

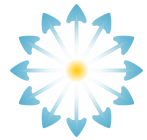


Evaluation Report

Democracy Projects in Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina:
Activities organised by the Olof Palme International
Center and the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation
with implementing partners

Ilmari Nalbantoglu & Petri Saarukka, Arvomaatti Oy (ltd) February 2023



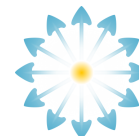


Foreword

This evaluation report represents the views of Arvomaatti as an external evaluator of the project.

We thank the Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, as well as Forum of Left Initiative and Qemal Stafa Foundation for successful collaborations. The responsibility for the correctness of the information in this report rests with the authors. Every effort has been made to ensure the correctness of the information.

In Espoo, Finland, 26.2.2023
Ilmari Nalbantoglu & Petri Saarukka
Arvomaatti Oy (ltd)



List of abbreviations

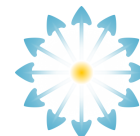
DAC:	Development Assistance Committee
MFA:	the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OECD:	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ProgWeb:	Progressive Politics in the Western Balkans
Sida:	the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToT:	Training of trainers

Nordic partners:

KSF:	Kalevi Sorsa Foundation
Palme center:	Olof Palme International Center

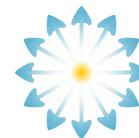
Local partners:

FLI:	Forum for Left Initiative
QSF:	Qemal Stafa Foundation



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Executive Summary

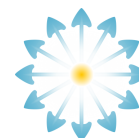
Overall, the actions evaluated in this report are well reasoned, planned, organised, conducted, monitored and reported. General factors contributing to this are:

- The Nordic and local partners have a **growth mind-set**, meaning that they are constantly ready to learn and improve the actions in the projects.
- The organisers have a deep and diverse **understanding of the societies** (Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina), as well as close monitoring of the societal changes in question.
- **Constructive cooperation and interaction** between different stakeholders, including structured dialogue with financiers in Sweden and Finland (Sida in Sweden and Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA). The interaction between Nordic and local partners is direct and practical. For these reasons they are able to solve challenging issues and seize opportunities as they occur.
- **Utilisation of feedback and evaluations**: local partners gather and evaluate feedback from the participants of the activities, and develop the activities further on the basis of the feedback¹. The projects have been externally evaluated several times and the partners have utilised the recommendations from the evaluations.
- Good networks and **utilisation of partnerships**: the Nordic and local partners have well utilised their mutual synergy as well as the constructive, pragmatic and systematic interaction with each other and with other key stakeholders, such as participants to the activities, political parties in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina and different other foundations who are working in the region.
- Attention to **good project management and administration** and setting common standards in management and administration between different organising stakeholders.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we regard the evaluated actions and their organising as relevant and well-reasoned; coherent in their implementation, as well as in relation to the societal objectives; effective and efficiently implemented; impactful, as well as sustainable.

As we see the projects, there are no major issues requiring changes. There are always ways to improve projects, and Nordic and local partners should constantly be alert to seeking and understanding these. In this report, we raise as recommendations some possibilities for Nordic and local partners to consider: could the overall quality of the projects' activities be raised for example by more systematic way of compiling, processing and utilising participant data, as described in section 4; or diversification of partners' interaction with other than social democratic actors, as described in section 6? However, according to

¹ Even though feedback is utilised, we have a recommendation how this could be done even better in the future. Please see section 4 Effectiveness.



evidence gained in this evaluation, **there are no acute and evident issues in which the Nordic and local partners are doing something unproductive.**

An objective and thorough evaluation of projects like this is very hard to do, given that projects are broad in their objectives, impacts are seen over a long period of time, several societal factors are involved in achieving the objectives, and it is often unclear which part of the societal effects occur as a result of the projects' activities. Due to these factors, our conclusions and recommendations are largely based on our overall assessment of evidence and appearance of different elements of the projects.

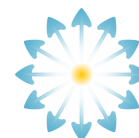
Table 1 summarises the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. This information is elaborated in sections of this report. Recommendations are also compiled to the last section of this report, 8 Recommendations, in which we describe each recommendation concisely but in more detail than in this summarising table.

Table 1: Summary of results of the evaluation

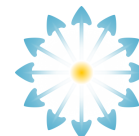
The grading scores:

Very good	Good	With problem	With deficiencies
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Conclusions/Key findings	Recommendations: we encourage Nordic and local partners to examine following:
Relevance: Very good	
The implemented activities have a relevant role as a part of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina's societal development as well as Finnish and Swedish development cooperation.	No actual recommendations - just continue monitoring the different levels of relevance.
Coherence: Very good	
Coherence is realised in three levels: 1) organisational: cooperation adds to building of overall organisational capacity in QSF and FLI 2) relational to organising the actions - cooperation enables the actions that are object of this evaluation	No actual recommendations - just continue and develop the practice of gradual improvement as well as more punctual development. Gradual improvement meaning continuous development during activities; punctual development meaning overall evaluations of activities for a certain period and development based on these evaluations.



<p>3) networks: through cooperation, QSF and FLI have gained access to other cooperation relations</p>	
<p>Effectiveness: Very good</p>	
<p>We assess that the actions have worked toward the overall objective: towards stronger democracy and more stable societies in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina.</p>	<p>For the local partners: Compile the feedback-data to standardised, easy to follow metrics for development and reporting of the activities.</p> <p>Systematically develop and map the possibilities of strengthening the regional dimension (meaning different regions of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina) for example in cooperation with the other European partners for strengthening the equality of possibilities to participate in the activities.</p>
<p>Efficiency: Very good</p>	
<p>The use of the resources can be justified, and actions in the projects have been managed and implemented efficiently.</p> <p>We assess that Nordic and local partners have sufficient personal and organisational capacities, as well as commitment and ownership to sustainably carry on the work.</p>	<p>Gradual increase of financial independence of the local partners from the support of Nordic partners for increasing the efficiency and sustainability of actions.</p> <p>Better use of the “participant database” for networking and development of the activities.</p>
<p>Impact and sustainability: Good</p>	
<p>Overall very good projects and activities design and implementation creates a basis for overall good impact and sustainability of the impacts</p> <p>Main positive impacts can be seen and suppose to be sustainable in three categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the increased capacity of the local organisations and their closest stakeholders 2) strengthened political status and capacities of the young and 	<p>Systematically develop and map the possibilities to engage those, who were not able to participate in the trainings for wider reach of young people.</p> <p>Continue and diversify the interaction with other than social democratic actors, who are engaged in democracy promotion, in the Western Balkans.</p> <p>Be mindful of issues of dependence of local partners from the funding of Nordic partners.</p>



<p>women: 3) strengthening of democracies</p> <p>Political and societal instability can be seen as a threat for sustainability. On the other hand, that instability is a key reason for the projects.</p>	<p>Think in more detail what societal criteria (in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina) should be fulfilled, so that similar projects would no longer be required.</p>
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1 Introduction

The object of the evaluation is joint activities in two democracy projects by Olof Palme International Center (Palme Center) and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation (KSF) in the Western Balkans - Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina - during the years 2019-2021 and to some extent 2022. The joint activities are the Gender Academy and Political Academy for Social Democracy (Political academy). Actions in the year 2022 are evaluated indicatively due to the fact that the reporting of Palme Center partners is due to be finalised after the time of evaluation, and thus the essential data was not available yet. Also, Kalevi Sorsa Foundation's project cycle ended in 2021, although another project cycle continues.

