
After Chernobyl, Speaking Out

THE LEGACY OF CHERNOBYL continues to loom over Europe. It has been over thirteen years since the devastating accident of April 26, 1986, spewed ten tons of radioactive dust, causing the evacuation of 116,000 inhabitants in a 40-mile-wide circle surrounding Chernobyl. A concrete-and-steel sarcophagus shields the remains of reactor number four – and an estimated 140 tons of uranium fuel remains melded to the rubble. Severely disabled and dangerously unstable, a portion of the Chernobyl plant is still operational today. Safely replacing needed energy and shutting the plant down is a project that deeply concerns neighboring countries and the world.

see page 3

for Democratic Change

is an international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide.

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Shaping a Response to Kosovo

by Raymond Shonholtz, Founder and President

AS I WRITE THIS, Russian and NATO troops are entering Kosovo, after relentless bombing attacks forced Slobodan Milosevic to the negotiating table. It can be argued that a foreign policy that ends in war and mass refugee movement is a failed policy. Certainly for those dedicated to the goal of peacefully mediating human conflict, it is a sad and disturbing time. Yet, if one outcome, however history may judge discreet events, is an affirmation that all people, though diverse in religion or race, are deserving of dignity and safety, then a new and better international practice may prevail in the new millennium.



Within the penumbra of this ideal, both now and in the post-war environment, change and conflict management practice and processes become essential. For vital humanitarian and relief efforts to succeed, mechanisms which ameliorate areas of potential conflict and tension, and promote cooperative processes to address systemic social, economic and political issues, are critically necessary.

Within communities hosting refugees, in refugee camps, and in any repatriation effort, tensions, conflicts, and the development of social infra-structure and systems ... from security and sanitation to education and ethnic tolerance ... require exceptional awareness of and adherence to conflict prevention, reduction, and ameliorating mechanisms. The leadership of host communities and camps must be able to lead cooperative-planning processes in decision-making which will directly impact the future living conditions of displaced Kosovars. And in future, if repatriation is to be peacefully achieved and sustained, a myriad of distinct and united efforts must be invoked to address the systemic causes of conflict in this region.

Partners' Centers are uniquely placed to provide conflict management training and application teams

to "front line" states such as Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania, and eventually to Serbia and Kosovo. Last May, Croatian Co-Directors Branka Peuraca and Munir Podumljak visited Macedonia, meeting with government officials and refugee leaders to begin to formulate a response to the most pressing local needs. In Bratislava, our Regional Partnership meeting of Center Directors, (including directors from Bulgaria and Romania), focused on an overall plan for appropriate post-war initiatives. Partners' Director of International Programs, Brad Heckman, and I visited Albania (see photos, below and opposite), an experience which underscored the tragedy, need, and human perseverance invoked by the conflict in Kosovo.

As one of the few international organizations with in-country Centers staffed by indigenous trainers and practitioners from several Central and Eastern European nations, with broad experience in cross-border initiatives and post-conflict work, Partners feels a particular responsibility to assist in the refugee crisis and in the post-war recovery. Partners will encourage substantive conflict and change management processes that promote the needs and decision-making responsibilities of Kosovars, Serbian democrats, non-governmental organizations and front line states. Partners and the international community of conflict managers have a pivotal role to play in promoting a new vision and concomitant methodologies to prevent conflict and facilitate peaceful change in the Balkans. ▲

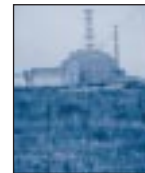


Above and opposite page: The Pishina Camp, near Tirana, Albania, provides shelter to 8,000 Kosovar refugees

Inside the Fence: In May, Partners' staff met with Kosovar refugees and camp leaders, relief workers, government officials, and local NGOs, to assess the need for cooperative planning processes in communities affected by the Kosovo crisis. Under a World Bank contract, Partners is also developing a commercial mediation program for the Albanian Ministry of Justice. ▲



After Chernobyl, Speaking Out



from page 1

Ten years ago, Ukraine began building two new nuclear power plants in the nearby towns of Khmelnytsky and Rovno. Construction was halted, however, due to public opposition and lack of funding. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is now considering funding completion of the project by the end of the year. However, EBRD rules require that project planners consider public concerns and opposition on potentially environmentally harmful investments. Such public oversight must occur in the country receiving the loan, as well as in all other potentially affected countries. A group of eight nations has been assembled to monitor the project. In Hungary, independent environmental organizations and the Ministry of Environmental Protection recently turned to Partners-Hungary to rescue a foundering and controversial public oversight process.

