funding to restore public buildings so that residents who had previously been forced to flee during the fighting would be encouraged to return. North of Tetovo, CBI helped to reconstruct a water supply system in a village that had been the center of conflict (see CBI Hot Topics: August 2002).

#### OTHER CONFIDENCE BUILDING PROGRAMS

The USAID Mission in Macedonia administered \$273 million in foreign assistance programs from 1992 to 2002. In the Mission's FY 2002 budget, assistance was increased from \$38.4 million to \$45 million. Future budget lines are scheduled to decrease, with the USAID Mission reporting that the overall objectives over the last two years have been met<sup>30</sup>. The Country Strategic Plan (CSP) includes four Strategic Objectives (SOs):

- Strategic Objective 1: Private sector development.
- Strategic Objective 2: More legitimate democratic institutions.
- Strategic Objective 3: Mitigation of the social consequences of economic transition.
- Strategic Objective 4: Special initiatives (support to census, budget support, organizational training).

OTI activities fit most closely with SO2, especially in the area of improving civil society and achieving greater transparency and accountability in local government.

SO2 has four Intermediate Results that are currently being carried out by contractors or non-profit organizations:

- Intermediate Result 1: calls for "increased citizen's participation in political and social decision-making." Two community programs, in many ways similar to CBI, are being funded by USAID. First, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) has been supporting "The Democracy Network." The goal is to enhance democracy by strengthening NGOs through technical assistance, training, and financial assistance. Active since March 1995, the program will end in 2004. Second, under this Intermediate Result, the CSHI—originally started by OTI – continues to be implemented by the Louis Berger Group. Its goal was and continues to be "fostering self-determination at the community level" and is scheduled by the USAID Mission to end in 2004, contingent upon an assessment of the entire civil society sector that was underway while the OTI evaluation team was in Macedonia.
- Intermediate Result 2: calls for the "adherence to the rule of law enhanced" and concentrates on the legal framework; supporting the transition to a democratic system under the rule of law through judicial education, continuing legal education, institution building of judges and bar associations, court administration, and related legal reforms.
- Intermediate Result 3: is the promotion of "more effective, responsive and accountable local government." Its overall goal is to decentralize local government competencies and fiscal authorities, build public participation in local government, develop capacity at the local level, and strengthen municipal associations to serve as a mechanism for a better national policy and more effective local government.
- Intermediate Result 4: seeks to "increase confidence in democratic institutions and political processes" by promoting the integrity of the electoral process for the 2002 parliamentary elections and supporting a domestic NGO coalition to conduct domestic election monitoring and to work with political parties on election related issues.

USAID's SO2 efforts are primarily oriented to accomplishing structural and institutional changes within Macedonian society.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, OTI's CBI activities were targeted to carrying out changes in the local community – although the Media Office efforts were more macro in their focus – complementing the efforts of the USAID/Macedonia to conduct a national census, a fair election, and implement the conditions of the Framework Agreement.

### **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

In September 2002, the USAID Mission and the U.S. Embassy decided that the CBI program should be extended for another year.<sup>32</sup> This was based on the evidence of good progress on the

previous year's objectives and the need to support certain sensitive stages in the implementation of the Framework Agreement: the census, the decentralization process, and the elections. By February 2003, given the progress of the CBI program, OTI/Washington decided to end its Macedonia program at the end of the second year of operation.<sup>33</sup> This was based partially on OTI policy considerations; OTI country programs are typically short-term endeavors and in the ideal situation, disengagement takes place with programs "handed off" to become integrated into development programs operated by local USAID Missions or other donors. In the case of Macedonia, most of the changes to be implemented as part of the Framework Agreement were well under way (with the notable exception of national elections, which were delayed), and the "transition" inherent in the TI funding authorized by Congress was over. A February 2003 assessment also concluded that Macedonia was no longer vulnerable to a major outbreak of conflict and that OTI's mandate would be fulfilled by September 2003.<sup>34</sup>

### **FINAL GRANT PRODUCTION OUTCOMES**

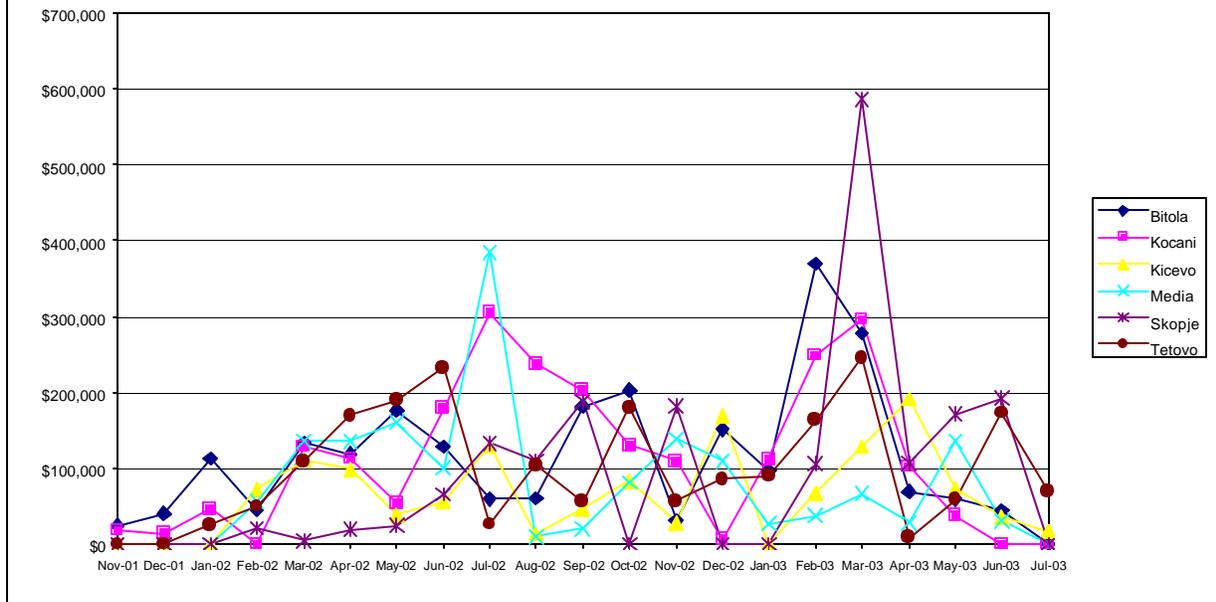
The last grant monies were being committed by the end of July 2003, with all funded activities due to be completed no later than mid-August (see Item 4.6). However, IOM/Skopje office staff said that the completion dates for some projects were delayed because of extended work schedules of local contractors. Nevertheless, some of the field offices continued working hard at developing more community grants or grants that would commit more monies to a particular community project. These efforts are displayed in Item 4.7; note in particular March 2003. By the end of July, field offices were reporting that they expected 90 percent of their projects would be finished. According to the data provided by IOM/Skopje, by the end of July 2003, the CBI program would achieve or exceed the same number of projects (250) as the official target in year one of the LOP.<sup>35</sup>

#### **4.6 Final Grant Commitments through July 2003**

<b>CBI Office</b>	<b>TOTAL GRANTS (FY 2002-2003)</b>	<b>Funds Committed (US\$)</b>
Bitola	87	2,379,034
Kicevo	64	1,353,811
Kocani	85	2,339,088
Skopje	57	1,904,511
Tetovo	127	2,019,720
Media	92	1,654,027
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>11,650,191*</b>

Source: OTI/IOM CBI Database June/July 2003 and IOM/CBI "Funds Committed Spreadsheet, July 2003."<sup>36</sup> \*Note: There are slight discrepancies in final figures between Item 4.1 and Item 4.6 due to the variance in time frame of a week or two.

### 4.7 CBI Funds Committed by Office



Source: IOM/CBI “Funds Committed Spreadsheet, July 2003”

Interestingly, the types of CBI grants funded shifted from the first year to funding more infrastructure activities in year two of the project. When POs were asked about this shift by the evaluators, there were mixed responses. Some acknowledged that they felt the need to move more monies in order to achieve a higher burn rate for their community before the CBI program ended. Other POs said they could not develop larger more costly projects until they had achieved a better understanding of local community processes and good rapport had been established with local leaders.

### 4.8 CBI “Places and Spaces” Grant Funding Over the LOP\*

Office	2002 (n=188)		2003 (n=226)	
	Places	Spaces	Places	Spaces
Bitola	20	26	38	14
Kicevo	13	11	25	14
Kocani	21	12	43	9
Skopje	8	11	23	5
Tetovo	15	51	39	16
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>77 (41%)</b>	<b>111 (59%)</b>	<b>168 (74%)</b>	<b>58 (26%)</b>

Source: OTI/IOM CBI Database and IOM/CBI “Funds Committed Spreadsheet, July 2003.”

