

2012



Community Building Mitrovica

Annual Report



Mitrovica

1/1/2012

Mitrovica background information

The overturn of the political situation in Kosovo started in September 2010 continued in 2011 as well. In particular the first half of the year was challenging, with the start of the dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina facilitated by the EU.

The so-called technical dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade has raised a lot of publicity and has heavily affected the fragile interethnic relations in Mitrovica.

Since March 8th when the dialogue started several issues were discussed and agreements achieved:

- The consequence the dispute for regional cooperation.
- Communications
- Freedom of movement
- The rule of law

However, the media in Kosovo heavily reported different kinds of scenarios on the territorial and political issue of Mitrovica. Despite the fact that international and local authorities stated firmly that there will be no division of Kosovo, still this kind of statements have affected all developments in Mitrovica.

Explosions and threats in northern Mitrovica undertaken by extremists continued against civil society activists that cooperate with public institutions have continued following the tensions of the spring and summer 2011.

International Civilian Office (ICO) has been focused on capacity building and professionalizing of the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT), and work towards establishing the new municipality in Mitrovica. MPT has been supported by USAID. However the establishment of the new municipality has been prolonged since MPT is not being accepted by all groups, citizens, etc in northern Mitrovica.

The political developments have also negatively affected the strategy for integration of the northern part of Kosovo, an area which has not shown much progress. In southern Mitrovica the local authorities continued their activities with a little monitoring and scrutiny from the civil society organizations. The same accounts for the monitoring exercise of authorities in northern municipalities.

CBM still holds that monitoring of the municipal authorities in southern and northern Mitrovica as well as its impact on the life of all citizens needs to be a priority of the civil society.

The central challenge for the Mitrovica region municipalities, therefore, lies in finding a new orientation for the region:

- Eliminating divisions and social exclusion
- Improving the security situation and facilitating the reintegration development of a local economy

The latest developments in northern Mitrovica related to the stationing of Kosovo Police and Custom officers at the gates 1 and 31 has raised the interethnic tensions and has caused further Serb community resentment towards the Kosovo authorities. The street blockades and the security risks present in northern Mitrovica affected the life and work in Mitrovica in general.

On the other hand, the EU continues to implement its monitoring mission 'EULEX', and also UNMIK continues to function in the northern part of the Mitrovica region (including Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok) despite the termination of the mandate provided by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. This situation continues to lead to a great deal of confusion on the ground as to the legitimacy of various securitizing actors and the implementation of rule of law.

Notwithstanding, the above said, CBM thinks that now more than ever it is crucial that the civil society undertakes activities that will fill the gap in process of state building; In this case, the exercise of extensive local authorities as provided in the Kosovo Law on Self Government, which is the building of partnership relationships between civil society and municipal authorities

Fostering the partnership between civil society and (local) authorities is one of the prerequisites of the 'good governance' concept and development of democracy in general. CBM thorough implementation of its activities has managed to do so. Many turning points in the process of activities implementation have shown that despite very critical situations and high tensions in the city individuals involved in the project but also ordinary citizens are interested to overcome the divide and work towards rehabilitation of the life in Mitrovica.

After Kosovo's declaration of independence, Serbia did not allow Kosovar goods with Kosovo documents to enter Serbia. As this issue failed to be discussed and solved at the "technical dialogue" facilitated by the EU on 20 July 2011 Kosovo government decided to introduce a reciprocal ban on goods from Serbia. On 25 July 2011 Kosovo Police Regional Operations Special Units (ROSU) were sent to two border crossings in northern Kosovo, Jarinje and Brnjak, in an attempt to deploy Kosovo Custom there and to implement the ban. With the takeover of border points, the situation escalated. In violent clash, one Kosovo Police officer was shot dead. Kosovo Serbs erected roadblocks. The special unit withdrew, KFOR established control in the area. Since mid-September, EULEX is manning the two border points, which provoked fierce protest among Kosovo Serbs, as a reaction roadblocks were further established. The two border crossings are the only connection to and from Serbia and the northern part of Kosovo. Tensions are very high and the situation is fragile and volatile. The dispute has long gone beyond the starting point of deployment or non-deployment of Kosovo customs officers.