Fearful of deadly environmental contamination from radioactive cesium 137 and its long-term health effects, citizens demanded a voice in the Ministry's planning sessions. When the Ministry scheduled a hearing in the eastern city of Nyiregyhaza, far away from the media and public eye, environmental groups ardently objected to the choice of venue, inadequate publicity for the meeting, and failure to provide the public with any independent information or analysis in Hungarian about the new power plants. Partners-Hungary was called upon to facilitate discussions between these passionate groups and the Ministry. The first step was to

develop a mutually acceptable public deliberation process, during which the parties agreed to move the hearing to Budapest and to initiate a public information campaign, providing detailed written information in Hungarian.

Once in Budapest, over 100 citizens and environmental experts, representatives of the Hungarian Ministry and Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection, and representatives of the EBRD and Energoatom, the Ukrainian developer, attended the assembly hearing, facilitated by Partners-Hungary. In a recorded session, the public seized the opportunity to pose some difficult questions to the developers and voice strong opposition to the EBRD. Ukraine proponents of the new plants argue the economic and energy needs of the region -- that new plants are necessary before the aging and dangerous graphite-core reactors of Chernobyl (in Hungarian, Csernobil), can be put to sleep. Citizens in neighboring countries, including Hungary, site the hazards -- including the more than 800 cases of thyroid cancer reported in children from the Chernobyl region -- aware that a single accident could change the landscape and pattern of life for generations to come.

It remains to be seen whether the EBRD will approve the loan, though Hungary and other countries oppose the project. Whatever the outcome, Partners-Hungary and the public hearing participants are satisfied that, despite numerous obstacles, the public was able to exercise its right to speak out, and in doing so, perhaps, to exorcise the haunting memory of Chernobyl. ▲

Cross-Border Initiatives

To mark the Tenth Anniversary of Partners for Democratic Change, Partners' staffs from Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics and Transcaucasus met in Bratislava last month, to review successful programs and plan Partners' role in the global future of conflict and change management. In November 1998, these same Centers came together for mediation and management trainings led by Partners-Czech and Partners-Hungary.

As part of a workshop on alternative approaches to ethnic conciliation, Centers visited Nograd County, Hungary, to meet with members of Partners-Hungary's model Ethnic Conciliation Network, and with the county police chief, and a Roma family who had used the Network's mediation services.

At the World Mediation Forum in Cuba, Partners-Argentina presented "Cooperative Planning and Consensus Building on Public Policies" to an international panel of conflict resolution practitioners.



As part of the Soros Foundation's International Conference in Romania, Partners-Czech presented its "Against Racism Project," a program for primary and secondary school students geared to counter the recent rise in racism and xenophobia.

Representatives from Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, joined Partners-Slovakia for a training on methods to mediate ethnic minority-majority conflicts.

At Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, Partners-Slovakia led a lecture on collaborative decision making and community planning for students in the Master of Arts in Policy Studies program.

Upon invitation from the Kettering Foundation, Partners-Hungary and Partners-Slovakia joined civic leaders and researchers from all over the world in Miami, Florida, to prepare a report on the characteristics and prerequisites to building democratic civil societies. ►

The Wallenberg Approach to Tolerance

THE RAOUL WALLENBERG INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL of Warsaw is one of the few schools in Poland where disabled and abled students learn together in a shared environment. The school also offers programs on tolerance toward different ethnic, national and religious groups. Because of its openness to new ideas and emphasis on tolerance, the Wallenberg School offered a perfect venue for Partners-Poland's pilot Peer Mediation Program.



Disabled and abled mediators show off their shirts

Partners-Poland began by training 15 teachers in conflict management skills, enabling them to become student advisors. The teachers and Partners' staff then conducted short mediation presentations in each classroom, and recruited potential mediators from among the student body. Of the 300 abled students and 44 disabled students who participated in the overall program, twenty-six students, both disabled and abled, completed the rigorous training program to become peer mediators. Partners' staff worked with pedagogists specializing in disabled issues to develop student sensitivities to the unique context existing in the Wallenberg School.

To date, Wallenberg students have successfully mediated cases ranging from typical schoolyard conflicts to multi-party disputes on how to use money collected for homeless animals. A survey conducted by Partners-Poland demonstrated that many students are using their new conflict management skills on a daily basis. According to Danuta Bozentowicz-Sarna, Principal of the Wallenberg School, "We see Partners-Poland's Peer Mediation Program as the next step in preparing our students for responsible and mature participation in community life. This program will create opportunities for our students to resolve conflicts peacefully."

Funded by the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation, the program's popularity also enticed local businesses, who showed their support by designing a program logo and slogan for posters and brochures, and producing beaming yellow mediation T-shirts for students.

Interest in this pilot project has spread, resulting in offers to replicate the program. In response to one such request, Partners-Poland conducted a conflict resolution training program in a primary school in neighboring Raszyn. ▲

Para un Futuro Mejor

THROUGHOUT ARGENTINA, the second largest country in South America, the staff of Fundación para el Cambio Democrático (Partners-Argentina), has responded to a variety of cooperative planning needs, bringing interested parties, community members and decision-makers together to develop a consensus approach to large-scale projects or controversial community issues.

