WORLD LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE
CLUB DE MADRID

The Shared Societies Project:
Leadership for Dialogue, Diversity and Social Cohesion
Building a world safe for difference

Replicable example of practice

Commitment X

Take steps to reduce tensions and hostility between communities and ensure members of all communities are protected from abuse, intimidation and violence

Suggested Approach

- Develop early warning systems to monitor inter-community relations and identify where preventive action is required.

Commission to Preserve National Monuments

Country: Bosnia-Herzegovina

Background

- Since the war in the early 1990s the country is much polarised. There were many atrocities carried out during the war.
- In addition to people being killed and displaced, places of worship, graveyards and other significant sites were destroyed or vandalised as symbolic removal of that community from the area. Often the sites were built on for other purposes
- There is a commitment to restore as far as possible these sites which are described as “national monuments”.
- Restoration can lead to new tensions, particularly with the return of some displaced people problems, as sections of the community resist restoration of the national sites while communities want to press ahead with sites that are related to their nationality

Goals

- To identify and designate national monuments, both portable and non-portable
- To respond to petitions to give a ruling on such sites
- To make decisions on specific sites
- To set standards for the management of specific sites

Method

- The Commission is made up of 5 commissioners
- It appoints expert teams to assess specific monuments
- It monitors and reviews the state of affairs and activities relating to national monuments at risk from illicit building, inexpert reconstruction and lack of maintenance or other hazards.
- The Commission has drawn up a list of endangered monuments of which emergency protection measures are required to prevent them being completely destroyed. As of May 2005 the list included the 35 most endangered monuments:
- In 2003 the Commission launched a Campaign for the protection of endangered monuments, with the aim of educating the public on the importance of the heritage for preserving the identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of raising funds for their rehabilitation.
- The Commission works with all levels of society from the international community down to local NGOs.

Impact

- The Commission has been effective in protecting a number of sites.
- It has raised awareness of the value of all the traditions and cultures in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- It has ensured that the two entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina support the reconstruction of national monuments regardless of which nationality they represent.
- Its rulings have in general been respected and it therefore has managed to diffuse some very tense and intractable situations

Enabling conditions

- The Commission was set up as part of the Dayton Agreement (Annex 8) and therefore has considerable authority and its decisions cannot be ignored.

Comments

- The fact that the Commission is willing to work with any level of the community and must consider any petition presented to it, the Commission can help groups who cannot get attention from their own municipalities.

Contact / References

The Commission's website English is:
http://www.aneks8komisija.com.ba/index.php?lang=4