\*Based on “project end” date; Media projects were virtually all social or “spaces” projects.

With approximately \$12 million spent in funding grants, the average grant was \$22,666, slightly under the original projection of \$24,000 per grant. The field offices with a higher number of grants had lower average grant amounts whereas Skopje with fewer grants had the largest average grant amount. The largest single grant (\$136,808) was for rehabilitating nine businesses in downtown Bitola that had been burned during the outbreak of violence in 2001. However, the Skopje CBI office awarded eight grants of varying size for one major project (the Saraj Sport and

Office	Av. Grant \$	Range \$ U.S.
Bitola	27,345	814 to 136,808
Kicevo	21,153	394 to 74,926
Kocani	27,519	917 to 74,997
Skopje	33,412	43 to 72,251
Tetovo	15,779	136 to 68,596
Media	17,785	473 to 63,277

Source: OTI/IOM Database; all figures rounded.

Recreation Center) totaling \$367,262, but this amount was likely to be reduced as program closeout approached. The Media Office is the exception since it had a fairly high number of grants but also a low average grant amount (see inset).

### MEDIA PROJECTS

The Media Office awarded 93 grants, over two years of operation, in support of all types of media (e.g., radio, television, print journalism, and non-traditional media) for disseminating balanced information on peace to multiple audiences. Unlike the field offices that stressed a “community process,” the Media Office tended to downplay the process in deference to emphasizing the message and means whereby a particular group or organization could deliver the message to target groups. In fact, the staff said, “The Media Office functioned more like a marketing research firm selling a product.”

<u>Awards by Media Type</u>	
Print =	12
TV/Radio =	2
TV =	18
Radio =	10
All media =	4
Other =	47

Source: Media Office Stats

Grants were made to a full cross-section of Macedonian media outlets. These efforts early on produced educational brochures on the Framework Agreement (see “Ohrid and Beyond”), and developed and distributed a song along with documentaries on village life in rural Macedonia. In point of fact, most of the materials developed with CBI funds targeted both rural and urban audiences. Media staff stated they concentrated on funding projects that would address and hopefully mitigate what they referred to as “conflict triggers.”

One critical trigger was the attitudes of young people of different ethnic backgrounds resulting in a grant to Radio Life, which uses contemporary rock music mixed with Albanian and Macedonian-language radio programming, to generate trust across the ethnic divide. Several grants were made to assist in the distribution of newspapers in the northern and more remote parts of the country to ensure that rural people had greater access to information. Grants were also made to radio and TV stations to develop Public Service Announcements (PSA) about parliamentary election activities and the Framework Agreement.<sup>37</sup> In addition to print and electronic media, CBI funds were provided to support local festivals, concerts, and dances where members of different groups could mix and feel at ease with each other. Indeed, grant funds also supported the development of comedic skits that used humor to discuss perceptions about ethnic differences with the aim of reducing tension among groups.

Despite some obvious successes, some CBI staff cited the media program as one of the weaknesses of the overall program. The media mandate was unclear and too broad. Media Office staff members were expected to serve the needs of their colleagues in local programs while at the same time devising PSAs for national issues (e.g., the census, parliamentary elections, etc.) and often those expectations were in conflict. There were, as noted above, notable exceptions such as

independent media in Kocani and national efforts to support the census, as well as support for national journalism based out of Skopje. However, the media program was incongruous to the local CBU approach striving to “transition” communities through difficult times. Indeed, it was difficult to create a true “local” constituency around a radio station. The “community process” which the CBI program emphasized as a strategy could not be easily implemented as part of the media program. The need to work through other institutions (The Macedonian Institute for the Media) created additional problems of implementation and financial accountability. Aside from anecdotal data, the evaluation team was not able to measure, in any reliable way, the outcomes of CBI media interventions.

### **VIEWS FROM THE FIELD**

Focus group discussions were held in each of the five field offices with CBI staff or selected CBUs (usually 2-3 per office). The evaluation team asked a set of common questions for generating perceptions about CBI activities and its outcomes (see Annex 5).

#### Question 1: What need was being addressed by the grant(s)?

Focus group respondents viewed the role of CBI quite differently. The first difference expressed by respondents relates to the regional differences in the country. In Kocani, needs were expressed in terms of the relations between communities and public service delivery (garbage collection, public buildings, etc.), whereas in Kicevo needs were expressed in interethnic terms, and in Bitola the prevention of unwanted political violence. In Skopje, the focus was on encouraging cooperative behavior in marginalized communities or having an impact on larger groups.

CBI staff stated that their efforts, in essence, concentrated on “buying time”—although each group tended to have adopted their own descriptor for their individual effort (i.e., “creating” an enabling environment, opportunities for cooperative relationships, a preponderance of activity, a different dynamic, etc.). Staff also talked about “provoking counter-events” that is, the need to draw the attention of local communities and demonstrate that conflict is not inevitable. For example, it was important to develop a politically neutral newspaper in Kocani, or to support a multiethnic school in Bitola. All of the offices struggled with whether to concentrate on funding social versus infrastructure projects and of course, to meet “burn rate” requirements.

#### Question 2: How was the “community process” carried out for selecting a project?

The evaluation sought to capture the stages of the project cycle, namely the way by which the needs were identified, the intervention decided on, the community mobilized, the resources allocated, and the intervention outcome. Based on the comments of field staff, the evaluators found that the CBI staff used different strategies in how they carried out the community process in their respective regions. In some cases, CBI staff insisted on a high degree of gender balance in the CBU, or the attendance of community members required a fixed number (in one instance, a minimum of 100 persons was stated as the requirement). Other CBI staff simply stressed the inclusion of key members or groups of a community. Most CBI staff preferred to work with informal community groups although NGOs were not excluded per se. Lastly, some staff felt it was better to initiate “processing” in communities with small groups; letting “word of mouth” efforts expand membership over time.

Once initiated, the community process was fairly uniform: field staff would visit a community, present an overview of the CBI program usually to local officials and other interested groups, identify groups to work with on commonly recognized problems, requesting, receiving and screening requests from these groups, and then preparing a proposal for IOM/Skopje for approval, revision, or rejection. Once a grant was approved, funds would be committed and work on a given project could proceed contingent upon whatever contributions were to be forthcoming from the community.

All of the CBUs interviewed expressed satisfaction with the process for receiving grants from CBI. They indicated that the decision-making was impartial and responsive, that is, the decision to fund or not fund was made quickly, and funds were provided in short order. Interviews with CBU representatives revealed that most delays were the fault of local contractors and not due to CBI operational procedures.

Question 3: What aspects of the project worked particularly well?

The most important ingredient for the success of projects was the involvement of "the right people" in the CBUs. Participating individuals tended to be more open-minded and interested in project objectives beyond immediate results. A commitment to the school, a radio program, or a host of other causes supported by CBI was a better predictor of success than the technical feasibility of the project. CBU respondents felt the CBUs were very useful mechanisms for creating new flows of information and ensuring a level of commitment required for projects to be completed. In some instances, CBUs allowed tensions to emerge and be dealt with in open community settings where issues could be resolved. Also, CBUs became community forums for local citizens to learn how to participate in community decision-making—democracy via the "town meeting" model. CBI staff also felt that once "viable and effective relationships" had been established with some CBUs, awarding repetitive grants was an efficient mechanism for not only moving monies but also achieving reliable results.

Question 4: What aspects did not work particularly well?

CBI office staff cited the lack of sufficient personnel as the prime constraint to their overall performance in the CBI program. This was especially the situation cited due to the heavy (and frequently shifting) requirements for developing new grants, reporting on existing grant activities, and for general administrative work. These tasks, when combined with the intense community engagement process, led to workloads constantly exceeding 12 hours a day. This was cited as one of the causes of the turnover of local staff in CBI, in some cases leading to complete changes in the office over two years.

CBUs also lamented the difficulties of mobilizing local resources and volunteer help, noting the inability to pay for local labor led to projects rarely achieving a high level of institutionalization and predominantly remaining unsustainable. The evaluation has, however, come across cases where the need to recruit volunteers triggered a real change of attitudes (for example a Parent Teacher Association in Bitola, or a rock concert in Skopje) and generated a commitment which would not have been there had the workers been paid wages.

Question 5: What would be done differently if the project(s) was to be renewed?

CBI staff cited overly demanding scheduling for the limited impact of some grants. More time was needed to engage a community, to understand the community and in turn for the program to be understood. Too often, CBI personnel felt that the CBU was simply going through the motions to obtain the money. Invariably, staff felt spending more time in a community would have been better, although there was no evidence to support whether this would have made a significant difference. There was, however, general agreement that more time was required to work in communities if attitudes were to be changed.