In Baradero, a northwestern county on Rio de la Plata in the province of Buenos Aires, community members and municipal representatives requested Partners' assistance in stemming the increase in drug abuse and youth-to-youth violence at night. Many community members participated in several cooperative planning sessions – the City Legislative Council, school counselors and teachers, non-governmental organizations, union representatives, local police, social workers from Baradero Penitentiary, concerned parents, and informed youth. In listening to the target group, ranging in age from ten to twenty, Partners' trainer Oscar

Rodriguez Robledo repeatedly heard the same message: "We have no future, and don't care about it."

Partners worked with the varied, sometimes opposing, groups to conduct a needs assessment, define the problem, create a process design and educate the stakeholders in communication and problem solving techniques. Partners then facilitated the cooperative planning process, while also further educating participants in order to promote their ability to continue the process independently in the future.

This first multi-party community initiative in Baradero County successfully developed a strategic plan to address youth violence and its underlying causes. By creating school-based awareness programs, conducting youth outreach, and involving the community in a shared responsibility, Baradero is well on its way to preventing adolescent violence and making the streets safe after dark. ▲

Reinventing History in Pisek

ON THE PICTURESQUE BANKS of the river Vltava, Bohemian kings founded the town of Pisek in the 13th Century. In modern times, Pisek, a tourist town in a sea of forests, reflects the Czech Republic's complex ethnic challenges. For the large Romany population, lack of representation in public institutions exacerbates ongoing majority-minority tensions.

In the context of this need, Partners-Czech initiated and conducted a dialogue process which brought together Roma citizens and local decision-makers to promote Roma participation in public life. The project, sponsored by the Council of Europe, began with extensive interviews of Romas, police, and local officials in Pisek and neighboring towns in order to select participants and identify crucial issues. The interviews identified different important issues – housing, education, unemployment and public safety as common concerns among all sectors. Not surprisingly, interpretations of these concerns varied — many Romas felt that police did not protect their neighborhoods, whereas ethnic Czechs often stereotyped Romas as criminals.

Through initial contacts with Pisek's unemployment agency, Partners gained access to the local government and town police and successfully garnered support for the dialogue process. Bringing Roma representatives to the table required Partners-Czech to build trust and relationships, and occasionally required shuttle diplomacy to get rival Roma clans to simultaneously participate. The next stage of the project consisted of communication skills workshops for Romas and local officials. After a common set of tools had been learned, Partners facilitated a series of four round-table meetings for Roma representatives, police, the mayor, elected officials, and social service providers.



A welcoming Roma family home

The meetings produced a consensus agreement to implement new institutional relations between Romas and the local government, police, and social service agencies. The dialogue group developed several new task forces within the Town Hall, including city officials and Roma representatives in an ongoing effort to reduce crime and prevent drug abuse. Roma representatives became members of key municipal committees, including the Crime Prevention Committee, Housing Committee, and Youth Committee. The group developed a Roma citizen police watch, and planned a joint Unemployment Agency-School Authority project to improve Romas' education and job opportunities.

In neighboring towns, several mayors agreed to promote similar types of programs in their communities, while neighboring Roma citizens developed civic associations to advocate for Roma inclusion in local decision-making. As the collaborative process takes root, this fair southern region holds great promise to be a beautiful place for all inhabitants. ▲



Historic symbol from the Prachen Museum in Pisek

"Power, Politics and Collaboration: Bringing Vision to Reality," a presentation on the cooperative planning work of Partners-Hungary was part of the annual meeting of the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution, in Portland, Oregon.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is sponsoring Partners-Czech in a training program to foster NGO development in Ukraine.

Workshops and trainings on intercultural communication were presented by Partners-Hungary to students at the Youth Center of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, and the Masters program of Comparative European Social Studies in Maastricht, Holland.

At the Freedom House sponsored Conference of the Association of Missing Persons, held in Bosnia, Partners-Slovakia conducted a challenging and emotional training for Bosnian, Croatian and Yugoslavian participants. In Yugoslavia, Center staff conducted trainings in teambuilding, leadership and conflict resolution for members of TIM TRI, a civics training organization. A second meeting between TIM TRI and Partners-Slovakia has been postponed by the Kosovo crisis.

Argentina

As a result of a cooperative planning process facilitated by Partners-Argentina, the government of the city of Buenos Aires donated public property to build a sports center for youth-at-risk in its Mitre neighborhood.

An article in *La Nación*, one of Argentina's largest newspapers, featured the Center's work and recommendations regarding mediation in private property regulation and dispute settlement.

In Cuba, staff presented Partners' work in "Cooperative Planning and Consensus Building on Public Policies," at the World Mediation Forum.