CBM background information

Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) as a local grassroots organization, initiated from locals supported by IKV PAX (IKV PAX Christie now) is active since March 2001 in northern part of Kosovo. The overall aim of CBM is to facilitate contact and dialogue between citizens in the whole Mitrovica Municipality. The staff consists of devoted citizens – both Serbs and Albanians – who grew up in this region and want to restore the previous confidence and friendship. By supporting many concrete projects that address the direct needs of local communities, CBM contributes to this aim.

With its mission in identifying and advancing the common concerns of Mitrovica's citizens, CBM tries to empower communities to work together and establish the means for peaceful co-existence and provides facilitation and mediation for interethnic dialogue as well as advocacy with and for those promoting peace and social integration.

CBM as an organization with a long history in the region has gained the respect and credibility among communities of Mitrovica. CBM works throughout the entire Mitrovica region and has initiated numerous links between people;

- has strengthened the position of youth and women
- has supported freedom of speech
- has facilitated many small "IDP return projects"

Among many other efforts, CBM advocates for transparency and accountability of Kosovo's Institutions by establishing the advocacy group Mitrovica Monitoring Team (MMT), working with youth in addressing their concerns and problems;

- violence in schools
- reforms and human rights

CBM also takes an active part in mediating between government institutions from both sides of Mitrovica (the northern part of the city is under administration of the Serbian Government and UNMIK Administration Mitrovica (UNMIK), the south part of the city is controlled by the Kosovo government) and serving as a bridge for reaching objectives in fulfilling the needs of citizens.

Despite the sensitive and difficult situation as elaborated above, CBM and its staff managed to stay together and to implement activities. The staff from the northern part of the city has continued to work in their office in the southern part despite the threats and political pressure that was created since last summer. CBM in the year of 2011 after starting M Magazine and Youth Platform Mi-2, and on the other hand the youth Human Rights School, CBM and its team developed many youth programs for the next two years. A fuller description of the organization's report on current activities follows.

Projects implemented in 2011

- ✓ **Bridging the divide (BtD)** – a two year project supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and supervised by Spark from the Netherlands.

Project goal

Stabilize and reintegrate the community by seeking to bridge divisions through

- highly visible infrastructural upgrades
- CSO empowerment
- Maturing media
- Open youth work
- The sustainable development of local, institutional and civil interethnic cooperation and communication

thus facilitating the depolarization and the reduction of the ethnic tensions while enhancing security, stability and reintegration. The project is one of the biggest projects ever at CBM, where a lot of activities have been going on and a big number of people are involved.

Established

Building board (BB) – composed by representatives from north and south, local representative from UAM, local representative from Mitrovica Municipality, and architect from north, engineer from south and community expert from south Mitrovica.

In the time of preparation of the project representatives from municipality south have submitted a list of 20 projects and the representative from UAM north has submitted a list of 20 projects.

New projects after starting the implementation of the project has been included in previous list and those are:

- Reconstruction of façade on housing building in Kralja Petra Street in northern Mitrovica (Finalized)
- Renovation of façade on housing building on central city square, southern Mitrovica (Finalized)
- Renovation of three sport playgrounds and two parks in northern Mitrovica, in multiethnic areas (technical acceptance is in progress)
- Rebuilding of sport playground in Elementary School in SuhoDoll/Suvi Do (Finalized)
- Electrical works and construction of the electric network of the public lighting (P.L.) in “Kroi I Vitakut/Brdjani” north of Mitrovica (the project has taken longer to implement due to the difficult situation in northern Mitrovica)
- Premises for public use next to orthodox church ((technical acceptance in process)

The situation in northern Mitrovica has caused further Serb community resentment towards the Kosovo authorities. The street blockades and the security risks present in northern Mitrovica aside CBM has continued to implement activities. On days of increased tension CBM staff has been unable to cross the bridges and have resorted to use of email and phone communication in order to continue the work on the project.