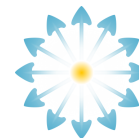
We took to some extent into consideration 2022 activities, as they overlap in regard to concrete actions and objectives, and it has not been meaningful to completely separate the activities of 2022 from the activities of 2021. However, the main focus was in the time-period 2019-2021.

In this introduction, we briefly describe the projects, their evaluated joint actions, as well as the purpose and scope of the evaluation.

1.1 Two projects

Palme Center's projects

Within the framework of the Swedish Strategy for special democracy support through Swedish party-affiliated organisations, the Palme Center leads a programme in the Western Balkans together with the Centre Party International Foundation. The programme is implemented in Bosnia & Hercegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia, as well as regionally. The programme's goal is that Liberal and Social Democratic sister parties in the Western Balkans represent progressive political alternatives, and thereby strengthen the political diversity, as well as cooperation in the region.



Kalevi Sorsa Foundation's project

KSF's Project Supporting Democracy in the Western Balkans – Progress and Bridges 2019–2021 is a development cooperation project that promotes democracy, stability, and social-political dialogue in the Western Balkans. The project is being implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, and North Macedonia. The long-term goal of the project is that democracy is strengthened, and stability increased in the Western Balkan region.

The project has two elements. The first is educating young politicians and civil society activists, so-called "future leaders" in political academies in Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina, and North Macedonia. The second element is strengthening the regional cooperation of Western Balkan think tanks by arranging capacity-building and capacity-sharing seminars.

1.2 Joint activities

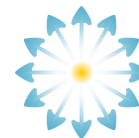
Objectives of Palme Center's and KSF's projects are to an extent similar, and therefore the organisations have organised joint activities supported with mutual partner organisations in the Western Balkans. These joint activities are the actual object of the evaluation.

The Gender Equality Academy is organised together with Palme Center, Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, and their mutual partner organisation Forum of the Left Initiative (FLI) in Bosnia & Hercegovina. It consists of six modules, with the overall objective of building the capacity of women and strengthening their position of influence within both parties' and CSO's, internal decision-making procedures, as well as generally in society to ensure efficient and effective mainstreaming of gender issues.

According to the organisers, the Gender Equality Academy covers the following topics: democratic processes and the position of women in politics, the institutional and legal framework for gender equality, women in the labour market, health, parenthood, childcare, protection of the elderly and disabled people, women-peace and security, and women-political skills.

In Albania as well as in Bosnia & Hercegovina, Palme Center and KSF together support the respective **Political Academy for Social Democracy** implemented by Qemal Stafa Foundation (QSF) in Albania and FLI in Bosnia & Hercegovina. According to the organisers, the main purpose of the Political Academy is to educate and train individuals who with their everyday activities shape the political decisions and actions in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina.

Political Academies aim to provide a platform for active and future politicians in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina to receive a broad political education in the social democratic ideology and values. They cover themes such as the political systems of their countries, the relation to the EU, party organisation, and management. In addition, social democratic topics of just economic policies, social care, and common welfare are included, as well as



inter-ethnic relations and integration. The overall objective is to promote a democratic and open society of equal opportunities for all.

One Academy consists of 4-5 weekend modules, and every module consists of presentations (lectures and exercises) and debates on current political issues.

The target group of the Political Academy are individuals aged 21 to 30. The participants come from different backgrounds, including 1) members of political parties 2) activists of NGOs, 3) actors from trade unions, and 4) individuals with no organisational background.

According to our overall assessment, **the activities being joint between KSF and Palme Center is well reasoned.**

Reasons for this are described throughout this report in different sections, but generally the main factors are:

- **Joint objectives and values**, as well as ways of working and sufficient similarity of these two organisations (KSF and Palme Center): both organisations' objectives are strengthening the democracy and state of civil society, as well as overall stabilising the societies in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. As Nordic NOGs with social-democratic background, KSF and Palme Center easily find a common way of working.
- **Synergy**: two organisations are more efficient when combining their resources in regard to the joint objectives.
- **Well-functioning cooperation**: KSF and Palme Center have found an agile, uncomplicated, and effective but also well managed way of working with each other as well as with local partners FLI and QSF.

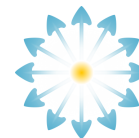
1.3 Organisers of projects

In this report we refer to the partners as follows:

Nordic partners:

The Olof Palme International Center (Palme Center), founded in 1992, is a hub for the Swedish labour movement's international work articulated through trade union, political party, and civil society organisations. It currently has 27 member organisations. Palme Center operates in six countries in the Western Balkans.

Kalevi Sorsa Foundation (KSF) is a Finnish social democratic think tank established in 2005. KSF produces information and perspectives for public debate, policy preparations, and political decision-making. Development cooperation in the Western Balkans has been a part of KSF's work since 2008.



Local partners: Project partners in the Western Balkans:

Qemal Stafa Foundation (QSF) is a think tank established in 2007 by the Socialist Party of Albania. It is independent from the party. QSF describes its aims as spreading, developing and consolidating the values of democracy and human rights and freedoms, justice and solidarity, pluralistic society and the rule of law.

Forum of Left Initiative (FLI) is an association of leftist political actors, civil society organisations, and trade unions. It was founded in 2008 and operates in Bosnia & Hercegovina. FLI describes its aims as advocating and developing a society based on social democratic values of social justice and solidarity.

1.4 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the aforementioned joint activities of Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina.

The evaluation is done using OECD DAC evaluation criteria. It is meant to contribute to Palme Center's and KSF's assessment of the projects in order to provide insights about the impact and lessons of the projects, as well as to provide recommendations for the continuation of Palme Center's and KSF's democracy work (in the Western Balkans). In addition, the findings can benefit other stakeholders of the projects, such as QSF and LFI, as well as financiers of Palme Center and KSF (The Swedish International Cooperation Agency SIDA and Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

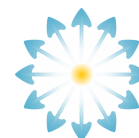
Key evaluation questions in the fields of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability are listed in the beginning of the sections of this report for each respective criterion.

The evaluation is meant to give recommendations and present key possibilities and risks in the following areas:

- Overall strengths of the project
- Overall weaknesses of the project
- Operational/functional possibilities and risks
- Cooperational possibilities and risks
- Financial possibilities and risks

It should be noted that the time available for the evaluation was limited to roughly one month, and we as evaluators work solely from Finland (no trips to the Western Balkans were planned with the commissioner of the evaluation). Therefore the answers to the evaluation questions can only be indicative and often based on our overall assessment.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:



- To assess the joint activities in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability
- To assess the cooperation between Palme Center and KSF and local partners QSF and FLI
- To assess the added value for local partner organisations of this kind of donor harmonisation and broader cooperation
- To document key challenges and lessons learned
- To provide practical recommendations that can be utilised for future planning.

The methods and data-gathering is described in more detail in Annex I.

