KEY STATISTICS

THE COUNTRY

- Located in the Western Balkans

- Independence from Yugoslavia since 1991

- EU candidate status since 2005

- Population 2,045,177 (2001 Census)

- 7 ethnic groups expressly mentioned in the Constitution

- 21 Municiplalities required to have Commissions for Inter-Community Relations

- Community languages officially recognised for groups representing 20% of the national or local populations

UN Programme to Enhance Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration

The former Yugoslav Republic of MACEDONIA

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MDG**F**
MDG ACHIEVEMENT FUND

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The United Nations seeks to advance what the country has achieved in inter-ethnic relations by promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration. It does this by supporting the efforts of central Government, relevant local bodies and civil society.

The main objectives of the UN Programme are:

- **Governance**—Improve national systems and capacities for inter-ethnic cohesion

- **Education**—Reinforce the education system's ability to promote diversity

- **Society**—Promote tolerance and respect between different groups

This UN Programme works at the national-level, but also in three ethnically diverse municipalities (Kicevo, Kumanovo and Struga). At the local level, the Programme is working with civil society, school communities, and government bodies to demonstrate how formal and informal systems can fortify tolerance, inclusion and respect.

Youth exploring linguistic diversity in COOPERATION.

Main Activities and Results

Governance

- The Programme supported representatives from all levels of government and civil society to map out and make recommendations for improving the capacity of national systems to promote interethnic cohesion.

- In response, the Programme is implementing a set of activities, which include incentives, such as grants schemes for civil society organizations, capacity development activities, and activities to increase capacities of municipalities to take up decentralized responsibilities on managing local diversity.

- The Programme is also advancing a comprehensive dispute resolution system centred on facilitation and mediation that can support inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration in the country both at national and local levels.

Education

- The Programme is working with the Ministry of Education and Science and related institutions to incorporate greater inter-ethnic understanding, tolerance and respect into the national education policy, curricula and textbooks.

- In the three municipalities, joint extracurricular and democratic participation activities are being introduced in the selected schools. At the same time, the Programme is expanding opportunities for interaction and dialogue among young people out of the school settings in community based youth centres.

- Higher education institutions are supported in developing and implementing educational programs that advance the study and promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution.

Society

- To build consensus among communities in the three municipalities, trainings and seminars for government and civil society are being conducted.
- CSOs are being awarded grants for inter-ethnic confidence building activities.
- Through public debates, training for journalists and media support mechanisms, the Programme is also creating space for civic dialogue on inter-ethnic issues.

GOVERNANCE

"Through the Programme, the citizens of Struga from different ethnic backgrounds were brought together. I am proud that now they are focused on how to contribute to the well-being of the Municipality of Struga." (The Mayor of Struga)

EDUCATION

"This Programme has given us the chance to review after many years some of our policies such as the curriculum development or extracurricular activities to increase greater inter-ethnic understanding, tolerance and respect." (Head of Department, Bureau for Education Development).

SOCIETY

"The Programme responds to the growing demand for high quality standards in the media that foster social cohesion and inclusion of all groups in the society." (Lecturer at the School of Journalism and Public Relations)