Director Gachi Tapia

was given an award for her early and constant dedication to mediation by the First National Congress on Mediation. ►



Bulgaria



Channel One of Bulgarian National Television aired five parts in the mediation series, "I Win, You Win." The Center's project on children rights, "My Rights and My Duties," was featured on Bulgarian National Radio's "Citizens' Culture."

In Vratza, known for environmental pollution, Partners trained representatives of local government, schools and non-governmental organizations in cooperative planning, enabling them to develop better alternatives for pressing environmental issues.

Through "Young People Leaving Care," Partners is teaching life skills and career training to young people who have "graduated" from state-sponsored home care.

Visit Partners-Bulgaria's new website at: www.partners-bulgaria.dir.bg.

Croatia

Partners joined with the Institute for the Development of Human Resources (IHDR), a conflict management training organization working in Croatia and Bosnia, to create Partners' newest Center, the Partnership for Social Development. Branka Peuraca and Munir Podumljak, Co-directors, are working in Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia.

Croatia's Academic Workshop included professors and advanced graduate students in social work, psychology, and political science at the Universities of Zagreb and Rijeka, plus two experts in law enforcement from the Police Academy in Zagreb.

Czech Republic

Mayors throughout the Czech Republic attended a Partners' workshop entitled "Minority Issues in the Context of Local Authority."

In elementary schools, Partners is working to create a peer program in drug abuse prevention. ➤

Orchestrating the Velvet Revolution

IN THE EYES OF MANY PEOPLE throughout the region, Slovakia's Velvet Revolution, spurred to success through the collaboration of non-governmental organizations, came to a successful conclusion with the parliamentary elections of September 1998. The majority rule of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia, led by Vladimir Meciar, was defeated, and replaced by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, leader of the Slovak Democratic Coalition, who now heads a four-party coalition government.

The Slovak Federal Republic's constitution provides for a multi-party, multi-ethnic, parliamentary democracy. However, during its four-year term, the governing coalition led by former Prime Minister Meciar, was accused of numerous violations of democratic principles, including thwarting a May 1997 referendum on the direct election of the president. It was feared that the parliamentary elections might be manipulated. Non-governmental organizations strongly felt the need to strengthen citizen participation and ensure fair elections. Eleven NGOs, including Partners-Slovakia, joined together in a large-scale nationwide civic campaign for free and fair elections. The Obcianska Kampan (Civic Campaign), (OK98), proved the significant and positive role that the instruments of civil society play in strengthening the democratic process.

OK98 was developed in January, 1998. Its three broad goals in over 58 independent election projects, were to **inform voters, increase voter turnout, and monitor the election.**

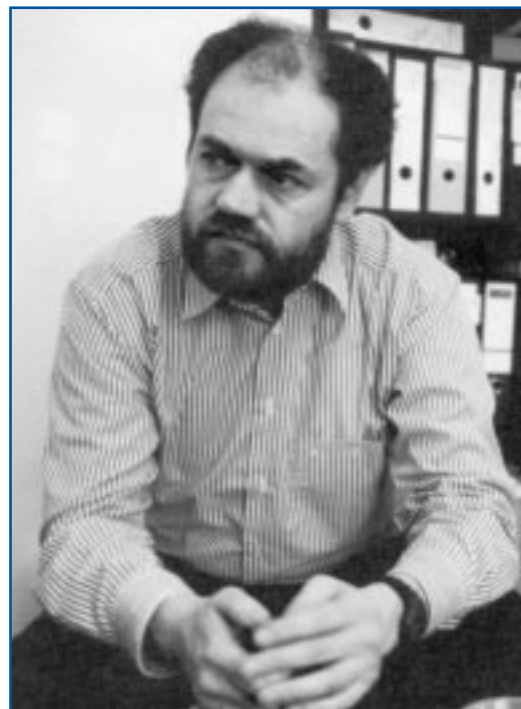
Partners-Slovakia was deeply involved in all aspects of OK98. In a series of Pre-Election Roundtables, Partners led trainings for NGOs on how to organize and moderate pre-election forums for citizens. The roundtables also featured discussions with actual candidates. Partners also facilitated and mediated OK98 meetings and coordinated pre-election citizen activities. As part of its education campaign, Partners trained lecturers from the European Law Students Association concerning the importance of participation of young voters in the elections. Finally, Partners facilitated a series of seminars for the Election Crisis Network – a network of NGOs providing approximately 2,500 election monitors to pre-

vent any manipulation during the two days and one night of the election process.

The many months of preparation and monitoring, two million posters, leaflets and publications, thirteen rock concerts, video spots, short films, and political debates organized by NGOs participating in the campaign were a great success. Voter turnout reached a record 84% - higher than any neighboring country. Eight out of ten voters did so for the first time . . . and they voted for change. As the last ballots from September 26 were tallied, a coalition of opposition parties had won 93 out of 150 parliamentary seats.