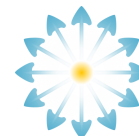
2 Relevance

Key questions:	Short conclusions:	Recommendations:
Are the outputs of the activities relevant in reaching the expected outcomes?	The outputs are relevant and the actions of the projects are constantly monitored and developed by the local and Nordic partners vis-à-vis the societal background as well as feedback from the participants and other stakeholders.	We encourage the nordic partners to continue monitoring the different levels of relevance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) relation to the societal situation in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, 2) relation to objectives of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, 3) relation to development objectives of Finland and Sweden And in addition: relation to the overall strategies of their own organisations (Palme Center and KSF).

The expected outcomes can be summarised in strengthening the democracy and state of civil society, as well as overall stabilising the societies. This creates opportunities for the comprehensive development of society. The target group in the actions are especially young people and women.

2.1 Levels of relevance

Relation to the societal situation in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina



As party-affiliated foundations, the work of the QSF and FLI is closely linked to the work of the Socialist Party of Albania as well as the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia & Hercegovina. The information from the interviews indicate that one important aspect of the work of the QSF and FLI is to promote the success of the Socialist Party (in Albania) and Social Democratic Party (in Bosnia & Hercegovina), for example by training and involving more young people in the work of the party and raising public interest in its initiatives. This element is not contradictory to the objective of overall democracy promotion, since political parties are crucial to democracy.

This also increases the relevance of the projects' activities at the national level in both countries. One clear example of this was in the case of QSF: when the participants, organisers and stakeholders mix with the Socialist Party, the ideas, know-how and other human capital created in the framework of the projects' activities are absorbed into Albanian political life and society, since the Socialist Party is in a position of power in Albania.

"The projects have greatly served the [socialist] party and its members - they have increased our capacity"
- representative of the QSF and Socialist party of Albania

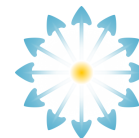
Relation to objectives of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina

Viewed in relation to the stated goals of the governments of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, we assess the projects' activities to be relevant for the societies of both countries. The strengthening of democracy supports, for example, the explicit objectives of progress with EU memberships.

According to the interview data, government initiatives are taken into account in the planning of the activities in both Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. This can be seen in many ways. One could take the critical stand-point that the objective of trainings should not be to promote the government initiatives and thus strengthen the power of the current government, but to strengthen the broader elements of democracy. However, this is not in accordance with our findings. Based on the material, our conclusion is that this is a positive feature in the activities: when the government initiatives are taken into account, it ensures the relevance of the activities in relation to the Albanian and Bosnia & Hercegovinan societies. Political systems in question can be considered democratic in the sense that the governments' initiatives generally reflect the people's goals.

Relation to development objectives of Finland and Sweden

The projects' activities are relevant to both Finnish and Swedish development cooperation. From the Finnish perspective, the activities especially support the development



cooperation's priorities of "peaceful and democratic societies" and "strengthening the status and rights of women and girls"².

From the Swedish perspective, the activities especially support Sida's thematic areas of "democracy, human-rights and freedom of expression", as well as "peaceful and inclusive societies"³. Activities are part of continuum of Swedish democracy-support through Party-Affiliated Organisations (PAOs), that in Sweden was initiated in 1995. This support contributes to the development of well-functioning democratic multi-party systems.

It is also illustrative that the projects and their predecessors have been evaluated several times, and the Finnish and Swedish development cooperation authorities have found them to be justified receivers of funding.

In light of relevance to development objectives of Finland and Sweden, it should be noted that the similarity of objectives of national development policies of mentioned countries, as well as relative similarity of values and working practices in development cooperation of both countries, create a good basis for the cooperation between KSF and Palme Center.

2.2 Main observations on relevance

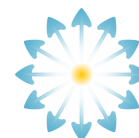
Strengths and opportunities:

Understanding of the region and its societal context: Both nordic partners (KSF and Palme Center) have vast experience in operating in the Western Balkans. The KSF has had democracy promotion projects in the region since 2008: in North Macedonia 2008-2019 and in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina 2019-2021. Also, Palme Center has worked several years in the region, starting from 1995. The project documents clearly express the deep and wide understanding of the societal context of different states in the region. The know-how of two nordic partners supplement each other, and it is easy for them to exchange knowledge.

Strong societal reasoning: Based on the organisers' understanding of the region and its societal context, they reason well the need for a more robust democracy in the region (with key notions being "relatively unstable societies", "war and violence in the recent past", "tensions between ethnic and other groups", "recovery from the authoritarian past", "short history of democracy and general societal challenges, such as high corruption, weak economy and institutions"). In terms of what societal capacity Finland and Sweden have that could also benefit the Western Balkans, it can be concluded that the Palme Center and KSF have very good basic premises to act as organisers of their projects.

² Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The priorities of Finnish development cooperation.
<https://um.fi/goals-and-principles-of-finland-s-development-policy>

³ Thematic areas [of Swedish development cooperation]. Sida.
<https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas>



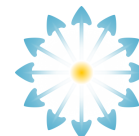
3 Coherence

Key questions:	Short conclusions:	Recommendations:
What is the added value of the cooperation between Palme Center and KSF for the partner organisations in the Western Balkans?	<p>1) Organisational: cooperation adds to building of overall organisational capacity in QSF and FLI</p> <p>2) Relational to organising the actions - cooperation enables the actions that are the object of this evaluation</p> <p>3) Networks: through cooperation, QSF and FLI have gained access to other cooperation relations</p>	No recommendations
What can be improved? Are there needs for changes?	No specific nor acute needs for change.	We encourage to continue and develop the practice of <i>gradual</i> improvement (meaning continuous development during activities), as well as <i>punctuated</i> development (where a certain period, such as a year, is considered as a whole).

Main observations on coherence

Strengths and opportunities:

Planning: The projects are overall well planned, reported and documented. They also make use of experiences from the previous project cycles. KSF and Palme Center have also been able to learn from each others' practices in planning and reporting.



Clear connection, and dialogue between organising partners: through the use of different trainers and lecturers from the Nordic Countries the project organisers have been able to leverage the societal strengths of the Nordic Countries (such as education, equality, digitalisation) and create dialogue. This justifies the fact that precisely these actors - Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation - have implemented the projects.

Reflexivity to the context of the country of implementation. The projects took into account the current affairs and thus presumably interests of the participants.

Cooperation: We assess that the Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation have cooperated well and complemented each other: for example, the project documents show a clear orientation of Palme Center towards work with political parties, whereas KSF has worked primarily with civil society organisations and think tanks. KSF and Palme Center have cooperated flexibly and constructively with actors in the Western Balkans. They have also cooperated successfully with similar projects, such as ones implemented for example by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Foundation Max van der Stoel, and the Westminster Foundation in the region.

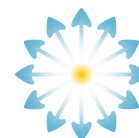
One aspect of cooperation with Nordic partners KSF and Palme Center for local partners QSF and FLI is credibility. By working with the Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, the local partners create a kind of quality assurance for their actions and build their credibility in relation to national and international partners. This quality assurance and credibility is not superficial, as KSF and Palme Center have significant assessment and quality assurance methods at their disposal, especially because they are accountable to their national funders and stakeholders. These methods are used in all international activities of the partners. In this sense, the local partners utilise the nordic partners' capacity in a very efficient and justified way. A representative of a local partner described this as follows:

"just working with the Palme Center and KSF gives major support [for our credibility as a partner and actor in our society as well as with other European actors]"
- representative of a local partner.