Worth mentioning is that in times of tensions the activities of the Infrastructural and Media component have continued. The only component still challenging is the CRYM since it is a coalition and decision making needs all the organizations of the coalition to take action and responsibility. The challenge became much bigger in 2011 with the arrest in Serbia of two key members of CRYM coalition partner organization CCSD, MomciloArlov and VukMitrovic, on charges of weapons dealing. This has damaged the reputation of CRYM.

Cooperation with target groups and policy makers differs based on the BtD component. In implementing the infrastructural component cooperation with local authorities is regular, productive and with the prospects for further cooperation. In addition cooperation with the citizens from both communities is developed smoothly, and there has not been a single incident while implementing the infrastructural upgrades. Serbs in the north have been very supportive to the companies that were implementing the upgrades eventhough one company was an Albanian one. The same support was reported to CBM by supervisors for the work delegated by the BB.

M-M@ag achieved a high degree of cooperation with the target group. The use of the web magazine, Miz and facebook, trainings of youth, interaction with journalists and photographers is proceeding.

CRYM marked a substantial cooperation with young people but not so much with policy makers and local authorities. It is to be noted that some local representatives were present in the official opening. However, a lot of cooperation and interaction is being developed with international stakeholders.

- ✓ **WomInnovation**– Project, part of a larger project (Innovation Centre Kosovo) financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and run by “Athene Project Management”

Wominnovation is a business network for women and innovation in Kosovo. It aims to increase women start-ups, growth ambitions in women entrepreneurs and inspire more women to become business leaders.

Wominnovation offers women access to courses and workshops locally, to enable them to manage and develop their businesses. The network with other women business owners and entrepreneurs, locally, regionally and internationally, offers mentor programs, study trips, match making, and business to business services.

Wominnovation offers the know-how, network and inspiration to empower women to succeed in business. The service includes different tools, such as mentoring, profiling, competence enhancement and the informative web portal www.wominnovation.org.

The webportal is a meeting place for women business owners and leaders as well as for those who aspire to become one. Thorough success stories, news, information, activities and courses across the country the portal aims to be a useful and inspiring contribution in the process of starting and succeeding with a business.

The wominnovation project will be implanted together with five local Kosovo organisations. Part of the project is Kosovo Association of Information and Communication Technology (STIKK) (Prishtina), CBM (Mitrovica), Business Service Center (Strpce), NGO “Lady” (Prishtina), and NGO “Sabor” (Mitrovica).

CBM as part of this network is planning to have four activities implemented in relation to the project every year, working towards attracting more women entrepreneurs to the project and will profile and function as an ambassador of Wominnovation.

- ✓ **Youth School for Human Rights**

The Human Rights School Project addresses the need to transfer knowledge about human rights, democracy and confrontation with the past to young people from different ethnic communities in Kosovo. It aims at establishing links between young people divided by ethnic boundaries to empower them to cooperate in making the society in which they live more accountable in fulfilling its human rights obligations. The program has been implemented through the following activities;

- **The development of the Youth Forum Group project (YFG) "My Human Rights"** directed at youth from both North and South Mitrovica. It has been implemented in three phases.
 - Knowing Human Rights through arts
 - Human Rights Presentation
 - Concert "Children's Day"

The activities were implemented by 12 members of YFG and activities took place in north and south Mitrovica primary schools.

- **Workshop of YFG**

The workshop took place on the 3-7 may 2011 near Prizren. The workshop was attended by 12 members of YFG. The main purpose of the workshop was reflection and evaluation of the activities/project that was developed, and possible future activities of the YFG.

- **Round Table with Stakeholders involved in the education system in Mitrovica**

In order to raise awareness of the human rights education of the youth in Mitrovica a round table was organized to discuss human rights education, its relevance and activities to be undertaken to further enhance human rights education in Mitrovica. 20 individuals from south Mitrovica and 12 from north participated. The individuals had different backgrounds; A university professor that teach human rights, school principals, municipal officials from the Directorate of Education, and school teachers from both primary and secondary education, NGO sector and youth.