Word of the election results came on October 1, 1998, from an elated Partners-Slovak staff: "Some of us were even sleeping in the office to guard NGO monitoring. Slovakia again begins to be a cultural, human-friendly country. Please join our beautiful feeling for a while."

On the heels of their success, Partners-Slovakia and other leaders of the OK98, led several trainings in Sharing the OK98 Experience, a conference for NGO leaders from post-communist countries with upcoming elections. The response was overwhelming - over 60 NGO leaders from Croatia, FRY, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, the Baltics, and Russia came for this event, each perhaps renewing their hope that change is possible through authentic democratic process. ▲



Dušan Ondrušek, Director of Partners-Slovakia

300,000's a Crowd



GEORGIA'S 1993 WAR with secessionist Abkhazia resulted in the influx of nearly 300,000 ethnic Georgians, leading to the transformation of many massive soviet-era hotels into cramped, run-down refugee tenements. As many as ten or more people representing multiple families may live in the same former luxury suite, with a professor and a ditch-digger bedding down in the same room. View balconies are strewn with laundry and belongings which have no other place to go. The crowding exacerbates tensions between dwellers, and pits community members against refugees. It has also destroyed a lucrative and much-needed tourist industry by making hotel accommodations virtually unaffordable.

In the city of Poti, Partners-Georgia is working with one such hotel (recently purchased by a former refugee), the local government, residents, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to develop a cooperative planning program focusing on the housing needs of the refugee community as they relate to the city's economic development issues. This is part of the Center's multi-faceted program, funded in part by the World Bank, to address the needs of Georgia's refugees by bringing various stakeholder groups together to work on joint solutions.

Partners offers an array of related programs specifically targeted to assist refugee communities, including mediation services, facilitation of Abkhazi-Georgian NGO dialogues, and training of refugee leaders in conflict management skills. In recent months, Partners' Center, based in Tbilisi, also organized a recreational camp, providing a unique experiential learning opportunity for refugee children living throughout Georgia. ▲

Two of the Center's courses – Communication and Negotiation Skills, and Mediation Skills – are open to the public and fully booked for three months in advance.

"Education toward Tolerance and Against Racism," the Center's project in secondary schools, will feature a video program developed by Amnesty International, on the subject of immigrants and refugees.

Georgia

Post-graduate students from the Georgian Institute of Public Administration were trained in effective communication and group dynamics skills.

Partners facilitated a UNDP-sponsored meeting for Georgian ministry officials and representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations and businesses, to brainstorm remedies for the high unemployment rate of professionals in Georgia.

As a result of the International Alert's Workshop, "Women's Role in Conflict Management," facilitated in Russia by Partners-Georgia, several regional projects were developed to address cross-ethnic activities and management of conflicts in the Transcaucasus.

Hungary

Over 100 police from Hungary and neighboring countries attended Partners' presentation at the conference entitled, "Protection of Victim's Human Rights."

To build cooperation on minority issues, Partners is conducting skills training and cooperative planning processes with the Gypsy Minority Governments of numerous counties in Hungary.

The Center is preparing a public policy study and meeting with Hungary's Supreme Court to implement legislation that promotes mediation.

Lithuania

Partners-Baltic provided training in project writing and other strategic development skills for representatives of regional Social Welfare Departments in Lithuania. ►

As part of the "Women and Small Business Conference," organized by the Finnish Women's Association and the Finnish Embassy, Partners chaired the session on "Public Relations and Small Business" for representatives from women's organizations in Lithuania and Finland.

The Centers facilitation of strategic planning sessions for the Business Studies Center (BSC) was so successful that future related trainings have been planned, including "Public Relations Strategy and Its Implementation," "Project Management," and "Conflict Resolution."

Poland

A model training program in disaster preparedness – building constructive, two-way communication systems between local authorities and citizens in disaster management – has received much attention. After two training sessions, the Polish Parliamentary Commission on Local Government is considering support of a national campaign.

Partners has been authorized by the Head Judge of the Appellate Court in Warsaw to conduct mediations in the country's pilot victim-offender mediation program.

Center staff are working with other training agencies in Poland, to develop a trainer association and establish trainer standards and a certification system.

Managers and employees of the 50 regional offices of the National Coordination Bureau for AIDS Prevention attended Partners' training in project planning methods.

Romania

In Kenya this spring, Partners-Romania led a Training-of-Trainers program sponsored by UNHCS and the UN Environmental Programme. **Partners trained environmentalists from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda** in collaborative problem solving for environmental issues and guided participants in developing country action plans. ➤



Guaranteeing a Place for Little People

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION on the Rights of the Child asserts that children are entitled to a full range of rights, including protection from cruelty and neglect, freedom from use as cheap labor or as soldiers, and the right to express their own opinions. Unfortunately, most children and adults lack adequate knowledge or resources to effectively protect these rights.