CBI staff all felt the CBI database was a positive management tool, but also expressed a need for greater rigor in determining beneficiary numbers, quantification of CBU contributions, and the difficulty of assigning themes to grants. Staff also felt more training would have been useful before being posted to the field offices. Indeed, to some staff, the links between infrastructure and social change were nebulous. In this instance, some academic instruction in social change theory might have been useful.

Beneficiaries, quite predictably, felt the CBI program should have been continued for a longer period of time than just two years. At the very least, it would have been useful to know more about other USAID and/or international programs/donors to continue the activities initiated by the CBUs. Beneficiaries also stated their confusion with all the acronyms associated working with IOM/CBI (OTI, USAID, CBI, etc.). Lastly, local staff expressed a concern that they were viewed (views expressed by at least one member) as a “second class status” by IOM/Skopje. For example, recruited as local consultants, they were considered technically unemployed under Macedonian law and subsequently could not participate in their social security system. As an international donor, IOM was exempt from the same hiring regulations that governed other national NGOs or contractors in Macedonia.

Question 6: Which aspects of the project are sustainable or leave a legacy?

When asked about “sustainability,” the majority of CBI staff felt this was a moot issue and not really applicable to the CBI program given its short duration. Most CBI staff discussed the results or outcomes of their various projects in terms of “legacy.” Pragmatically defined, staff talked about what meaningful values and/or practices would remain after the cessation of CBI activities. CBI program staff felt it was important to obtain reliable information from CBI participants and/or beneficiaries regarding their perception of the CBI program.

**BENEFICIARIES’ PERSPECTIVES : SURVEY RESULTS**

During the initial discussions with OTI on the design and scope of the evaluation, Washington staff made it clear to the evaluation team that there was a genuine need to obtain information on whether the Macedonian CBI program was having an impact on its participants. Prior OTI evaluations (i.e., the Macedonia mid-term evaluation and other country evaluation reports) have focused mainly on collecting data through interviews with local staff, implementing partners and with selected project participants, resulting in evaluations comprised of primarily qualitative data summaries. In consultation with OTI/Washington, the evaluation team proposed carrying out an

attitudinal survey of the CBI project participants to generate quantitative data on participants' views of CBI, its operational efficiency and effectiveness, and the perceived impact(s) of the program. These data would complement other information gathered from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. In fact, the information collected from the actual participants (i.e., beneficiaries) in the local CBUs would, in effect, serve to externally validate these other data.

Once the evaluation team had completed site visits to each of the CBI field offices, and conducted interviews with CBI and OTI managers and staff, the evaluation team began the development of a field survey instrument for gathering views from CBU participants.<sup>38</sup> Like the focus groups, there were certain key questions (domains of inquiry) that the instrument was designed to probe (see inset to the right) that were in concert with CBI program objectives.

**Survey Instrument Key Domains of Inquiry**

1. Participants' involvement and knowledge of CBI.
2. Level of participation and personal attributes.
3. CBI and meeting community needs.
4. Solving community problems.
5. Indicators of attitude and/or behavioral change.
6. Likely continuation of intervention efforts.
7. General demographics of CBU participants.

Refer to Annex 5B-Survey Questionnaire

Subsequently, the team devised question sets corresponding to these domains. Once completed, the questionnaire was translated into both Macedonian and Albanian and then reviewed internally by OTI staff and pre-tested with two different CBUs in Skopje. Modifications were made to the instrument based upon these reviews (note: both of these questionnaires were formatted comparably to the English version for data entry accuracy).

In order to administer the survey, a sample frame was used (consisting of project years [2002, 2003], sector [infrastructure, social], and grantee contribution level [in percent]) to select CBUs representing a range of project types in terms of duration and grantee participation levels. The survey was administered to 42 different CBUs drawn from all of the field offices over a three-week period with the collected data entered and analyzed in Windows/SPSS.

#### **4.9 CBUs Participating in Survey by Office**

Office	No. CBUs.	Percent	10% Target	Survey No.	%
Bitola	98	23.2	10	8	19.0
Kicevo	63	15.0	6	7	16.7
Kocani	85	20.2	8	8	19.0
Skopje	52	12.4	6	7	16.7
Tetovo	123	29.2	12	12	28.6
Totals	421	100.0	42	42	100.0

The number of participating CBUs in the survey by field office was consistent with the overall distribution of CBUs; however, August is when most Macedonians take their vacations and this reduced the number of CBU participants available to take part in the survey. Nevertheless, the number of participants was fairly close to existing CBU participation ratios with the exception of Kocani (see inset above).

<u>Total Participants</u> (n=260)
Bitola = 64 (24.6%)
Kicevo= 41 (15.8%)
Kocani= 28 (10.8%)
Skopje= 45 (17.3%)
Tetovo=82 (31.5%)

In terms of projects, 48 percent were completed in 2002; with 52 percent being completed in 2003. Over half of these CBUs by sector were infrastructure projects (61 percent) with the remaining (39 percent) designated as social projects.<sup>39</sup> Of 42 grantees in the sample, 42 percent of the respondents were in CBUs that made in-kind contributions of under 15 percent; the remaining 58 percent made contributions over 15 percent, with the average contribution for all grants of 21 percent. The range was .9 percent to 60 percent. Summarized below are the responses of the survey participants by “inquiry domain,” which best captured grantee views of their CBI experiences (see Annex 6 for a demographic profile of survey participants).

1. Participants’ Involvement and Knowledge of CBI<sup>40</sup>

The majority (54 percent) of survey participants reported learning about the CBI program after listening and/or talking with CBI staff; just under half (48 percent) of the participants became involved directly as a result of these contacts. Asked about the purpose of CBI, 60 percent felt the role was to assist communities in identifying and completing infrastructure projects, get communities to work together (52 percent), or involve citizens in community affairs. Twenty-two percent of survey respondents associated CBI with resolving conflict between groups and 79 percent acknowledged their projects had been agreed to through “discussion in meetings.” These meetings were attended predominately by community members (60 percent), CBI staff (48 percent), and local government officials (25 percent). As a result of participating in CBI meetings, 92 percent of survey respondents stated that they were interested in becoming more involved in community activities and reported attending on average seven or more CBU meetings during the community process period. CBI’s community “process approach,” while highly variable among the respective field offices, was an effective mechanism for involving people in their community.

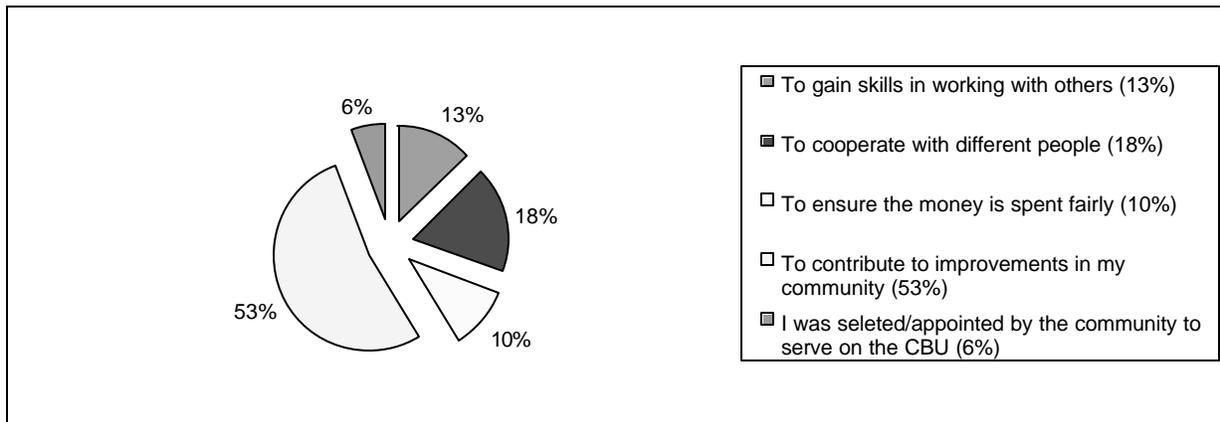
2. Level of Participation and Personal Attributes

The majority of grantees said they participated in the CBI project by providing labor (59 percent), local knowledge (54 percent), and management assistance (47 percent). Financial assistance was provided only by 16 percent of the respondents. Of course, a contribution was a requirement for a community to participate in the CBI program, but it appears there was great latitude on what the group contribution could be. With such latitude, how these various contributions are monetized in the database was a problem and will be discussed further in the findings’ management section.

<u>Grantee Participation</u>	
Labor	59%
Local Knowledge	54%
Mgmt Assistance	47%
Obtaining Permits	24%
Providing Materials	22%
Financial Assistance	16%
Technical Assistance	15%
Technical Equipment	15%
Did Nothing	3%

Of far greater interest is why individuals chose to participate in the local CBU. Item 4.10 displays the reasons provided by survey participants. Average participation reported by CBU participants was 38 members (median=20 members).