- **Human Rights Education (School 2)**

The project has seen an increasing number of participants (19 youth from secondary schools in Mitrovica representing three ethnic communities: Serb, Albanian and Bosnian). The project involved participation of parents, municipal authorities, education institutions. Local and international NGOs were informed about the youth engagement in the Human Rights School.

- **Human Rights Education (School 3)**

The number of participants remained the same as in the 2nd Human Rights school. More applied and confirmed participation, but due to tensions in Mitrovica four Serb youth cancelled their participation. The 19 participants who participated consisted of five and 14 Albanian youth. The increased number of participants shows that the interest to participate in the Human Rights Schools is very high.

The aim of the trainings is to empower the youth with knowledge and tools to deal with human rights issues for them to disseminate and share with other youth when they return to their schools. This is supposed to ensure sustainability of the project and to contribute to the improvement of the overall situation among the youth.

✓ **Rock School**

The Mitrovica Rock School serves as a platform for bringing youth from Mitrovica's different communities together and promoting inter-ethnic cooperation in order to rebuild ties between Mitrovica's communities, decrease tensions, address negative stereotyping and rebuild confidence.

The Rock School has developed its activities along two branches. Rehearses and the Skopje Summer School. The rehearses are regularly held with youth and the coaches were involved in developing plans for fundraising for the activities in the school and the concert organised in Skopje, for the 4th year in a row.

The Mitrovica Rock School has become a platform for inter/ethnic cooperation, where the presence and participation on the ground of Musicians without Borders along with the local coaches provides rehearsal sessions on a regular basis. The coaches are involved in planning and fundraising future activities which help to assure the sustainability of the project.

Platform for interethnic cooperation

The project has been more successful than projected in terms of creating a platform for interethnic cooperation. The presence "on the ground" of coaches from 'Musicians without Borders' (MwT) has been vital to this process. During the pilot period much energy went into getting staff from the two parts of Mitrovica to communicate, coordinate and settling arguments over miscommunications.

Over the past year this picture has changed entirely and a strong, unified and dedicated staff has emerged. The change is due to several new factors:

- Recruitment of new people
- Introduction of regular work meetings
- Ambitious goals set for the team as a whole

The friendship formed through this among the teachers has become an example for the students, creating a relaxed, mixed setting for the Summer Schools and working against the taboo of being seen communicating online with someone from 'the other side'.

The internet has proved an invaluable tool in connecting communities that are physically divided. Social networking sites like facebook allow the youth to show that they are – or want to be – a part of modern popular culture. Through the Rock School pages and post-Summer School friendships, youth on both sides see they have this in common with the Rock School-ers of the other side and together they market that culture in a joint fight against nationalist expressions (often found in *turbofolk music*)

✓ **Rock Summer School**

The Mitrovica Rock School's fourth annual summer school was organized under the tensest circumstances ever since the Rock School started activities in 2008. As Pristina sought to gain customs control of the gates 1 and 31 in July 2011, the Serb population in northern Kosovo raised barricades to prevent the passage of Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and KFOR vehicles to the crossings. This fierce resistance against the move in the north was countered by strong support

among Kosovo Albanians south of the river Ibar. This was the setting against which the Mitrovica Rock School organized a rock music summer school for 28 youth and 10 teachers from the divided city.

The Skopje summer school is one of the most important components of the Mitrovica Rock School – a project that involves Mitrovica's shared heritage as a rock music city to promote interethnic cooperation, create a shared identity and combat ethnic prejudice.

During the Skopje Summer School the Rock School students and their teachers gathered in Skopje, Macedonia, for a week of intense training and performing. During the Summer School the students formed mixed bands, chose and rehearsed songs and decided on their band names together. Trainers from the Fontys Rock Academy (Tilburg, Netherlands) coached the Rock School's teachers and offered training in fields not available in the Mitrovica area. The week culminated in a major outdoor concert, attended by parents and friends from Mitrovica (bus transport was provided) as well as a large young audience from Skopje, itself a divided city in the region.

