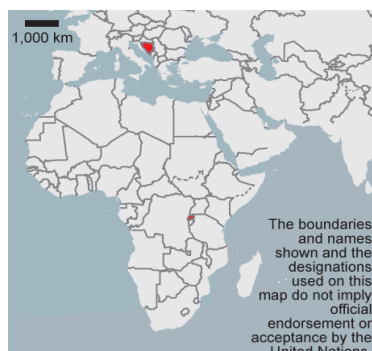


Imagine coexistence: A project to ensure the sustainable repatriation and reintegration of people returning to divided communities



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina; Rwanda

Duration: January 2001 to March 2002

Implementing UN Agencies: UNHCR

Other Implementing Partners: Program on Negotiation; Harvard Law School; Fletcher School of Law; Genesis; Oxfam Great Britain; Norwegian People's Aid; local and national NGOs

Budget: \$1,262,500

Key Words: Post-conflict peacebuilding; community reconciliation

BACKGROUND

In view of refugees returning to deeply divided societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, UNHCR recognized that despite its long experience with repatriation and reintegration programming, it had not thoroughly studied the mistrust that lingers between ethnically divided communities in the aftermath of conflicts. With the goal to strengthen its

ability to support coexistence in divided societies, UNHCR initiated the “Imagine Coexistence” pilot project in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. The project was designed to implement and evaluate sustainable coexistence activities at the community level and, in turn, to promote post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the project was to deepen UNHCR's understanding of the elements needed to promote coexistence in divided societies. Consequently, the project developed joint activities in public spaces, such as, schools, playgrounds and health clubs to help overcome deeply entrenched

mistrust among different ethnic groups, and to (re)build relationships and promote cooperation within these communities. In addition, the project conducted a research study designed to capture the outcome and the findings of the activities piloted in the field in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda.

BENEFICIARIES

The project set up 66 micro-projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, all of which aimed to support co-existence in ethnically divided communities that were in the process of reintegration. Participants came from different social groups. These

included teachers, religious leaders, local authorities, youth and farmers' representatives. In addition, the staff of UNHCR and other humanitarian workers benefitted from workshops, seminars and training on the topic of reconciliation and coexistence.