#### 4.10 Reasons Given by Survey Participants for Participating



In addition to why survey respondents stated their reasons for participating, the CBU participants also revealed that CBI participation was valued; first in terms of providing funds (67 percent), providing equipment (47 percent), organizing community members (42 percent), and paying contractors (42 percent). Only 3 percent of respondents said CBI staff did nothing. Analysis of the top four reasons why community participants liked CBI reveals that three related to money, equipment, and/or services.

The most important attributes that CBU members said they gained (based on a five-point scale: 1=very poor, 5=best) are listed in Item 4.11. The highest ranked reasons given were: 1) a desire to make positive changes in the community; and 2) learning to reach agreement with others. CBU participants were clearly motivated to improve conditions in their communities; and the CBI process was building upon, and perhaps improving, local values and attitudes.

#### 4.11 Attributes Gained by CBU Members by Participating in CBI Community Projects

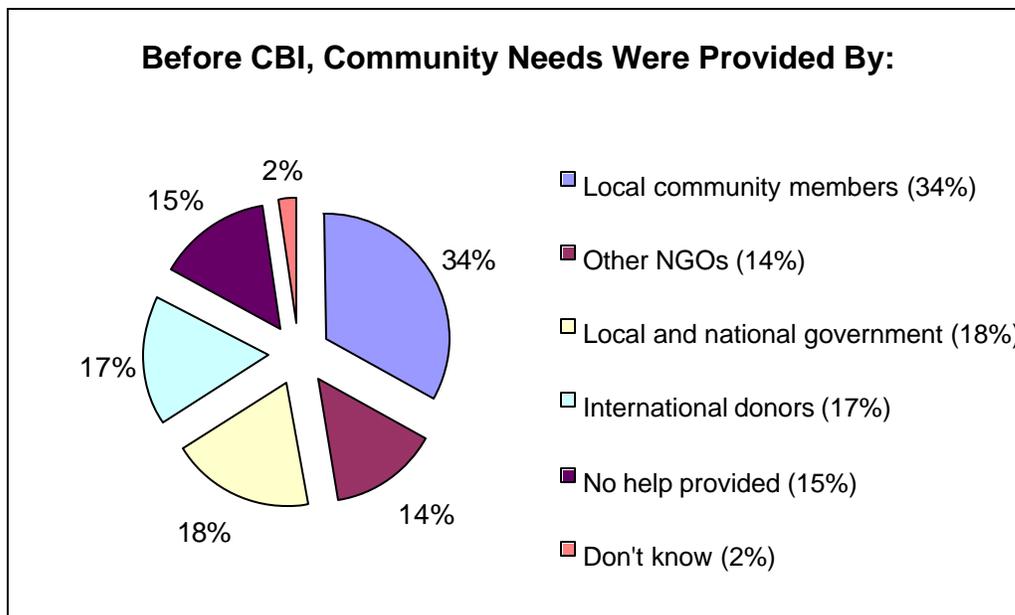
Attribute	Mean
A desire to make positive changes in the community	4.65
Learning to reach agreement with others	4.45
Building self-reliance to start community initiatives	4.37
Promoting commitment to one's community	4.34
Cooperating and working together	4.33
Ability to lead others	4.30
Tolerance of other's opinions	4.27
Willingness to listen to others	4.15
Personal connections with local officials	3.83

Note: The scale of 1 to 5 was used since this was comparable to the grade scale used in the Macedonian school system (field assistants -personal communication); (n=260).

### 3. CBI and Meeting Community Needs

Most respondents viewed meeting with CBI staff in a positive context where community members talked about common problems (31 percent) and, by working together, solutions could be determined (44 percent). These meetings were perceived as being generally open to the public (56 percent) where everyone could participate equally (48 percent). No doubt some persons participated more than others but all CBUs had meetings, and 33 percent of respondents indicated that people from the local community (referring to the CBU) attended these meetings. Interestingly, CBI staff members were seen as attending only about half (47 percent) of the CBU meetings, suggesting community groups were continuing to develop on their own once the CBI staff completed their “process approach.” Indeed, as shown in Item 4.12, before the CBI program, local communities were largely on their own seeking funds or assistance from a variety of sources. CBU members said they did meet before the CBI program (78 percent) but rarely initiated meetings with local authorities (31 percent) and said they “showed little initiative to do things on their own and relied on local government for assistance” (85 percent).

#### 4.12 Pre-CBI Community Needs



#### Grantee Perceptions of CBI Staff Mean

Responded to our requests when others did not	4.3
Supportive of group activities	4.4
Worked closely with community members	4.3
Did what they promised to do	4.5
Approved our project with little delay	3.3

Survey participants viewed CBI staff and their activities quite positively. The inset on the left shows the level of satisfaction (on a 5 point scale: 1=lowest, 5=highest). With one exception, the ratings were very high. Inasmuch as CBI was quick to point out how quickly they can approve and fund projects, the lower rating was somewhat curious. But since infrastructure

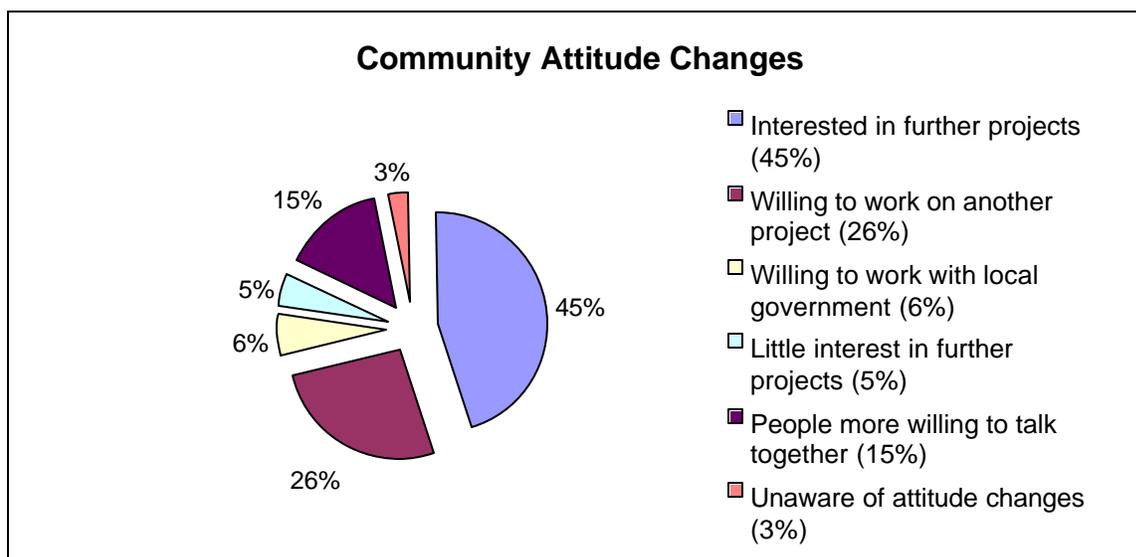
projects typically took longer to approve and then carry out via contractors (and associated de-

lays), the lower mean score makes sense. After all, over half of the projects were concerned with infrastructure as opposed to doing social programs.

#### 4. Solving Community Problems

In the survey findings, almost a quarter (24 percent) of the grantees said there was another CBI project in their community, as well as other donors (32 percent) providing assistance. Only 10 percent said that their local government was assisting the community. However, as a result of working with CBI, respondents (n=260) felt there had been real attitude changes in their communities as displayed in Item 4.13. Indeed, as a result of working with CBI, 45 percent of the survey participants said they can now, “work together to solve local problems,” and 44 percent of participants felt they were now more prepared to petition and cooperate with local government to resolve local problems.

#### 4.13 Community Attitude Changes



The major perceived benefits of the CBI projects are displayed and ranked by frequency of response from a list of items presented to survey participants in the inset to the right. Infrastructure is no surprise, but respondents also acknowledged that CBI projects assisted their communities in addressing “ethnic relations” and “community interaction issues.”

Perception of Project Benefits*	
Infrastructure	48%
Ethnic Relations	45%
Community Interaction	42%
Education	39%
Decision-Making	33%
Economic Development	31%
Gender Relations	31%
Employment	16%
Health	13%

\*Multiple responses were permitted

When asked about attitudes on participating in community activities “before and after” CBI, grantees responses revealed virtually no differences, suggesting the CBU members were already predisposed to active involvement in their community. But, as noted earlier, participants have become more aware of how to become involved and are more focused on not only material improvements in their com-

munities but also group relationships (i.e., ethnic issues, gender relations, and decision-making).