✓ **Women Together for Human Rights (WTHR)**

The aim is to empower women in Mitrovica by providing them the opportunity to go through basic and advanced trainings on human rights. Women from five different communities and locations were identified through a process by going door to door and through questionnaires. Around 120 women were identified, out of those 20 women leaders have followed advanced trainings in Human Rights and leadership. Different actions were organized, such as:

- Meetings with different stakeholders (e.g. municipality representatives)
- Strategy drafted together with women for the needs of their communities and neighborhoods
- Meetings with different donors and organizations

Women have met on a regular basis in order to establish the association 'Mitrovica Women', a draft statute has been compiled from leader women with the support of implementation partners. The association is in the process of registering as an NGO (documents have been submitted). Study visits to other associations were organized in Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study visits were organized for women leaders from the association in order to exchange experience with other associations. CBM together with CARITAS has been actively involved in discussions on the follow up of the project.

✓ **Multi-Ethnic program Miner Hill/Miner Hill Centre (2004-ongoing)**

Miner Hill Women centre is located in the Miner Hill area in northern Mitrovica. Around 100 women of various ethnic backgrounds visit the centre and attend its activities. The women's group has shown great solidarity in times of crisis. Keeping the centre open even through difficult periods of political turmoil or temporary funding deficiencies. The women centre also provides a meeting space for the local children of different ethnicities where they can play and learn together in a safe and stimulating environment. During 2011 this center has not been able to hold regular opening hours, but has still managed to open for activities. Most of the activities were trainings, lectures and exchanges with women from different places.

✓ **Youth Together for Human Rights**

The overall objective of the project is to increase the involvement of youth of various ethnic communities in Mitrovica in Peace-building and human rights journalism. Youth were informed about the program through a flyer and were asked to apply for the program. Around 100 youth applied and of those 40 were selected to go through the trainings and will at the end of it write an article on Human Rights. The articles will be published in Mi-2 and M-Magazine after selection by the editorial team. The project is supported by CARE International EC Project.

✓ **Drug prevention Campaign**

The main project goal was to raise awareness of drug abuse through a media campaign and provide an opportunity for members of the public to find out how they can join the fight against drugs.

In order to reach out to people, send them a message that they should acknowledge, openly discuss and fight drugs, CBM launched a media campaign through the ten electronic media in northern Kosovo. The introduction campaign emphasized the rule of law element in fighting drugs, and the activities of Kosovo Police (KP) and EULEX. The campaign was conducted with KP and EULEX.

Besides the activities implemented under this contract there were other activities going on with the support of other donors.

In general the campaign has reached a large number of people in Kosovo. The campaign bus was on tour for 60 days, reaching out to approximately 23.000 people with information and promo material. 45 billboards depicted the campaign posters, 14 of which were in the north. Kosovo wide 14 TV and radio stations aired the campaign spots, in the north 8 TV and radio stations broadcasted two spots throughout a period of 60 days. By mid may, due to these different outreach activities, the campaign had reached about 58% of Kosovo's population (assessed by polling report conducted by the research company 'Index Kosova').

✓ **Pro Peace Platform – Conflict Prevention Group**

CBM is member of the Pro Peace Platform which together with CARE International has established Kosovo CONflit Prevention Group. This group is created as foreseen in the Conflict Prevention in Kosovo project. Kosovo Conflict Prevention group is an indigenous local youth leadership network body intended to both model and promote action and advocacy by youth for civil society networks and prevention mechanisms in Kosovo.

The action includes the development of an online Early Warning System that provides up to date information on key social and political events in municipalities mentioned above. The early warning system will be fed with information coming from various sources including local communities, local and international NGOs, Protection Forces (Kosovo Police and KFOR), local and central government's respective departments, media, etc.

Quality data and variety of information sources are very important in order to identify best and worst case scenarios as well as to propose best possible solution (action) towards a potential problem.