In Bulgaria, the needs of homeless children, children in under-funded state institutions, Roma children suffering ethnic discrimination, abused children and children from low income families are most urgent. An estimated 71.9% of Bulgaria's children grow up in families whose earnings are under the social minimum living standard; 42.5% live in extreme poverty. The school drop-out rate has doubled over the past eight years, while public expenditure for child care services has remained flat.

Under a grant from Save the Children Fund, United Kingdom, Partners-Bulgaria has embarked on a nationwide program to improve the level of understanding concerning human rights for children, including participation in decision-making, non-discrimination for children with disabilities, and tolerance toward ethnic diversity. The *My Rights, My Duties* program educates children from ages five to thirteen, parents, teachers, and other school workers in the protection of rights for Bulgaria's youngest citizens. Partners is also creating a training kit for teachers, and building a network of organizations working to improve the welfare of children.

Hundreds of Bulgarian schools now integrate children's rights into their curriculum, spreading the word to both students and adults. Recognizing the distinct value of *My Rights, My Duties*, Partners hopes to replicate the program throughout Central and Eastern Europe. ▲

A Forum for Reform

TEN YEARS AGO, few would have expected Romania, then an isolated dictatorship, to export lessons on democracy building. Now, Partners-Romania is spreading its local government reform expertise throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The Center's Working Together regional program is building an international network of local government training organizations from 18 countries in the region. The regional program is financed by the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative of the Open Society Institute.

Partners-Romania is training individuals from each participating country in skills such as consultation, leadership, management of local government, cooperative planning and financial management. The training methodology is based on experiential learning about the role elected officials are called upon to perform. It is designed to build bridges between citizens and governments through open communication, shared leadership, and productive collaboration. Recipients, trained also to become trainers, return to their countries to impart these new skills to public leaders nationwide. A monthly

newsletter, FORUM International, keeps participants abreast of training resources, evaluative statistics, and new ideas.

Key to the success of this program is Partners-Romania's creative collaboration with the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat). Primary training materials for building local government capacity were originally developed by Fred Fisher for Habitat in a series entitled Elected Leadership, and have since been extensively tested and adapted. The series consists of eleven roles performed by elected officials, including Policy Maker, Decision Maker, Communicator, Facilitator, Negotiator, Financier, Overseer, Enabler, Power Broker, Institution Builder, and Leader.

In order to expand the scope of training topics into other related areas, Partners-Romania, in collaboration with Partners-Hungary and -Slovakia, is working with UNCHS-Habitat to create a new set of manuals and materials on participatory processes and conflict resolution skills. These essential elements will be added to the repertoire of training materials serving citizens and governments worldwide. ▲



Lighting a Match in Lithuania



A blind child studies new shapes

BUILDING THE CAPACITY of disempowered groups within civil society is an essential cornerstone for Partners' programs around the world.

With the restoration of independence in Lithuania in 1991, social norms have undergone many radical changes. Nevertheless, persons with disability still face a number of hurdles. A sociological survey commissioned by the Disability Information and Consultation Bureau in March of 1999, reinforced the opinion that the major barriers to social integration and equal participation of persons with disability are the inaccessible environment and facilities, lack of adequate services, and poor attitudes in the community toward persons with disability.

Since the early 1990's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on disability have mushroomed – there are now more than fifty national disability organizations registered in Lithuania. Much of the work of Partners-Baltic has been aimed at strengthening these NGOs and building awareness around disability issues.

Under the guidance of Gaila Muceniekas, Director, and trainers Kristina Kovaite and

Ricardas Dirzys, Partners has led a dozen seminars in eleven cities for over 300 persons from the Lithuanian Union of the Disabled, an organization which unites over 6,000 members. Topics have included the role and functions of NGOs, strategic planning, roles and responsibilities of committees, working with media, as well as lessons in training design and implementation. Individuals with physical disability have participated in each of these workshops, which has challenged Partners to rethink ways of making trainings more inclusive, from the physical setup of the room to the content of participatory activities. In one exercise requiring participants to respond to noise, an individual with a hearing impairment was reassigned to make the sounds . . . by rustling paper or lighting a match . . . so that he would not be excluded because of disability.

Graduates of the extended two-week trainings for future trainers have rated the sessions highly and have requested follow-up sessions to further their skills and confidence. Together, Center staff and the new trainers are strengthening the ability of the disabled to participate equally and fully in Lithuanian society. ▲

Academics from the Universities of Bucharest, Oradea, and Isi, Petre Andrei University, the Commercial Academy, and the Urban and Regional Planning Institute, participated in an academic workshop on designing curriculum in conflict and change management. Center staff also conducted a series of lectures at the Post Graduate School for Urban and Regional Planning.

Under the United Nations Center for Human Settlements, Partners-Romania conducted a training in local government reform for trainers from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the Maldives.