### 5. Indicators of Attitude and/or Behavioral Change

Asked about whether their exposure and interaction with CBI had changed their attitudes or their behavior in any meaningful way, CBU participants reported as follows:

- 88 percent said they will use their experience to find solutions to other problems in their community;
- 50 percent said they would now go to *places* in their community where they did not go before the CBI program;
- 64 percent said they now visit *people* that they did not visit before participating in the CBI program; and
- 83 percent of the people in their community where a project was implemented are aware of the CBI program.

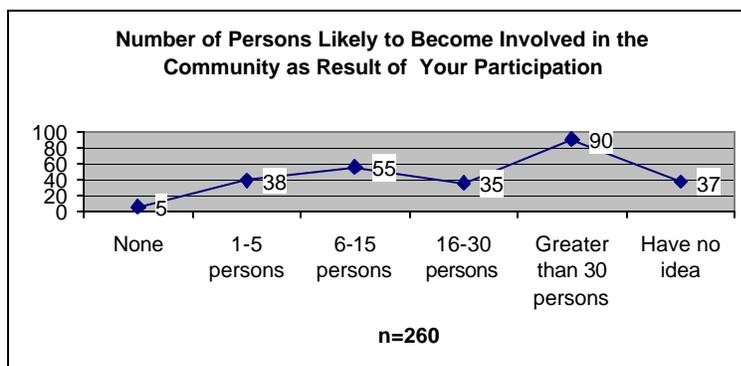
Item 4.14 displays the acknowledged attitude and/or behavioral changes by each of the field offices. Each field site demonstrated a positive shift by the willingness of respondents to visit places and people that they would not have done two years ago. Program Officers, especially in Bitola and Tetovo, said to the evaluation team that they believed their CBI activities were having a genuine effect on how local populations were behaving. In Bitola, the shopping pattern was returning to what it had been before the conflict and in Tetovo (where some of the most intense fighting took place), there was more interaction between ethnic groups in restaurants, taverns, and in some of the parks that CBI has assisted in rehabilitating.

#### 4.14 Attitudes on Places and Spaces since CBI Intervention

CBI Office	Places You Would Now Go Since Participating in CBI program (%)				People You Would Now Visit Since Participating in CBI program (%)			
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before
Bitola	45	16	11	28	66	6	2	27
Kicevo	71	7	7	15	78	0	0	22
Kocani	43	7	7	42	46	0	4	50
Skopje	56	16	4	24	73	2	4	20
Tetovo	43	12	13	32	55	6	4	37

Of course, the interventions by CBI were not the only factor at work to effect these changes. Considerable resources provided by USAID/Macedonia (including those of CBI), international donors, and NGOs have assisted in improving a more balanced access to information about events throughout Macedonia. By all indications, CBI staff worked hard and the CBI program had a strong positive influence on CBU participants.<sup>41</sup> Lastly, survey participants reported on the number of persons they believed would become involved as a result of their participation on the CBI program (see Item 4.15).

### 4.15



Finally, the responses of survey participants were examined in terms of the sample frame elements used to select the communities in the survey (i.e., project type, year of project, and community contribution to the project) to determine if unusual patterns might be discernible. There was none of statistical significance.

### 4.16

#### Attitude-Behavior Responses by Sample Frame Elements<sup>42</sup>

(Project Type, Year of Project, and Community Contribution to the Project)

Sample Frame Elements	People in Region “Aware” of CBI programs (%)			Will use CBI Experience to find “Solutions” to Other Community Problems (%)				
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No	No Sure		
Infrastructure	81	2	17	87	1	12		
Social	85	1	14	87	0	13		
2002	78	3	19	82	0	18		
2003	87	0	13	92	1	7		
Contribution >15%	84	1	15	90	15	0		
Contribution <15%	82	2	16	83	1	16		
Sample Frame Elements	“Places” in your Community that you now go to that you did not go to before the CBI program (%)				There are “People” you now visit that you did not visit before the CBI program (%)			
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before	Yes	No	Not Sure	Same as Before
Infrastructure	47	13	11	29	58	3	3	36
Social	55	11	8	26	72	4	2	22
2002	40	10	15	35	55	4	1	40
2003	60	14	5	21	71	3	4	22
Contribution >15%	53	13	9	26	65	4	1	30
Contribution <15%	45	12	11	32	63	3	4	30

### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Management of the CBI field offices was decentralized from the main office in Skopje with considerable responsibility and authority assigned to the program officers (e.g., the identification of grant opportunities, the preparation of the grant budget, the monitoring of performance and final grant closeout and handover to local beneficiaries). The exception was the Media Office that ac-

tually operated a nationwide media program and was handled from the capital. With respect to OTI's implementing partner, IOM/Skopje, the overall CBI program was well managed, efficient, and generally effective, although there were areas in need of modification and improvement. The OTI/Macedonia office also operated effectively; however, there are broader issues (e.g., such as developing a more coherent strategy than just counting grants awarded) regarding the role of OTI offices in transition settings.

### **PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND PLANNING**

**IOM/CBI** – Operations. The evaluation team met with all of the CBI staff in order to ascertain their views on the operations of the CBI program. It was very prudent of IOM management to permit, even encourage, considerable flexibility in how the POs developed their respective CBI grant projects through what was referred to as an Area of Responsibility. The result was that each office proceeded at different rates and even stressed different approaches to grantee identification and subsequent grant emphasis. The “burn rates” by field office varied accordingly, notwithstanding the different styles and backgrounds of POs.

Operationally, the IOM/Skopje office sought to ensure that POs and their staff had the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences by holding workshops and three retreats. Moreover, the presence of an information officer to write up experiences (Monthly Reports and Hot Topics on various grant activities) was an important contribution to ensure information flow in a rapidly moving grant assistance program. However, several field staff indicated that more training in IOM procedures would have been useful before being posted at their field site. Learning “on the job” had a lot of drawbacks requiring a lot of trial and error as staff established their operational procedures.

**Planning**. On the other hand, planning seemed to be driven primarily by the need to move monies at a demanding pace. Yes, targets were met but could the quality of grants have been enhanced if POs had had more time to think through some of their decisions? Unfortunately, other than CBI staff impressions, no data were available on individual project effectiveness. Moreover, planning seemed to be guided by hindsight rather than foresight; POs complained about the many administrative changes that continued to be made over the LOP, which they felt was strange since presumably much of the procedures had been developed and implemented in Kosovo. To say the least, these changes continued to add to the workload of field staff. Better planning might have alleviated some of the workload.

**Staffing**. The evaluation team was impressed with the quality of the CBI staff. Both expatriate staff and locally hired staff were highly qualified academically and, more importantly, appeared quite committed to the CBI program despite very demanding work schedules. Originally 28 staff were authorized when the project started, however, IOM expanded the staff to 39 (2 are interns) by the start of 2003 to reach all of the program targets and mitigate some of the workload at the field offices. Over a two-year period, nine staff were either replaced or resigned due to a poor fit, personality issues, or for personal reasons. In that CBI was in the business of promoting diversity, IOM practiced what it preached. With respect to ethnic diversity, 21 percent of the local staff were ethnic-Albanian, consistent with the national ratio, and in terms of gender balance, 59 percent of the staff were women—even higher (70 percent female) for the expatriates.<sup>43</sup>

**OTI/Macedonia** – The OTI/Macedonia office was effective in providing management oversight to IOM, especially in rapidly signing-off on grant applications once receiving them from IOM/Skopje. Operationally, OTI/Macedonia worked very closely with its implementing partner and coordinated with the USAID Mission on its various programs. Generally speaking, CBI program planning appeared to be primarily concentrated in the IOM/Skopje office. Beyond the oversight role, it was not clear to the evaluation team the extent to which the OTI/Macedonia office was playing a strategic role in the CBI program. Of course, based on interviews with OTI staff in Macedonia as well as in Washington, the evaluation team recognized that many aspects of the program were put into operation at the time of the Cooperative Agreement or by guidelines set by OTI/Washington.

**Information Technology.** Through OTI, IOM invested considerable resources (computers, software, training), to ensure that information could be shared quickly (via a Wide Area Network) and efficiently between Skopje and the CBI field offices, and OTI/Macedonia in real time. All information was entered into an OTI database for tracking grants, monies, and project status. The evaluators found the database to be extremely useful (if not always friendly) for examining field office activities. Additionally, IOM provided all CBI staff with cell phones ensuring communication for when staff were in the field or in travel status.

However, the database did have some problems, not operationally, but in terms of variable definitions. For example, in some data fields such as “number of members” referring to a project CBU, the entire membership of an organization was often cited rather than just the functional number of persons in attendance at meetings. In fact, asking about CBU participation was not relevant since media projects focused on audience markets. The procedures for calculating local labor, etc., were rather elastic (i.e., imprecise) and suggested communities were making more contributions than was the case. There was also limited consistency among POs in assigning program themes to grants. While there was a technical data manager, apparently, no one was responsible for data entry quality control.