✓ **Karl Popper Debate 2011**

Through implementation of this project CBM contributed in educating the youngsters for debating development of critical thinking, talking honestly, having proofs and facts when they discuss issues. Under this project the club of debate was created and met regularly, developed further debating skills. The beneficiaries from these activities were around 50 young people from the secondary schools in Mitrovica. The meetings with the debaters took place on a weekly basis. There were debates inside the club between teams every second month. These activities were crowned with the organization of the debate competition “Vucitrn/Vushtrri open 2011” which was hosted in Vucitrn/Vushtrri at the Police School in April 2011. The project was implemented in partnership with NGO “FOL” from Pristina.

Mitrovica Open Debate 2011 was organized to take place in the first week of October, where youth from five different cities participated. Five groups from Mitrovica were participating in this tournament of debates. Prishtina Open was organized in Prishtina by the partner organization “Youth for Human Rights” in November 2011. Five groups from Mitrovica participated in the debate. Karl Popper Debate has 21 active members.

✓ **Mitrovica Monitoring Team (MMT)**

MMT was established in 2008 and the main activities are monitoring the performance of local institutions. Different activities were implemented by the MMT in 2011:

➤ **Increased public oversight in the Rule of Law (2010 – ongoing)**

Monitoring the rule of law in Kosovo – CBM is partner of Forum for Civil Initiatives (FIC). The project continued for the second year and with this project NGOs tend to increase the monitoring of rule of law in Kosovo. In central level FIC managed to analyze the implementation of policies against illegal drugs, corruption in police and security from high officials. At local level CBM organized three round tables on policies against illegal drugs, corruption in Kosovo police department and security of high buildings, as well as a survey for police corruption with 300 citizen and several questionnaires with different representatives in different topics of institutional representatives.

A debate on implementation of policies against drugs on a national level was organized in Prishtina and was facilitated by CBM representatives.

➤ **Patients’ rights February – May 2011**

Public health institutions like all other institutions are obliged to provide their services in accordance with the highest international human rights standards. Therefore in order to raise the awareness of the patients, citizens and also health care service providers the activities foreseen in this project were directed towards the following target groups:

- All persons seeking health services within public Health Care institutions with a special focus on most marginalized groups
- Public Health Institutions and its employees.

MMT monitors visited public health facilities that operate under the responsibility of the Main Centre of Family Medicine (MCFM) in Mitrovica. This activity was undertaken in

order to assess if the card containing patients' rights was displayed and visible as ordered in the Health Administrative Order 01/2003, Charter of Patients' Rights.

Prior to visits at the Public Health facilities the project team met with different stakeholders to inform about the project. MMT visited health facilities in Mitrovica twice. The first round of visits started in March 2011 and the second round of visits started by the end of April 2011.

During the visits MMT found out that the a charter for Patients' rights was not properly displayed in many facilities. Directors and deputy directors were informed when the charter was not displayed correctly. After the second visit there were no major improvements in displaying and visibility of the document.

201 citizens from Mitrovica and its surroundings were interviewed through a structured quantitative questionnaire. The aim of this was to get information on the citizens' awareness of the existence of the charter on Patients' rights.

On May 19th 2011 the CBM organized a debate on "Chart of Patients' Rights and its application in Public Health institutions". Present were representatives from health department of the Mitrovica Municipality, interested citizens, volunteers, human rights experts, NGOs and Media correspondents. The aim of the debate was to present the findings of the MMT.

As an outcome of the debate a workshop was organized on the subject of Diabetes in Miner Hill (northern Mitrovica) as this was a concern of the locals there.

Media

- The debate was filmed by the local RTV Mitrovica and broadcast May 21st on TV and radio.
- The debate went on air on radio Ylberi on May 23rd.
- Published in the daily newspaper "epoka e re" on April 26th and on May 24th in KosovaLive.

CBM, for the purpose of raising the awareness of patients printed out 2000 copies of the flyers/leaflets containing the rights. All of them have been distributed to patients in the waiting area by CBM's volunteers in all 24 facilities of health care institutions.