Slovakia

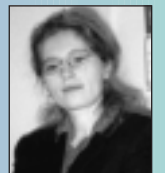
Staff of Volkswagen, Sony, IKEA and other large corporations in Slovakia were trained in conflict management and related skills by ARK, Partners' LLC.

On March 22, Radio Free Europe aired an interview with staff about Roma versus non-Roma relations in Slovakia, related current issues and conflict prevention possibilities – topics generally under-represented in the Slovakian media.

Partners will be assisting the Ministry of Justice and the Association of Slovak Judges in writing legislation to incorporate mediation and alternative dispute resolution into Slovakian law.

Regional Partnership

Kinga Szuly has been hired as Manager of the Regional Partnership of centers in Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics and Transcaucasus. She is compiling a slate of "best practices" and actively pursuing regional initiatives.



The Regional Partnership includes all nine Partners' Centers and Partners-International. The Partnership is designed to promote on a regional basis the field of conflict and change management, to export expertise from one Center to another, and to enable Centers to introduce the work of Partners' organization to local funders, governments, and non-governmental organizations in their country.

The Regional Partnership will showcase Partners' work in the Council of Europe's upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration. ►

Center Highlights

United States

Terry Amsler and Hilda Gutiérrez Baldoquin have been hired as Director and Associate Director of Partners-United States. Partners-United States has two primary goals: to enhance the capacity of existing community organizations to initiate citizen participation and cooperative planning processes in their communities, and to increase the number of persons from diverse backgrounds able to conduct and train in these processes.

As part of its inaugural work, Partners-United States is identifying and developing relations with potential organizations. Various materials, including a summary of services, and joint commitment principles statement are available to community organizations. A research unit has also been initiated to identify innovative programs and best practices in human rights, ethnic and minority tolerance, youth issues, community governance and other conflict management and prevention fields.



Embracing Peace

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's December 1998 **InFocus** magazine, entitled *Embracing Peace*, features the work of Partners' Centers in Hungary and Slovakia. In full-color photographs and in-depth text, the pages depict "all kinds of good stories." For a complimentary copy, please contact our San Francisco office. ▲

Repatriating the Lessons Learned

NO NATION IN THE WORLD can boast perfect social, economic and environmental justice. In the United States, equal access is a goal, not yet a truth ... all communities are not granted an equal voice in the trends set by marketing firms, political strategists, and economic and social institutions. And there are clearly communities who suffer unequal treatment on more than a random basis. Partners-United States, a program inaugurated in recent months by Partners for Democratic Change, is gearing up to make an important difference for these communities in twenty U.S. cities over the next two years.

Partners recognizes the need to increase the number of people of color, youth, and other ethnic and national minorities who are skilled in collaborative and consensus-building processes. Skills training and application is particularly important given the complexity of the problems facing communities and the need for people to work together – within and across group and organizational boundaries – to get problems solved. Needed skills encompass a range of collaborative processes that enable communities to hold more effective public conversations, envision and plan for the future, make decisions and resolve complex problems – all of which promote public participation and a stronger civic infrastructure.

Partners-United States will work with twenty local organizations that seek to create or expand their ability to offer pertinent skills and processes to their community. These local organizations will identify their needs, assets and interests. With Partners' support, each will determine the specific competencies their organization seeks to acquire, and Partners' staff and training faculty will provide the needed training and technical assistance at no charge.



Hilda Gutiérrez Baldoquin, Associate Director, and Terry Amsler, Director of Partners-United States

Participating local organizations are currently being identified based on a number of factors, including a sustained commitment to such work, and a willingness to apply the new skills and process-knowledge in the community. In some communities this may take the form of public conversations on potentially divisive issues. Others may focus on collaborative problem solving processes to address the concerns of young people. Elsewhere, community networks concerned with health or environmental issues may learn to facilitate processes that will help to shape the community's agenda for improvement in these areas. The specific application of the acquired skills and processes will be shaped in each case by the needs of the community.