Pursuit for developing the project: Organisers have identified areas for development and considered the possibilities to implement them.

One describing example comes from the Annual report of KSF (2019):

"For the most part, we were able to follow the original project plan. Only exception was the cooperation with QSF in Albania, as early in the year we realised that the capacity and the resources of our new partner were not at the level required, and the project plan was adjusted accordingly. Instead of supporting the Political Academy



program, we dedicated the year 2019 (and at least part of 2020) to Training of Trainers.”
- KSF Annual Report 2019

Threats:

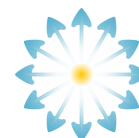
Multitude of stakeholders: Both FLI and QSF have many international partners. There are also several other international actors in the field of democracy promotion in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, such as think tanks and foundations with different ideological backgrounds. In general, this can be seen as a constructive element, as the objective of strengthening democracy requires many voices and actors. Also, both QSF and FLI have good practices in working with multiple partners, such as mapping capacities and objectives of different partners.

However, this situation creates a threat of losing the overall picture of objectives and their management for QSF and FLI, and thus, for the objectives of joint actions with Palme Center and KSF. We emphasise that this is a threat, not a problem that has occurred in the projects. So far the local partners (FLI and QSF) have accommodated the different interests, objectives, and actions of different stakeholders well. An overall strategy/plan of each respective local partner (FLI and QSF) to clarify the interests, objectives, and actions as well as mutual synergy of different stakeholders of democracy promotion from their respective perspectives could be useful.

Independence of local partners: Palme Center supports the QSF and FLI with important funding for the organisations’ basic functions, such as staff, office and equipment. Palme Center is also the main financial supporter of QSF at the moment. All the data considering the cooperation between QSF, FLI and Palme Center support the view that Palme Center does not use its position as a financier in any way to determine QSF's or FLI's activities. Our view is that FLI and QSF have strong ownership of their own activities.

4 Effectiveness

Key questions:	Short conclusions:	Recommendations:
Are the joint activities promoting progress toward the outcomes and key impacts?	We have no reason to doubt that the joint activities would not contribute to progress towards strengthening the democracy and state of civil society as well as	We encourage the local partners to compile the feedback-data to standardised, easy to follow metrics. We encourage Nordic and



	overall stabilising of the societies.	local partners to systematically develop and map the possibilities of strengthening the regional dimension (activities in different parts of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina), for example in cooperation with the other European partners
How could the effectiveness be increased in the next cycles and future activities?	No specific nor acute needs for change.	

The operating environment in both Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina can be challenging for effective implementation of the projects. In addition to the political and societal turmoil, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged all of the implementation of the projects' activities during the evaluation period.

The last two years have been difficult especially in Albanian society. There was a severe earthquake in 2019 that impacted the society in many ways, and also affected the activities of QSF.

Despite the difficulties, the partners have been overall able to effectively organise the activities. The main reasons are good, flexible interaction and working relations, dynamic project designs (clear guidelines and enough flexibility) and pragmatic working methods.

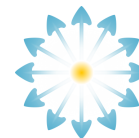
4.1 Main observations on effectiveness

Strengths:

Utilisation of feedback and evaluations: local partners gather feedback from the participants of the activities, and based on that develop the activities further. The projects have been evaluated several times, and the partners have utilised the recommendations from the evaluations.

Good, constructive interaction between different stakeholders, including structured dialogue with financiers in Sweden and Finland (Sida in Sweden and Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The interaction between project partners is direct and practical. For these reasons they are able to solve challenging issues and seize opportunities as they occur.

Accommodating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and overall risk management: The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the projects like many other activities in societies. The staff of the local partners have adjusted the projects well to the situation. The majority of



the activities were implemented as planned, with procedures of social distancing and/or utilising online tools. Overall, projects have sufficient risk management in place.

Knowledge of the region is an asset for both of the Nordic partners. Both Palme Center and KSF have gathered a considerable understanding of the societies in the region. Palme Center also has a local office in Albania, and Bosnia & Hercegovina is covered from their local office in Serbia. In addition, they have the will to develop their understanding. KSF and Palme Center are able to “loan” each other’s knowledge of the region through day-to-day interaction when for example discussing the joint activities. The Nordic partners’ knowledge of the region is something that the local partners really value.

Synergy and cooperation is an asset for the activities. See the following section 4.2 Special focus: cooperation.

Using various, complementary methods in capacity building: Different methods include lectures, group work, presentations by participants, and policy papers. Using multiple methods allows participants from different backgrounds to learn together as well as individuals to build one's own capacity in the most suitable way.

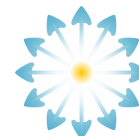
Balance between Balkan and Nordic voices: The projects have utilised trainers, speakers and facilitators from both regions in a balanced way. This justifies the entire starting point for cooperation.

Opportunities:

Use of feedback-data: The local partners already continually gather the feedback data from the participants. This is an opportunity for Nordic and local partners to compile quantitative data such that the local partners can follow how the feedback develops over time. We consider that there are 3 metrics that can be followed in every training regardless of content, and if focused on these, it would be easy to monitor the overall development over time.

- Relevance: How relevant (personally and societally) is the topic of the training?
- Content: How well does the content of the training increase the understanding of the topic?
- Organisation: How well was the training organised (communication to the participants, timing, location and arrangements in the location)?

Regionality: One aspect of improvement could be at the regional level (meaning different regions inside Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina). At the moment, activities are concentrated in the biggest cities, Tirana and Sarajevo. Regional presence of the trainings could be improved in order to enhance the effectiveness and equality of the trainings. More people could participate; trainings could include more broader - regionally relevant -



issues; and also those who do not already have access to the networks of political power would be in a better position to benefit from trainings.

This is a known issue for the local and Nordic partners, and they have already in many ways made it possible for people from different regions to participate in the activities: an important aspect is that the activities are free of charge and the travel costs are reimbursed. Also, the local partners have informed various communities (especially political parties, trade unions, and students) about the possibility of participating in the activities.

Enhancing the regionality further is in many ways problematic: above all, it is about resources. We encourage Nordic and local partners to systematically develop and map the possibilities of strengthening the regional dimension, for example in cooperation with the other European partners.

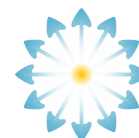
4.2 Special focus: Cooperation

In this evaluation, we pay special attention to the quality of cooperation and interaction between different partners, especially between the Nordic partners KSF and Palme Center. Our overall assessment is that the quality of cooperation is very good, and in its part justifies the fact that KSF and Palme Center have joint activities in their own respective projects (as described in section 1 Introduction).

The main reason for paying special attention to the cooperation is the multitude of stakeholders: there are four different partners (two local partners and two Nordic partners), and their actions are linked to an even broader set of national and international actors (such as political parties and different European foundations). The multitude of stakeholders is an opportunity and a threat at the same time, as:

- The nature of activities is such that they can be completed effectively only by cooperation - the quality, organising and networks require cooperation (the opportunity-side)
- Managing different expectations, goals and operating methods can become difficult for local partners (FLI and QSF) across the borders of countries and organisations (the threat-side).

As one method of assessing the dimensions of cooperation, we used some visual or verbal version of dimensions of the interaction seen in the picture below, as well as supplementary questions. We interviewed seven representatives of organising partners (FLI, KSF, Palme Center, and QSF), representing all four organising partners, and in the case of FLI and QSF both employees and board members/trustees.