**Logistics.** IOM/CBI ran a very efficient logistics operation. The approval procedure for grants was that for all expenses below \$500 the offices had payment authority. For payments above that amount, three quotes had to be selected and submitted to the logistics and procurement office in Skopje via the Program Manager. The selection of one of the bids was kept fast, and the final signature was either that of the Program Manager or, for amounts above \$5,000, the IOM/Skopje Chief of Mission. The time lapse between the presentation of the bids and the issuing of the purchase order would usually take less than two weeks (all of these procedures were detailed for each PO in the “IOM/CBI Procurement Organogram: Contracting for Services”). The system, according to discussions with logistics personnel, worked efficiently.<sup>44</sup> Delays encountered in providing monies to complete projects were associated with local contractors not completing their work on time due to materials arriving late or the CBU not doing its part in the project as quickly as promised.

**USAID/OTI/Macedonia** – The office was linked electronically to its colleagues, USAID/Macedonia and OTI/Washington. The office received information in a timely fashion from the IOM/CBI Information Officer and was kept well-informed on CBI activities by IOM management. Undoubtedly, the OTI Country Representative used the CBI database to track CBI field operations, but it did not appear that the database was used to change or modify the pro-

gram strategy for the office. OTI staff did not mention any specific logistical difficulties to the evaluators.

Monitoring and Evaluation. Neither IOM/CBI nor OTI/Macedonia resolved the need for developing Monitoring and evaluation procedures for assessing CBI program effectiveness and impact. While the CBI database was quite efficient in permitting and carrying out monitoring efforts, it was not designed to determine program outcomes and/or impacts.<sup>45</sup> IOM/CBI management continued to report on CBI “outputs” in terms of number of grants awarded and the amount of money being moved. Beyond short vignettes on selected project activities, the evaluation team did not find any reports on project quality or the results of project interventions. An exception was a knowledge, attitude, and practice survey the M&E assistant carried out among citizens of Skopje who attended the opening activities at the Saraj Sport and Recreation Center. Indeed, OTI Headquarters had recognized early on in the LOP that CBI was “M&E Lite.”<sup>46</sup>

CBI did attempt to develop an assessment instrument referred to as a “tension index,” but apparently due to the complicated nature of this approach, the effort was abandoned and a comprehensive evaluation instrument was never developed. In December 2002, OTI/Washington conducted a Mid-Term Evaluation of the Macedonia CBI program, but for a variety of reasons (including little time spent in the field by the evaluation team), the resulting report was limited in scope and depth (see Creative Associates, January 2003). In February 2003, OTI/W assisted the OTI/IOM team in developing a Performance Monitoring Plan and a staff person was assigned to work on the PMP, however, the effort was essentially too late and focused mainly on input activities (identified as grant numbers and money, referred to as effort/effect). In short, despite some efforts on the part of the CBI and OTI/Macedonia managers, the M&E system was never implemented for assessing the impact of the Macedonia CBI program. In discussing the lack of M&E impact data, one OTI staff person summarized the situation by stating, “It’s not about the money spent or grants awarded, but about having an impact.”

Partnering and Supervision. As noted earlier, IOM/Skopje CBI and OTI/Macedonia management operated closely together resulting in grants being approved quickly and with few rejections. Less clear was which organization was in charge. From all appearances, IOM/Skopje seemed to be running the CBI program (as per the Cooperative Agreement) in its entirety with OTI/Macedonia playing mainly an oversight role and not a managerial/leadership role. The evaluators were told that OTI/Macedonia decided to keep a very low profile and while most survey and Focus Group participants were quite aware of IOM and USAID as organizations there was very limited awareness about the role of OTI with regards to the CBI program. Also, since OTI/Macedonia was located separately from the USAID Mission, it served to reinforce some confusion over the relationship of OTI to USAID as well as to other donors.<sup>H</sup>

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<sup>H</sup> OTI was not able to co-locate with the USAID Mission in Macedonia due to lack of space. This physical separation may have contributed to confusion over the relationship between OTI and the Mission programs.

## **V. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings presented in the preceding part of this report, the OTI/Macedonia Confidence Building Initiative, in a relatively short period of time, worked with numerous community groups throughout Macedonia, awarded a total of 495 grants (through August 2003<sup>47</sup>) to assist groups in a wide range of activities, and in doing so has promoted “local transitions to democracy” concurrent with other changes now taking place in the country. The question now begged is, “How well did the CBI program ‘perform’ overall in doing what was proposed in the Cooperative Agreement with IOM in August 2001?”

As stated in the Evaluation SOW, performance was to be viewed with respect to answering the following fundamental questions about the CBI program. Each of these questions is answered below with supporting discussion sections.

### **RESPONSES TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

#### To what extent did CBI meet its stated goal and objectives?

With respect to the first three specific objectives of CBI: (1) supporting community-based interaction among diverse groups of people, (2) promoting citizen participation in community decision-making, and (3) fostering transparency, responsiveness, and accountability between citizens and local government, CBI carried out these activities very well and extensively, as supported by the Focus groups interviews with CBI staff, selected CBU participants, and from the results of a survey of CBU participants. With respect to CBI’s fourth objective (increasing citizen access to balanced information and diverse points of views), the evaluation team was able to collect only anecdotal data suggesting this area had been improved in Macedonia. Certainly, the CBI program achieved its goal of promoting and instilling expanded democratic behaviors at the community level. However, in a broader sense, the CBI goal was to reduce and/or mitigate conflict. Indeed, the community survey findings clearly suggest that in those communities where the CBI operated, survey participants were willing to visit places and persons where they had previously been reluctant to do so. Nevertheless, the evaluators could not answer whether the CBI did anything that directly resulted in reaching the program goal of conflict mitigation. This may be due in part to the fact that the causal linkage between the goal and program objectives was not explained clearly.

### **Discussion**

The macro goal of CBI, frequently mentioned in several of the OTI monthly reports, was to reduce tension and mitigate conflict through confidence building efforts during the implementation of the Framework Agreement. These terms were never defined with any consistency, making it extremely tenuous to attribute whether the CBI program had accomplished anything specific in these areas.

By contrast, CBI did meet its specific program objectives. The program responded to what people wanted quickly and efficiently. The program provided grant assistance that could meet specific needs of communities, while at the same time being quite flexible in how monies could be used to meet needs. The program intervened at the local community level where local citizens could become directly involved in the affairs of their community. And in doing so, even though

CBI was only a two-year program, it did build local capacity that will persist after the program concludes. This is consistent with USAID/Macedonia's CSP and, in particular, Strategic Objective 2 calling for the development of "legitimate democratic institutions."

Did OTI's approach fill an important gap?

Yes, given the necessity to respond quickly to U.S. State Department and USAID/Macedonia concerns about the need to inject resources into local communities, OTI through its implementing partner efficiently and effectively carried out this mandate between October 2001 and September 2003.

**Discussion**

The USAID/Macedonia Mission did establish a community-based program for moving resources expediently into communities experiencing ethnic tension and possible conflict. However, the initial program, CSHI, was implemented slowly and once the Framework Agreement was signed in August 2001, OTI expanded its efforts in Macedonia by supporting a community program capable of providing resources quickly to specific regions of Macedonia that might experience ethnic conflict or the resumption of local conflict. The IOM/Skopje CBI program funded by OTI was very successful at injecting resources into these communities over the two-year life of the program. By way of contrast, other USAID programs have not been nearly as effective in moving resources into local communities in as narrow a time frame. There are no data to support whether the rapid infusion of resources actually prevented conflict, but the CBI program did ensure presence on the part of CBI staff and did in effect "buy time" as other USAID and donor programs geared up to meet the possible challenge of renewed ethnic conflict in the Balkans.

Did OTI complement the efforts of other USAID offices and international organizations working to promote peace and support the democratic transition in Macedonia?

Yes, but only in a limited way given the rather unique operating structure of OTI and that of its implementing partner, IOM/Skopje.

**Discussion**

USAID/Macedonia has a considerable list of contractors and PVOs that are assisting the Mission to implement its Country Strategic Plan. In the broadest sense, all of these organizations are working to promote peace in support of the democratic transition. Similar in some respects to the community program of CBI are the efforts of the Institute for Sustainable Communities working with local community NGOs. Development Alternatives, Inc., is managing the Local Government Reform Program aimed at improving the operations of municipalities in the area of public services, and Catholic Relief Services supports civic education for building a more viable civil society.

The OTI program was rather unique in its activities, with one exception—CSHI (originally started by the Mission using an OTI funding mechanism with OTI/Washington technical assistance). In many ways, the programs are very much alike—both worked to promote local communities to help themselves and use a community "process" approach. However, there were real

differences. CBI was a relatively short-term effort, whereas CSHI is an ongoing five-year program. CBI supported social projects as well as infrastructure projects; CSHI does only infrastructure projects. More importantly, the CBI program was designed to promote ethnic collaboration through community engagement in troubled regions of Macedonia or where ethnic conflict had taken place.