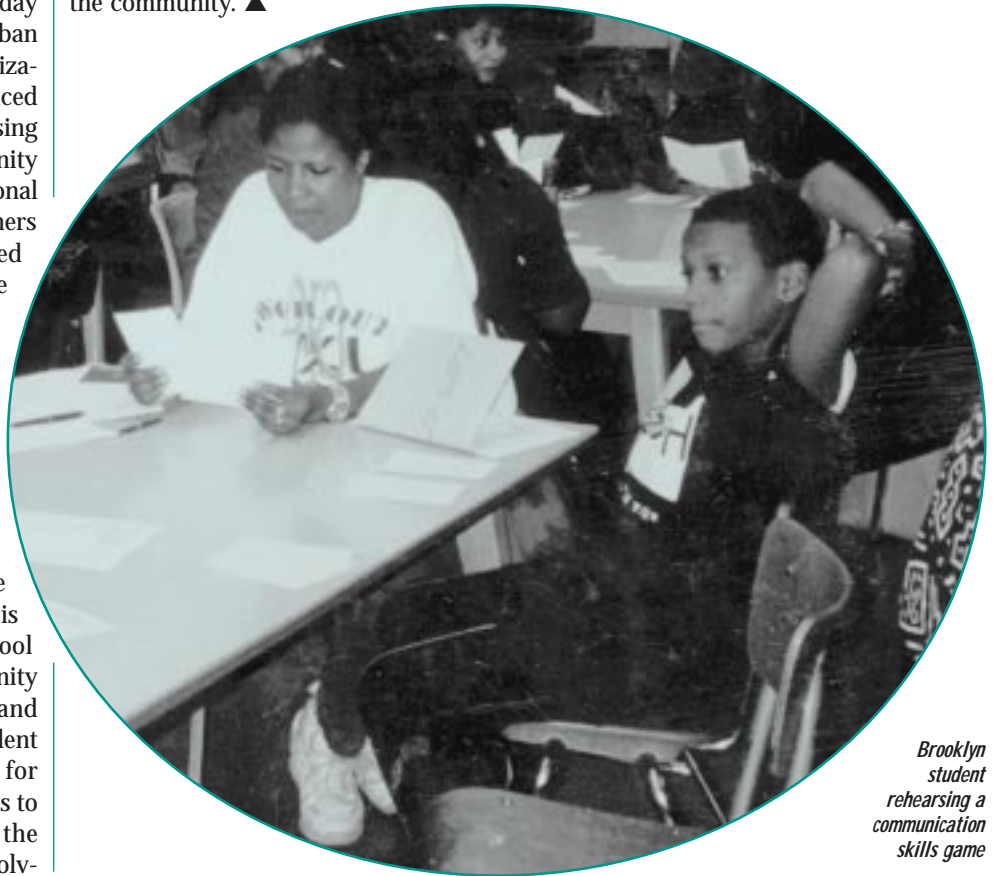
The result will be a more inclusive and broader application of collaborative and consensus-building approaches, enabling diverse communities to address and resolve the challenges they face. With ten years of expertise in the international arena, Partners is pleased to be bringing its best practices and lessons learned to underserved and under-empowered communities in the United States. ▲

An Olive Branch in the Urban Landscape

THROUGH RANDOM ACTS OF TERROR, dozens of students lie buried on hillsides in Oregon, Kentucky and Colorado. But the media blaze that surrounds these horrors seldom depicts the routine daily tensions that plague public and private educational institutions, where crime, drugs and violence vie for center stage, displacing textbooks, lectures and extra-curricular activities. Public education in the United States today must operate in an environment rife with urban and suburban discontent, using aging organizational models to try to keep pace despite reduced funding, lack of parental partnerships, a rising crime rate, and a perceived lack of community involvement or support. To help educational institutions cope with such challenges, Partners has initiated a Public Sector Practice, directed by Jim Isenberg, Vice President, to provide consulting services and training in conflict and change management, cooperative planning, and organizational analysis and development.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Partners is helping school district officials develop safety programs and organizational capacity to ease ethnic tensions and support a more positive classroom environment for the entire school community. Further east, Partners is working with the New York City School District and criminal justice and community organizations, using parents, students, and teachers to develop a comprehensive student safety and violence reduction program for schools, while also examining new approaches to community-based crime prevention. In the Brooklyn borough, a community problem-solv-

ing and crime-prevention program, managed by the Division of Student Safety and Prevention Services, brings together parents, students, teachers and school security staff to brainstorm on cooperative ways to improve safety and optimize the learning environment. These programs are an important step in alleviating the tensions that disrupt the classroom and the community. ▲



Brooklyn student rehearsing a communication skills game

Additions to Partners' Library of Publications:

A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts, by Harold H. Saunders, Partners' Board of Directors

Origins of Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers, by Warren Zimmermann, Partners' Board of Directors

Cítanka Pre Neziskové Organizcie (Reader on Nonprofit Organizations), by Bednarik, Butora, Hrubala, Jalcova, Labath, Ondrusek, Pauliniova, Pruzinska, Sinclair and Zelenakova — Partners-Slovakia

Mediación: Herramientas Para Trabajar en Mediación, by Francisco Diez and Gachi Tapia — Partners-Argentina

After Chernobyl, Speaking Out

page 1

Shaping a Response to Kosovo

page 2

Para un Futuro Mejor

page 4

The Wallenberg Approach to Tolerance

page 4

Reinventing History in Pisek

page 5

Orchestrating the Velvet Revolution

page 6

300,000's a Crowd

page 7

A Forum for Reform

page 8

Lighting a Match in Lithuania

page 9

Repatriating the Lessons Learned

page 10

An Olive Branch in the Urban Landscape

page 11

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The Chernobyl skyline in present day Ukraine.

Photo: Arnold Drapkin, *Time Magazine*