The cooperation with the Nordic partners Palme Center and KSF and local partners QSF and FLI is considered independently by different partners as constructive, effective, uncomplicated and overall good.

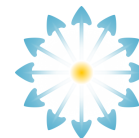
Based on independent statements in different interviews as well as evidence from the documentation of the projects, we noted mainly strengths in the cooperation, namely the following:

Synergy: Palme Center and Kalevi Sorsa Foundation (KSF) have similarities and differences as organisations, as have the local partners Forum of Left Initiative (FLI) and Qemal Stafa Foundation (QSF). All have a social democratic background, robust experience in acting in the Western Balkans, as well as democracy promotion. However, there are differences: Palme Center is more of a hub for international solidarity and advocacy work, whereas Kalevi Sorsa Foundation is primarily a think tank. Palme Center has a longer operating history and wider resources than KSF. FLI in Bosnia & Hercegovina and QSF in Albania are very different actors, differing in their resources and operating time or experience.

Overall, differences are an asset for the cooperation. As a representative of a local partner put it:

"[Our Nordic partners] see the needs of [our society] from a clear perspective, and it is good to have differences between cultures"
- representative of a local partner

Sorsa Foundation and Palme Center and Nordic and local partners as a whole cooperate well and complement each other's capacities. We consider a main reason being a balance between direct or informal interaction and more formal interaction, as well as balance between gradual and punctuated development.



Project organisers are also well aware of the other actors in the field of democracy promotion in the region, and utilise networks with them effectively.

Clear roles: Nordic and local partners seem to view the roles of different partners in the same general way:

- The Nordic partners support and enable the activities and bear responsibility towards the ultimate financiers, Sida and Finnish MFA.
- The local partners implement the activities and also bear responsibility towards local stakeholders, such as parties, think-tanks and civil-society organisations.
- Nordic and local partners develop the activities and the projects' design together.

The Nordic partners are catalysts of change more than change makers in the Balkan societies. This is a reasoned approach from the points of view of ownership and sustainability: It is hard to conceive (and justify) that a change (strengthened democracy) would last if it was exported to Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina from Sweden and Finland.

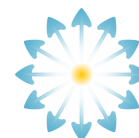
"Through support of [my organisation] the process to the goal is faster than if the local partners themselves would have done it"
- representative of a Nordic partner

We assess that Nordic and local partners have found a **productive balance in their way of interaction and cooperation:**

- Balance between formal and direct interaction: The interaction is direct, informal and collegial, but with some necessary formalities - such as reporting and contracts - taken seriously.
- Balance between working together and Nordic partners supporting the local partners' work: If necessary, the partners work together, make decisions and solve problems in a very pragmatic way, but mostly the work of the Nordic partners is about supporting and enabling the work of the local partners.
- Balance between gradual development and punctual development of the activities: The partners gradually develop the ways of local projects (gradual development), but also take time periodically to look at the overall picture of the projects and make decisions about more structural developments of the projects' activities (punctuated development).

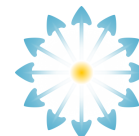
One concrete element of cooperation is the exchange of expertise between Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Sweden and Finland. This exchange is supported through study visits, exchange of speakers in trainings and sessions.

"KSF has been building bridges between Albanian actors and Finnish experts"
- representative of an local partner



5 Efficiency

Key questions:	Short conclusions:	Recommendations:
<p>How well are the joint activities using the available resources for implementing various planned activities to achieve results in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness?</p>	<p>Available resources have been used efficiently.</p> <p>Cooperation with Nordic and local partners is at a good level.</p> <p>Participation quantity/quality goals were achieved mainly in big cities (e.g. Tirana, Sarajevo).</p>	<p>See recommendation on strengthening the regional dimension from the section 4 “Effectiveness”.</p>
<p>How resourced are the local partner organisations in their ability to participate in national and regional societal and political debates?</p>	<p>Local partners rely and are partly dependent on the support by the Nordic financiers.</p> <p>Major improvement has occurred over a 10 years period in the capability and resources of the local partners. However, organisations and regions have different levels of resources, interest and know-how.</p>	<p>Gradual increase of financial independence of the implementing partners from the support of Nordic partners could increase the efficiency and sustainability of actions.</p> <p>Developing further the “participant database” for networking and development of the activities.</p>
<p>How could these resources be increased?</p>	<p>Close cooperation of partner organisations, continuous support on expertise of Nordic partners (near future) and sustainable actions (e.g. ToTs) have been efficient methods.</p>	



5.1 Operational efficiency

In general operational efficiency was achieved.

Risk assessments were done by Palme Center and KSF during the projects' planning stages. Major societal and environmental incidents occurred in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquake in Albania. Similar risks were taken into account in the baseline risk evaluations.

In regard to overall operational efficiency, Nordic partners had a major role in sharing knowledge, experience and capability development to local partners. However, without the strong commitment of the local partners the goals would not have been achieved at this level. The flexible support of Palme Center and KSF can be seen as crucial for the efficient accomplishment of the activities.

The question of participation was raised in interviews: How to increase the participation rate in order to get all interested participants involved in the activities? Participation in events is open through a selection procedure (application and interview) with the goal to have as wide a range of the society represented as possible. Thus, all applicants interested are not always taken on as participants. To increase the efficiency, especially regionally, measures could be planned to regionally have all interested applicants somehow included. This is partly a question of dissemination, but also partly concerning resources and measures. This issue is discussed in more detail in the form of a recommendation in section 6 "Impact and sustainability".

5.2 Economic efficiency

Financing mainly consisted of contributions by Palme Center (by Sida) and KSF (Finnish MFA) which were budgeted as shown in table 2. Direct financing concentrated mainly on the personnel costs on project management and administration but also on hospitality (food served in events) and accommodation. Available financing through Palme Center and KSF has been relevant for giving the continuous personnel work to the projects both for administration and for coordinating actions of the implemented activities.

As a general conclusion, **financing and other available resources were used efficiently**, e.g. through maximal use of voluntary work. On the other hand, without the financing and the active participation of the voluntary work, the concluded activities could not have been implemented at this level. Continuous support for the local partners by the Nordic partners through financing and also know-how is required in the near future.

If more activities in future are implemented in other regions than Tirana and Sarajevo (please see section 4 Effectiveness on this issue), allocation of resources on travelling and other practical measures should be solved and compared to the probable outcomes of the activities performed in the regions (resources meaning funds and personnel).

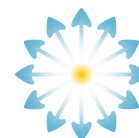


Table 2: Financing of the activities 2019 - 2022

	Palme Center (SEK)		KSF activities (EUR)	
	Albania	Bosnia & Hercegovina	Albania	Bosnia & Hercegovina
2019	247 000	800 000	12 120	13 325
2020	300 000	1 048 452	11 140	11 240
2021	300 000	1 154 280	11 860	11 060

5.3 Other issues on efficiency

According to the feedback based on the official reporting and interviews, **the participants were satisfied** with the content and organising of trainings. However, some remarks or wishes were stated:

- more time for interactions and discussions is needed between the participants on the basis of short and efficient presentations
- in relation to Bosnia & Hercegovina, more multicultural cooperation between neighbouring states (e.g. Croatia and Slovenia)
- some feedback was given on the discrepancy between the themes and presentations.