By contrast, the CBI media component worked with the USAID/Macedonia Mission in support of ensuring that information was disseminated on the census as well as the elections. This office also worked with various media outlets (TV, radio, and print) to promulgate accurate information about the Framework Agreement.

How did the management and operation of the CBI program contribute to or detract from achievement of the program goal and objectives?

The CBI program from the start emphasized the need to produce grants and subsequently move money at an assembly line pace. What was referred to as the “burn rate” became an end in and of itself. Frequently heard was the expression “low-hanging fruit” meaning to CBI program officers that they had to quickly fund easier “targets of opportunity” in their respective communities in lieu of taking more time to develop more difficult grant proposals. Nevertheless, setting a target of 250 grants for the first year did indeed keep staff well-focused and even motivated to achieving results.

## **Discussion**

The workload was by all accounts overly demanding on CBI staff, leading to expressions of high stress, limited time to work with communities, and by the second year of the program to develop larger infrastructure grant designs, possibly to meet burn rate expectations. Staff also would have benefited from more training at startup instead of learning mostly “on the job.” While some time would have been sacrificed up front, the quality of work performance later in the program life would have returned by way of greater efficiency. CBI staff certainly recognized the tradeoff involved in starting grant activities quickly versus having all the administrative procedures worked out for each office.

CBI made excellent use of information technology, linking the field and home offices, and enabling real time information flow. This facilitated local flexibility while at the same time there was centralized management oversight in the IOM/Skopje office and at the OTI/Skopje office. But several of the variables in the database were not clear; this was also true in terms of the overall goal of the program—the conceptual design or logic-in-use was weak and left to each PO to design and implement the CBI program in terms of their view of the local setting. Despite the availability of data, there was a dearth of information on individual project outcomes and the probable sustainability of these projects.

OTI/Macedonia and IOM/CBI staff frequently said the “process” of working with communities was paramount to simply turning out a “product.” But given USAID’s emphasis on achieving program results, process is not a substitute for generating a quality product. Had there been greater attention paid to Monitoring and evaluation, CBI might have been carried out with a

stronger conceptual orientation rather than just getting the numbers. This oversight may well be a function of varying skills sets and backgrounds of IOM and OTI staff in Macedonia; most of the staff had backgrounds reflective of crisis management issues. However, in addressing conceptual design and M&E issues, outcomes and sustainability, and performance in general, CBI staff needed to possess more of a development perspective for even a short-term program like CBI.

Lastly, the contributions of the Media Office were impressive although the various projects were poorly integrated into the rest of the CBI program. In short, the objective of “a more balanced access to information” was anomalous to the CBI program from the start. It did not fit with the local community approach adopted by the CBI program. Media resources might have been better used for operating in another field site for a more tailored intervention.

What programmatic and management lessons can be learned from the CBI program that can provide useful guidance to other OTI programs in like environments?

It was important for OTI/Macedonia and IOM/Skopje to achieve the CBI targets set forth in the Cooperative Agreement, but the quality of grants should also be viewed as important as quantity. In some respects, perhaps, IOM/CBI tried to do too much.

## **Discussion**

The evaluation team felt that the OTI/Macedonia office was too willing to play an oversight role with its implementing partner, rather than take more of a management supervisory role. This was, perhaps, a function of the Cooperative Agreement arrangement with the implementing partner being too prescriptive in what roles could be played between the respective parties. It also behooves OTI/Washington to develop a more formal approach on how its offices are engaged in a country, especially how relationships are to be established with local USAID Missions. OTI needs to be perceived as a team player, no matter how well it performs. In Macedonia, due to the fact that there was no space within the USAID/Macedonia mission, the OTI office was physically separated from USAID and this reified the perception by other USAID contractors that OTI/Macedonia was running its own show.

Despite several attempts to devise a strategy for the CBI program, the OTI/Macedonia office never fully developed an integrated strategic plan for the CBI program. Moreover, in the area of Monitoring and evaluation, the OTI/Macedonia office failed to develop a comprehensive approach for assessing the CBI program. While efforts were made early on in developing a monitoring instrument (i.e., the tension index), the OTI office ultimately did not develop a PMP detailing an overall evaluation strategy for the CBI program and how that strategy was integrated with USAID/Macedonia and USAID policy in general. By March 2003, the OTI/Macedonia office did finally develop a Performance Monitoring Plan, but it was completed late in the life of the project and never really implemented. The lack of a PMP for most of the program life is too symptomatic of how OTI goes into a country; people and resources are called on to respond to a crisis, but as programs are developed, conceptual designs are usually “pasted” to ongoing activities without sufficient attention being given to designing an integrated evaluation strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

OTI should develop a more formal and professional role within USAID in promotion of its skills in the area of “transition management.” Programs and activities both in Washington and the field should be closely integrated with Agency and/or Mission strategic objectives.

### **Rationale**

Given the reorganization of USAID over the last two years, OTI is now situated in DCHA where its skills relative to the other units in this bureau are unique. OTI is capable of reacting rapidly and with considerable flexibility in contrast to the other operating units in DCHA, but it is particularly different in that its efforts are mainly community-based and field-focused, permitting the organization to move beyond the veneer of political leadership in transition situations in order to work directly with community-based organizations, both formal and informal. OTI needs to continue refining its skills sets to address transition issues but in concert with overall Agency strategy and the Country Strategic Plan where OTI has a program.

As OTI becomes the Agency special unit for addressing transition issues, the recruitment and retention of staff become increasingly important and a stronger emphasis should be given to hiring more staff on a permanent basis rather than just as PSCs and/or consultants.

### **Rationale**

The development of skills sets designed to confront transition issues will require staff that obviously possess these skills. Since virtually all OTI staff now work as PSCs, there is no assurance that once skills are learned that staff will not move on to other positions as opportunities arise. A cadre of key staff with managerial and field skills in transition management would ensure that skilled personnel are available on short notice. Depending on short-term staff, whether PSCs or consultants, may be cost-effective but not necessarily conducive to building an effective program over time.

More attention should be given to ensuring that, in every OTI program, a conceptual design is in place that clearly defines a performance strategy for achieving goals and objectives. OTI/Washington should ensure that PMPs are developed early on in the program life of each and every field office.

### **Rationale**

It is increasingly important that in each and every case where OTI intervenes that a clear conceptual strategy is developed to identify the goals and objectives of the intervention. It is not enough to simply show up and distribute small grants, but rather each and every OTI intervention requires a program concept design that can evolve into an operational PMP for guiding the intervention and assessing its implementation over time. Moreover, given the brevity of most OTI interventions, the respective country PMP needs to be completed no later than the third month of the program so that it can function as a working management plan.

Monitoring and evaluation activities should be implemented as soon as possible in OTI field programs that emphasize quantitative data collection procedures as well as qualitative data collection.

### **Rationale**

Providing small grants to communities can play a critical role in addressing possible areas of conflict, getting different community groups to cooperate and work together, and in general plays a role in improving community life. However, documenting the results of OTI programs requires that attention be paid not only to collecting anecdotes about intervention activities, but also collecting numeric data for measuring the outcomes of OTI interventions.

The variables (data fields) of OTI's Worldwide Database should be thoroughly reviewed with respect to how rigorously each variable is defined and the logical consistency by which data are being entered into the database. Redundant and confusing data fields should be deleted making for a more friendly as well as productive data management system.

### **Rationale**

The evaluation team found that many of the data fields were confusing and data were being entered in some fields quite inconsistently. The OTI database is a valuable tool for tracking its programs individually and for comparing across programs. But if data fields are not clear to persons entering data, then data quality is in jeopardy. It might be useful to provide value labels for many of the fields so as to improve data consistency and reliability.

OTI/Washington should develop a Field Office Management Manual delineating the lines of authority to be followed in field offices—in particular, detailing the rules of the road in working with contractors under contract and with NGOs or International Organizations working under a Cooperative Agreement.

### **Rationale**

The OTI/Macedonia relationship with its implementing partner was quite collegial in the management of the CBI program, but the exact role of the OTI/Macedonia office was somewhat unclear. Yes, the office did a good job acting as liaison with USAID/Macedonia, and the OTI Country Representative approved or disapproved grants. But the Cooperative Agreement language, other than calling for reports, did not define what kind of relationship should exist with the implementing partner. With the current rotation of staff in and out of OTI offices (either on TDY from Washington or PSCs assigned to an office), the development of a Field Office Management Manual would provide guidance for how to interact with contractors and implementing partners. Decision-making and management responsibilities require a structure from which authority is defined and assigned for discharging responsibilities.