The distribution was also done in other premises such as the Municipal premises, NGOs, coffee shops. At least 2000 families have gained knowledge about their rights as patients through the flyer.

The findings from the activities of the project are compiled in a report. The report findings were printed in 400 copies and distributed in the Health Department, Municipal premises, NGOs, health care facilities, and in schools. The report was presented at a conference covered by the Mitrovica media. This event was transmitted in the local TV and printed media.

➤ **Monitoring the institutions in Mitrovica**

CBM in partnership with IKV PAX Christi has started the implementation of the project on monitoring the institutions which are responsible for services for citizens in the north in Mitrovica. The monitoring included local institutions such as:

- UNMIK Administration Mitrovica (UAM)
- Municipality South
- Parallel structures in the north (Serb run Municipality)
- Municipal Preparatory Team

The proposal was compiled and submitted to the ECLO. Different stakeholders were contacted.

➤ **Debate on the statute of Mitrovica Municipality and the confrontation of the Mayor – executive with the facts from the CBM report**

MMT raised the issue of the Statute of Mitrovica Municipality which for a long time could not be approved for changes, even though the changes in practice already had happened. The debate brought different actors together; from the executive, assemble, CSO, media representatives and citizens. The statute issue was raised for the second time by CBM which has distributed the report on findings to participants in the debate. The report was discussed in another debate organized by TV Mitrovica and during the following assemble meeting. The Mayor was confronted with the facts from the MMT report.

✓ **Other activities**

- Haifa study visit – outcome of the conference “cities in transition” in May 2011 Londonderry, Derry.

During the Haifa Delegation’s participation in the “Cities in Transition” conference in Mitrovica 2010 it was discovered the multidimensional complexity of the situation and witness that both Albanian and Serb youth coming together and working with each other in the community. Based on this potential it was realized that these youth can build upon their success by enhancing their abilities and motivation to better serve a more active role within their community and be better equipped to address the political, economic and social problems they face in a sustainable model.

Nine activists from Mitrovica, mainly involved in civic work, managed to visit Haifa, Israel. The volunteers from Mitrovica, Kosovo got informed more closely regarding the CSO, municipalities, volunteers, state officials etc. and their work for the benefit of entire communities and ethnicities in Israel.

The activists had a unique opportunity to hear about best practices and experiences of several organizations, working on different topics but having one aim: to improve the everyday life of the citizens.

An important issue raised during the visits was leadership and a method how to raise leadership in neighborhoods as an important element of the peace process in the region.

During the visit the activists saw some of the activities taking place in Haifa:

- Conflict prevention
- Women empowerment
- CSO and state officials working against human trafficking
- CSOs working with rape and sexual abuse victims
- LGBTI rights groups

Visiting Haifa and seeing its colorfulness with all its ethnic communities and the organizations working to create a safe environment for the communities through their work was very inspiring and a great learning experience.

- **Breast cancer Initiative**

In October on the annual day against breast cancer, CBM organized a group of volunteers to distribute materials to people in the streets. Leaflets with instructions on early detection together with pink ribbons were handed out. A bus was organized for women and volunteers to participate in the annual anti cancer walk which was organized in Prishtina along with a round table where CBM was represented.

- **Earth Day April 21st**

CBM in coordination with the office of NGO National Democratic Institute the office in Mitrovica, organized an event to raise awareness of environmental issues in and around Mitrovica, such as throwing trash in the street. People of good will including municipal institutions (directorate for environment) participated. CBM and NDI organized a meeting with different NGOs, institutions and media actors and agreed to mark the day by cleaning the river bank park and other spots. The activities on the day also included:

- Advertising in media for the Earth Day event
- TV debate at TV Mitrovica on the importance of raising awareness about the environment and the Earth Day activities
- A graffiti of the Earth Day symbols was made
- Cleaning the Ibar/Iber River bank
- Participants cleaned outside their own premises; homes, schools, kinder garden