Our conclusion from these remarks is that overall the implementation has been efficient, but there is always room for improvement.

5.4 Main observations on efficiency

Strengths:

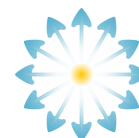
In general, Nordic and local partners have paid attention to **good project management and administration** and setting common standards in management and administration.

Strong commitment of local partners (e.g. voluntary work), people and participants and strong support of financiers together with their flexible cooperation and common goals.

Resource awareness: The projects have used the available resources completely and efficiently and are using sound judgement.

Opportunities:

The **“participant database” could be used more for networking and development of the activities.** The alumni of the projects’ activities are already quite a large group of active



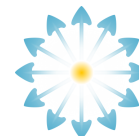
and talented people in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. This network could be used to increase the efficiency as well as the impact and sustainability of the projects' actions. We encourage the organisers to consider ways to for example more systematically draw feedback, new ideas for development, organise networking, recruit speakers and trainers or even organise mentor-tutor-pairs. Naturally this mapping should be done by matching the limited resources available to the projects to the best possible results - it isn't possible to implement all the ideas. The feasibility of different communication channels for activating the alumni-network, such as newsletters or social media platforms, should be considered.

Threats / weaknesses:

Gradual increase of financial independence of the local partners from the support of Nordic partners could increase the efficiency and sustainability of actions. The local partners are quite dependent on the financial support of Nordic partners. We do not see the issue of dependency as a weakness in the relationship, as is described in more detail in section 6 "impact and sustainability". However, we encourage the Nordic partners to be alert for opportunities to increase the financial independence of the local partners, as this would lead to increased efficiency through synergy between resources (the old resources provided by mainly KSF and Palme Center and new resources from other sources) as well as increased sustainability through variety of resources.

6 Impact and sustainability

Key questions:	Short conclusions:	Recommendations:
What are the intended and unintended, short- and long-term, positive and negative impacts of the joint activities?	Positive impacts are in 3 categories: 1) Increased capacity of the local organisations and their closest stakeholders 2) Strengthened political status and capacities of the youth and women 3) Strengthening of democracies	We encourage Nordic and local partners to systematically develop and map the possibilities to engage those who were not able to participate in trainings. We further encourage the Nordic and local partners to continue and diversify their interaction with other than social democratic actors, who are engaged in
How could the sustainability of the joint activities be increased?	Overall very good projects and activities design and implementation creates a	



	basis for overall good impact and sustainability of the impacts.	democracy promotion in the region. We advise Nordic and local partners to be mindful of the issue of dependency (the local partners are financially quite dependent on Nordic partners).
What are the prerequisites of a sustainable exit strategy for the project(s)?		The Nordic and local partners could reflect in more detail which societal criteria in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina should be fulfilled, so that similar projects would no longer be required.

By analysing the data from interviews and project documents, the impacts can be divided into three main categories:

1) The Capacity of the local partners and their closest stakeholders:

The activities have strengthened the QSF and FLI as well as their affiliated political parties especially via:

- new active members
- know-how and human capital
- institutional capacity, such as developed organisational structures
- networks, such as connections to other political and/or foundation-based actors in Europe
- ideas, messages, initiatives that make the organisations relevant in the public/political discussion

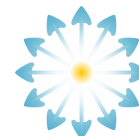
This category of impacts is depicted for example by this representative of a local partner:

“The [impact I'm most glad about is that the voice of [my organisation] is heard in our society”

- representative of a local partner organisation

2) Strengthened political status and capacities of the youth and women:

Status and capacities of youth and women are in the focus of the activities, and are seen as long-term impacts of the project activities.



For example following informants depicted this impact-category:

“Youth and women have not [had] the [equal] opportunity to participate in political life, only old men have held the political power. Youth and women have to be provided an opportunity!”

- representative of a local partner

“[The most important impact of the trainings is] the motivation of the youth. This strengthens the democracy in my country”

- a participant to the training in Albania

“For me, the most important impact was to be able to learn and utilise the ideas in my own organisation and to implement what I learned in my work”

- a participant to the training in Bosnia & Hercegovina

3) Strengthening of democracies

The political systems are strengthened by the sum of aforementioned capacities, via the capacities foundations and parties, as well as the political status of the young and women.

For example following informant depicted this impact-category:

“The main impact for the Albanian society [from the activities in the projects] is the overall improvement of the political ecosystem for the youth and their engagement in the political activities”

- representative of a local partner

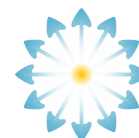
Main observations on impact and sustainability

Strengths:

Overall very good design and implementation of the projects and activities:

The relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency are at a very good level, as described in previous parts of this report. This is the basis for the overall good impact and their sustainability.

Conversational manner and utilisation of feedback in organising events: In the activities, the participants have had the possibility to formulate and bring forth their opinions. The local partners have also utilised interactive methods, so that as many participants as possible could succeed in expressing themselves in the trainings and discussions. Since open political discussion can be viewed as a cornerstone of democracy, this is an essential element of the projects.



Societal reach (personal level): The projects have reached and involved a variety of actors in Sweden and Finland as well as in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. Participants, debaters and trainers included young people, political decision makers such as ministers, members of parliament, and officials such as mayors. This indicates that the capacities gained in the projects have penetrated the fabric of society diversely and widely, which in turn is a precondition for sustainable impact.

Opportunities:

Broader engagement: How to engage the people who have expressed that they want to participate in the trainings, but have not been able to? Organising more training events, amplifying cooperation with other societal actors like educational institutions and European foundations, or enabling participation in a digital environment. We encourage Nordic and local partners to systematically map the possibilities to engage those who are keen to participate yet have had difficulty doing so.

Democratic resilience: The long-term benefits in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, culminating in democratic resilience. The impacts as a whole build long-term structural capacities in the society, and make the democracies more resistant to different disruptions.

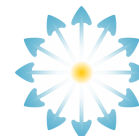
“Our activities build democratic resilience. In young and many ways fragile democracies there can always be setbacks for democracy, but our activities increase knowledge, networks, and democratic thinking, which increase the resilience of a democracy in the long term.”
- representative of a Nordic partner

Threats:

Societal instability: The democracies of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina can be viewed as rather fragile, due to a history of autocracy, only a short period of peace and stability on a societal scale, and (in comparison to Nordic countries) a narrow overall current capacity for societal development. In this context, it is not an easy task to create sustainable democratic impacts, as rapid changes in the fabric of society from political and economic issues and tensions can erase the achievements. These projects are part of a broader picture, however, and there are other measures in the region that aim to enhance democracy.

The Nordic and local partners have been active in preparing for threats and in trying to overcome them.

It should also be noted that the sustainability of the impact can never fully be in the hands of the organisers. As a representative of a Nordic partner put it in an interview:



*"The most important thing is to give opportunities to local people to implement change [to strengthen the democracy], not implement it for them."
- representative of a Nordic partner*

The organisers have been active in adapting to changes in the environment by accommodating the projects' actions to the bigger picture of democracy promotion.