OTI should be more thoughtful about appending program categories (e.g., media) whose objectives are incongruous with the overall conceptual design of a program.

## **Rationale**

While the media component of the CBI program was, in essence, a crosscutting set of activities to support community-based activities, the evaluation team found it extremely difficult to assess media projects in terms of outcomes. There was no way to attribute what role media projects played either in individual communities or in the country at large beyond relying on anecdotal and/or impressionistic data. Thus, for OTI programs that have media, conflict mitigation, tension reduction components, etc., these components should be integrated into the overall OTI intervention concept design with verifiable objectives capable of being assessed for determining actual outcomes/impacts.

More training should be provided to OTI staff in the area of organizational theory, community development, and socio-economic change so that staff has a better understanding on how to identify performance indicators and measure the results of their programs.

## **Rationale**

Considerable variation was apparent in the skills and backgrounds of the CBI program staff as they devised and implemented community intervention programs. Perhaps, assessing the program effectiveness of CBI intervention strategies went beyond the skills of the staff. However, since monitoring and evaluating program outcomes and results is an Agency-wide goal, staff training in certain topical areas (i.e., organizational theory, community development, and socio-economic change) could have assisted OTI staff in the assessment of the CBI program results. Certainly, this training would also be useful to future staff for assessing other OTI intervention programs.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> As used in this evaluation, *impact* is defined as “attitudinal or behavioral” changes directly attributable to the interventions of the OTI CBI project, based upon data collected from participants and stakeholders.
- <sup>2</sup> After the collapse of the Federation of Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared its independence on September 8, 1991. The country is officially referred to as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia since Greece still objects to the use of “Macedonia” in referring to this region.
- <sup>3</sup> The evaluation team was told by several persons interviewed that the only communities likely to reach this percentage were Albanian communities.
- <sup>4</sup> All statistics are from the World Fact Book, 2002.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> See “Macedonia Assessment Team Assessment and Recommendations,” April 11, 2001, Carl Mabbs-Zeno, E&E/OM/OD, Kirpatrick J. Day, BHR/OTI/Kosovo, Thomas W. Stukel, BHR/OTI/Washington.
- <sup>7</sup> The Community Self-Help Initiative was a program the USAID/Macedonia mission originally established in 1999 by buying into the OTI SWIFT contract mechanism in response to the Kosovo refugee crisis.
- <sup>8</sup> Stukel, Tom, Personal Communication.
- <sup>9</sup> OTI/DCHA/USAID Macedonia Field Report # 12, October 2002.
- <sup>10</sup> See Cooperative Agreement No. HDA-A-00-01-00109-00 approving an initial budget of \$8,646,448.00 in support of a “...program to mitigate conflict and promote stability by maintaining and bolstering community cohesion...” [pg 9 of 26]. The Agreement was later extended for an additional year.
- <sup>11</sup> The IOM/Macedonia program was originally referred to as the “Conflict Mitigation Initiative,” but was renamed as the “Confidence Building Initiative” in February of 2002.
- <sup>12</sup> See “OTI Macedonian Field Report, #18,” April 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> Five offices (e.g., Bitola, Kicevo, Kocani, Skopje, and Tetovo) were established and staffed by IOM/Skopje within the first month of the program but were not fully functional until March/April of 2002.
- <sup>14</sup> As used in this evaluation, *impact* is defined as “attitudinal or behavioral” changes directly attributable to the interventions of the OTI CBI project, based upon data collected from participants and stakeholders.
- <sup>15</sup> Initially, the CBI program was approved for only one year per the IOM-USAID/OTI Cooperative Agreement.
- <sup>16</sup> IOM-USAID/OTI Cooperative Agreement, “Conflict Mitigation Initiative,” August 1, 2001, p-9.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p-11.
- <sup>18</sup> Feedback from former E&E Team Leader.
- <sup>19</sup> Feedback from former E&E Team Leader.
- <sup>20</sup> IOM staff, personal communication. Moreover, these goals were more consistent with OTI goals of assisting a society’s transition to democracy, peace, and overcoming a political crisis —see USAID/OTI 2001-2002 Report.

- <sup>21</sup> Confidence was usually translated as “trust” or “reliance” or “self-assurance.” But in English, confidence is more typically used in reference to an individual (i.e., self-confidence). Macedonian members of the evaluation team explained that the term “confidence” [*besima*] was used in a similar manner in Albanian but the term in Macedonian [*doverba*] was used more often in a social context.
- <sup>22</sup> IOM management; personal communication.
- <sup>23</sup> Personal communication with OTI former PSCs.
- <sup>24</sup> The average number of community meetings required for all projects was 5.3; (range = 3 to 8).
- <sup>25</sup> The OTI/Washington office provided the evaluation team with the latest database they had (through June 2003); however, since the CBI program was ongoing, some figures will be at variance with later submissions to OTI/Washington. Discussion focuses on the observable data patterns for making a point; whenever possible, the Team has sought to present the most recent and accurate data provided while in the field.
- <sup>26</sup> USAID/DCHA/OTI, Macedonia Monthly Report, Field Report # 1, November, 2001.
- <sup>27</sup> Field offices typically had 4-5 staff; each had a Program Officer (all Expatriates) and 2 local field staff to work in communities, a logistics-accounting person and a technical expert, usually a civil engineer for reviewing infrastructure projects. The Cooperative Agreement called for 28 staff, but additional staff was hired to handle the heavy workloads associated with “burn rate” targets.
- <sup>28</sup> The evaluation team did not come across any documentation that used or explained “places and spaces.”
- <sup>29</sup> Comments from OTI/Macedonia Country Representative.
- <sup>30</sup> See "USAID Macedonia: Annual Report FY 2003," in particular section "Cover Memo."
- <sup>31</sup> A detailed listing of USAID contractors, NGOs, and international organizations providing some type of assistance to Macedonian society is listed in Annex 8.
- <sup>32</sup> Information Memorandum: “Rational for FY03 Continuation of USAID/DCHA/OTI Program in Macedonia.” December 30, 2002, David Taylor.
- <sup>33</sup> Stukel, Tom. “Should We Stay or Should We Go?” Disengagement Report presented to OTI/Washington, February 6, 2003.
- <sup>34</sup> Comments from OTI/Macedonia Country Representative.
- <sup>35</sup> No formal target was established for year two; however, IOM/Skopje management expressed a desire to do as well in year two as they had done in year one of the LOP.
- <sup>36</sup> Although the June CBI Database indicated 514 grants approved, several were canceled for a variety of reasons and the final number of CBI grants approved by OTI/Macedonia and subsequently completed was 495 (personal communication, IOM/Skopje staff).
- <sup>37</sup> The United States Embassy and USAID/Macedonia were especially pleased with these efforts by CBI in support of carrying out the activities called for by the Framework Agreement (personal communication).
- <sup>38</sup> Had there been a greater understanding and appreciation of CBI operations on the part of the evaluators, especially in the local field offices, a survey instrument might have been developed prior to carrying out fieldwork. However, in this instance, it proved beneficial to know more about local conditions and program nuances in order to develop a survey instrument sensitive to these issues.

<sup>39</sup>By program category, 79 projects were designated as community impact, 125 as civil society/organization support, and 53 projects cited as transparency/good governance projects.

<sup>40</sup> See Annex 5B; responses total more than 100 percent due to the fact that in some cases respondents could provide multiple responses to a question.

<sup>41</sup> Annex 6 provides a full demographic profile of survey participants.

<sup>42</sup> Total respondents=260. Respondents by Element 1, infrastructure=159, social=101; by Element 2, CBI year 1 - 2002=124, CBI year 2 - 2003=136; and by Element 3, CBU project contribution greater than 15 percent=151, and CBU project contribution less than 16 percent=109.

<sup>43</sup> Data source: CBI Contact Lists and personal communication.

<sup>44</sup> The evaluation team became aware of IOM accounting problems that came up in August of this year (2003). Apparently, when grants are closed out, the final accounting is done in U.S. Dollars. However, grant expenses are linked to the local currency (i.e., Macedonia Dinar) that in turn is tied to the Euro resulting in a shortfall of grant project funds, that is, because of the Euro rising and falling against the U.S. Dollar. IOM/CBI failed to conduct currency reconciliations with sufficient frequency to discover these impending shortages resulting in the cancellation of some projects.

<sup>45</sup> The IOM/OTI database does have a data field called “success,” but the field is entirely blank. Before the end of the CBI program, IOM is planning to have each PO assess their projects using a standardized protocol, but the effort will be entirely subjective and not based upon objective evaluation methods.

<sup>46</sup> Personal communication with former Macedonia field staff.

<sup>47</sup> Final Communication with IOM/Skopje Information Officer, September 2003.