Cross-political engagement: projects are centred around social democratic parties. In the Western Balkans, there are other actors from different ideological backgrounds aiming at the same goal of strengthening democracy. The projects can be seen as a part of a bigger picture in democracy-promotion in the region, where other actors promote it from different ideological standpoints. We encourage the organisers to continue and diversify their interaction with other than social democratic actors, who are engaged in the promotion of democracy in the Western Balkans.

Dependence is a possible threat for sustainability. However, we detect no indications for this threat becoming real. Nordic and local partners have accommodated their financial relationship well to an equal and constructive partnership.

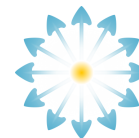
Both QSF and FLI are quite dependent on the institutional support of Palme Center. Strictly, however, this institutional support is not in the scope of this evaluation, but should be noted as a background factor of the cooperation. In the case of FLI, according to our interview data, the organisation would have great difficulty continuing its operations without Palme Center's support. However, the organisations are making efforts to strengthen their resources. It should also be noted that for QSF and FLI it is not easy to find other international financiers, as the organisations are clearly affiliated to social democratic political parties.

7 Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting issues of gender equality, reduction of inequality, and climate sustainability are well taken into account in the projects.

Strengths and opportunities:

Awareness of gender and minority issues: These issues are well covered throughout the documentation. Also, one of the main activities - Gender Academy in Bosnia & Hercegovina - is focused on building the capacity of women and strengthening their influence within political parties and CSOs, as well as in society generally, in order to ensure efficient and effective gender issues mainstreaming. Equal participation has been ensured between genders in activities. Gender equality is the main theme in the gender academies and taken into account in political academies as well.



Climate sustainability: Climate change has been a theme in political and gender academies. Activities have included seminars and panel discussions on climate change and the intersection of climate and gender equality.

Threats:

Reduction of inequality: This is an integral part of the evaluated activities, but there are difficulties due to the structure of societies in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina, as societal, demographic, and political divisions are in many ways strict. Interviews with the personnel indicate that every effort was made to facilitate participation from different backgrounds.

8 Recommendations

As concluding recommendations, we encourage Nordic and local partners to examine the following. This could be done for example in a light, developmental workshop between local and Nordic partners. It would not be necessary to limit the development ideas discussed in the workshop to these recommendations.

Relevance:

Continue monitoring the different levels of relevance:

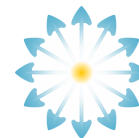
We have no actual recommendation on relevance, as the relevancy of the projects' activities is established in many levels (as described in more detailed in section 2 of this report): in relation to the societal situation in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina; in relation to objectives of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina; and in relation to development objectives of Finland and Sweden.

Coherence:

Continue and develop the practice of gradual improvement as well as more punctual development.

Nordic and local partners have already a good practice of using both gradual and punctual development in regard to the projects' activities. Gradual improvement meaning continuous development during activities. Punctual development meaning overall internal and external evaluations of a certain period of activities and development based on these evaluations - such evaluations being for example periodical reporting for funders of the projects, periodical overall discussions with Nordic and local partners, and external evaluations. This practice greatly adds to the coherence of the projects' activities as well as their effectiveness, and we thus encourage the KSF and Palme Center to continue and further develop that practice.

Effectiveness:



We encourage the local partners to compile the feedback-data according to standardised, easy to follow metrics.

The local partners already continually gather the feedback data from the participants. If this would be done in a more standardised and concise way, the feedback could be used for higher quality reporting on projects and to increase the evaluability and overall development of the projects' activities. One important aspect for both of these usages would be, that it could be followed how the feedback develops over time. This could also help develop the monitoring and evaluation plan of local partners. In section 4 we elaborate this idea and introduce three general metrics that could be followed in all the feedback: relevance, content, and organisation.

Systematically develop and map the possibilities of strengthening the regional dimension (meaning different regions of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina) for example in cooperation with the other European partners

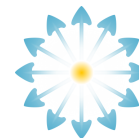
One issue that constantly came up in our interviews with the local partners was the question of whether there is a way to strengthen the regional aspect of projects' activities: meaning especially more activities in other localities than Tirana and Sarajevo. This was seen as important in order to strengthen the effectiveness and equality of the trainings. There are already measures that increase the accessibility of the activities from different regions of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. Also, it is not without problems to increase the regionality. These issues are discussed in more detail in section 4. However, we encourage the Nordic and local partners to map the possibilities of increasing the regionality - opportunities can lie in cooperation with other European partners, such as European foundations similar to KSF and Palme Center.

Efficiency:

Gradual increase of financial independence of the local partners from the support of Nordic partners could increase the efficiency and sustainability of actions.

The local partners are quite dependent on the financial support of Nordic partners. We do not see the issue of dependency as a weakness in the relationship, as is described in more detail in section "impact and sustainability". However, we encourage all of the partners to be alert for opportunities to increase the financial independence of the local partners, as this would lead to increased efficiency through synergy between resources (the old resources provided by mainly KSF and Palme Center and new resources from other sources) as well as increased sustainability through variety of resources available for the local partners.

The "participant database" could be used more for networking and development of the activities. The alumni of the projects' activities are already quite a large group of active and talented people in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. This network could be used to increase the efficiency as well as the impact and sustainability of the projects' actions. We encourage the local and Nordic partners to consider ways to for example more systematically draw feedback, new ideas for development, organise networking, recruit



speakers and trainers or even organise mentor-tutor-pairs. Naturally this mapping should be done by matching the limited resources available to the projects' to the best possible results - it isn't possible to implement all the ideas. The feasibility of different communication channels for activating the alumni-network, such as newsletters or social media platforms, should be considered.

Impact and sustainability:

Systematically develop and map the possibilities to engage those, who were not able to participate to the trainings

Not all of the willing can participate in the projects' activities. How to engage these people to be more able to participate in and develop a more sound democracy? Possibilities could lie in organising more trainings, amplifying cooperation with other societal actors like educational institutions and European foundations, passing on more information about activities, or enabling participation in a digital environment. That is why we encourage Nordic and local partners to systematically map these possibilities.

Continue and diversify their dialogue with other actors, who are engaged in democracy promotion, in the Western Balkans region.

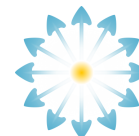
In the Western Balkans, there are other actors from different ideological backgrounds aiming at the same goal of strengthening democracy. We encourage the organisers to continue and diversify their dialogue with these actors in order to create synergy and promote dialogue also in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina between societal actors with different political backgrounds. Our assessment based on the data of the evaluation is that multi-party-cooperation is very difficult in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina. On the other hand, in a well-functioning democracy, dialogue between different societal actors is of great importance.

Be mindful of issues of financial dependence of local partners from the Nordic partners

Also, see recommendation "Gradual increase of financial independence of the local partners from the support of Nordic partners" under "efficiency".

Both local partners, FLI and QSF, are quite dependent on the institutional support of Palme Center, also on support of KSF. The institutional support is a good thing, as it largely enables the work of FLI and QSF. The flip-side is, that it creates a threat of dependence in regard to the objectives and operations as well, when the purpose of FLI and QSF is to realise their own goals.

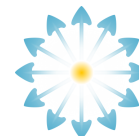
We detect no indications for this threat becoming real. Nordic and local partners have accommodated their financial relationship well to an equal and constructive partnership. This is however an element that we encourage especially the Nordic partners to be continuously mindful of: isn't it so, that the local partners retain their independence in terms of their overall objectives.



Think in more detail what societal criteria (in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina) should be fulfilled, so that similar projects would no longer be required

The democracies of Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina can be viewed as rather fragile, due to a history of autocracy, only a short period of peace and stability on a societal scale, and (in comparison to Nordic countries) a challenged overall current capacity for societal development. Against this background, there are plenty of actors and actions in the region that aim to enhance democracy. When is democracy sound enough so it does not need this kind of support anymore? We encourage Nordic and local partners to consider the ultimate exit-criterion for the projects: what kind of society would no longer significantly benefit from the continuation of such projects?

In this section, we have gathered the recommendations. Overall we remind, that as stated in the executive summary, we regard the evaluated actions and their organising as relevant and well-reasoned; coherent in their implementation, as well as in relation to the societal objectives; effective and efficiently implemented; impactful, as well as sustainable.



Annex I: Evaluation Framework

Approach

We apply a participatory, gender-sensitive, ethnically-balanced, and results-oriented approach.

The proposed methodology of the evaluation is designed to meet the requirements set for this particular evaluation. This approach is considered appropriate for identifying results attributable to the evaluated project.

We commit to the United Nations Evaluation Group's Ethical guidelines for evaluation. We are committed to the principles of integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence.

Methodology: Data Collection

We used a mixed set of data collection and analysis methods to ensure a variety of views, as well as assess the adequacy and quality of the data to draw justified conclusions and make recommendations.

Data collection:

1: Interviews and/or internet-based surveys with key informants

The key informants:

- Key personnel at Olof Palme Center
- Key personnel at Kalevi Sorsa Foundation
- Key personnel at FLI
- Key personnel at Qemal Stafa Foundation
- Participants and instructors who participated in the activities

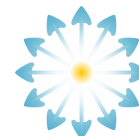
Altogether ten people were interviewed.

2: Documents:

We examined the following documents as provided by the Palme Center and KSF:

KSF: Documents on the project Supporting Democracy in Western Balkans – Progress and Bridges 2019-2021 (variably):

- Application documents
- Logical framework matrix ("logframe") for the project
- Risk evaluation
- Budgets
- Audit reports of the project and by country



- Annual reports

Palme Center 2019-2022 (variably):

- Applications (by partner organisations in the Western Balkans for Palme Center)
- Annual work plans
- Annual reports
- Budgets
- Audit reports
- Evaluation of the actions of Forum of Left Initiative's program, 2021

Methodology: Content analysis

In our analysis, we have categorised and summarised the overall information from various, aforementioned data sources. This means that our analysis is not objective, but based on the quality and quantity of data we had at our disposal for the evaluation.

We utilised mixed methods in the analysis. We based our analysis on the documents that were available from Nordic and local partners, as well as on interviews.

To examine the interviews we applied content analysis, meaning we grouped the data gained in interviews into clusters of strong and weak signals describing answers to the evaluation questions.

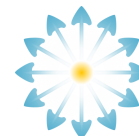
We assessed whether the documents support the findings from the interviews/surveys and vice versa.

Annex II: Background information

The Population of the Balkans at the dawn of the 21st century (Institut économique - Skopje, Université Saints-Cyrille-et-Méthode de Skopje Prolet 1, 1000 Skopje, République de Macédoine) 2017.

A new low for global democracy. The Economist 9.2.2022
<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/02/09/a-new-low-for-global-democracy>

CIA World Factbook: Albania 19.1.2023.
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/albania/>



Albania

Democracy in Albania is in the formative phase. In the widely cited “The Economist democracy index”⁴ Albania is classified as “a flawed democracy”. In The Economist’s scale of 1-9, it is ranked as 6. It ranks as 68th in a list of 167 countries.

In the same index, Finland and Sweden are both classified as “full democracies”, and on the scale of 1-9, both rank as 9. Finland ranks as 3rd and Sweden as 4th in The Economist’s list of 167 countries.

CIA World factbook⁵ describes:

“In the early 1990s, Albania ended 46 years of isolated communist rule and established a multiparty democracy. The transition has proven challenging as successive governments have tried to deal with high unemployment, widespread corruption, dilapidated infrastructure, powerful organised crime networks, and combative political opponents.”

According to Freedom house, a widely-cited democracy think tank, Albania is a “partly free” democracy, and scores 28/40 in political rights and 39/60 in civil liberties - scoring overall 67/100 (The “Freedom in the World” report 2022). In comparison, Finland and Sweden both score 100/100.

Also the **state of civil society has plenty of room for development.** Civicus - an international network of civil society organisations dedicated to strengthening citizen action - considered Albania as “narrowed” in its global civil society monitor. Classifications from best to worst are “open”, “narrowed”, “obstructed”, “repressed” and “closed”. In this sense, Albania “scores” 4/5. (Source: Civicus, Albania)

Ethnic and religious composition of the population is diverse, although not as diverse as in some other countries in the Western Balkans. This brings a special feature to strengthening the state of democracy and civil society in the country.

Bosnia & Hercegovina

The state of democracy is problematic. According to international think tanks and research institutes, Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina are somewhat at the same level in regard to democracy and civil rights, with Bosnia & Hercegovina lagging slightly behind.

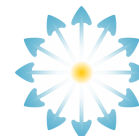
For example, In the widely cited “Economist democracy index” Bosnia & Hercegovina is classified as a “hybrid regime”, meaning a hybrid between authoritarian and democratic regimes. On The Economist’s scale it ranks as 5/9. It ranks as 95th in a list of 167 countries.

According to Freedom house, Bosnia & Hercegovina - as Albania - is a “partly free” democracy. It scores 19/40 in political rights and 34/60 in civil liberties - scoring overall 53/100 (The “Freedom in the World ” report 2022).

⁴A new low for global democracy. The Economist 9.2.2022

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/02/09/a-new-low-for-global-democracy>

⁵CIA World Factbook: Albania. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/albania/>



Freedom house describes democracy in Bosnia & Hercegovina as follows:

“Political affairs are characterised by severe partisan gridlock among nationalist leaders from the country’s Bosniak, Serb, and Croat communities. Political participation by citizens from other communities is extremely limited. Corruption remains a serious problem in the government and elsewhere in society.”

(The “Freedom in the World” report 2022)

Civicus considered the **state of the civil society** in Bosnia & Hercegovina as “narrowed”. In this sense Bosnia & Hercegovina, like Albania, “scores” 4/5 (source: Civicus, Bosnia & Hercegovina).

Ethnically and religiously Bosnia & Hercegovina is more diverse than Albania.

State of democracy and civil rights in Albania and Bosnia & Hercegovina.

Source	Albania	Bosnia & Hercegovina	For comparison: Finland	For comparison: Sweden
Economist Intelligence Unit: Democracy index	6/9	5/9	9/9	9/9
EIU: democracy index: country ranking	68th	95th	3rd	4th
Freedom house: overall index	67/100	53/100	100/100	100/100
Freedom house: political rights	28/40	19/40	40/40	40/40
Freedom house: civil rights	39/60	34/60	60/60	60/60
Civicus: Civicus monitor	4/5 “narrowed”	4/5 “narrowed”	5/5 “open”	5/5 “open”