

**ЗБОРНИК
НА
ТРУДОВИ**

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS of the
1st International Conference –
Challenges of Contemporary Families**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS of the

1st International Conference – Challenges of Contemporary Families

University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje

Publisher:

Faculty of Philosophy – Skopje

For the publisher:

Prof. Oliver Bakreski, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy - Skopje

International Scientific Program Board:

Irena Avirovic Bundalevska, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Makedonka Radulovic, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Angelka Keskinova, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Ratko Duev, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Zoran Matevski, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Anica Dragovic, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Tatjana Stojanovska Ivanova, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Marija Drakulovska Chukalevska, University “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje

Lucia Jimenez, University of Seville, Spain

Angela Abela, University of Malta, Malta

Ana Antunes, University of Madeira, Portugal

Ivana Dobrotić, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Oriola Hamzallari, Aleksander Moisiu University, Albania

Nicolas Maslowski, Charles University in Prague, Poland

Nevenka Zegarac, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Mariana Buciuceanu-Vrabie, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova

Ecaterina Grigoras, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova

Tatyana Kotzeva, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Department of Demography, Bulgaria

Kyriakos Demetriou, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Nergis Ramo Akgün, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

Salih Zeki Genç, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

Muzaffer Özdemir, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

Editor in chief: Prof. Irena Avirovic Bundalevska

Secretary of the Proceedings: Elena Chekova

Macedonian Language Proofreading: Liljana Jovanovska – Filadelfija Dooel

Technical Editing: Evropa 92, Kochani

CONTENTS

Laklija M., Maja Karačić M. The Impact of Fostering on Foster Carers' Children - the Perspective of Experts from Regional Offices of the Croatian Institute for Social Work.....	11
Dučkić Sertić A., Blažeka Kokorić S. The p-Process of Family Change and Recovery from Drug Addiction.....	32
Malčić L., Blažeka Kokorić S., Dželalija S. Social Services for Divorced Parents in Croatia - Expert's Perspective	51
Marić Ognjenović M., Marković V., Stajić T. Analysis of the Parenting Support Program for Roma Families in the Republic of Serbia	73
Grigoras E. Modern and Traditional Value Orientations Regarding Family and Childbirth: Evidence from GGS.....	94
Mašić K., Mihić I, Marić-Ognjenović M. Parents' Beliefs on the Importance of Reading with Children from the First Days of Life	112
Kaliterna Lipovčan L., Brajša-Žganec A., Džida M, Brkljačić T., Kućar M. Adolescent's Well-Being in Key Contexts TEEN-WELL – Project Presentation	134
Brajša-Žganec A., Kaliterna Lipovčan L., Džida M., Kućar M., Brkljačić T. Family Structure as Moderator of Links between Mother's Life Satisfaction and Different Types of Social Support	147
Sibinovska K. The Impact and Role of 4-Day Week on Work-Family Balance.....	160

Georgievska O., Jordanova Peshevska D., Tomovska Misoska A., Trajkova K. The Relationship between Parenting Styles in Childhood and Self-Esteem and Subjective Feeling of Happiness in Adulthood	185
Ignovska E. The Legal Possition of Vulnarable Adults in the Republic of North Macedonia In-between the Authority of the State and the Family	203
Martinović Grgurić J., Berc G. Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: Seeking Support from the Counselors' Perspective	220
Kulić I., Milosavljević J., Krilović M. Family Mediation as a Model for Protecting the Best Interests of the Child	240
Todorovska H., Keskinova A. Children in Early Adolescence from Families at Social Risk	260
Vasev S., Simonovska S. The Transformation of Fatherhood in the Modern Family	278
Karovska Ristovska A., Keskinova A., Chichevska-Jovanova N., Rashikj-Canevska O, Filipovska M., Nikolovska E, Ajdinski G. National Situation Analysis on Early Childhood Intervention in N. Macedonia: Perspectives of parents and caregivers	290
Ramo Akgün N., Zeki Genç S., Özdemir M. Problems Experienced by Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders	311
Burgund Isakov A., Raleva M., Gaidazis S., Čalovska N. Contextualizing the Intervention: “Parenting for Lifelong Health for Adolescents and Their Families” - A Case Study from North Macedonia	332

Antonovska D.	
Work-Life Balance as a Catalyst for Gender Equality	351
Krsteska – Papić B., Bilal S., Emin O.	
Reconciliation: A Transformative Tool for Families in Post-Conflict Environments	370
Bilal S., Emin O., Krsteska – Papić B.	
Families and Intercultural Challenges	385
Trajkovski D.	
Family Violence with Reference to Violence Against Women.....	399
Matevska V., Georgievska S.	
Fostering Practical Engagement: Exploring the Need for Social Work and Social Policy Students to Participate in Practical Work within HERA Initiatives.....	409
Petrovska N., Stanojkovska Trajkovska N., Kunovski I., Karovska Ristovska A., Georgievska S., Kostovska Frchkovska S.	
Parental Support through Promoting the Concept of Positive Parenting	419
Todorova B., Radulovik M.	
The Right to Part-Time Work of a Parent of a Child with Developmental Disabilities and Special Educational Needs	428
Avirovic Bundalevska I., Trpchevska M.	
Surrogacy: History and Challenges.....	447
Angeleska N.	
The impact of rare diseases on patients and their family members in functionality and daily life.....	462
Atanasova G.	
Implementation of Family Mediation in Macedonian Legislation and Institutions	482

Raleva M., Gaidazis Knezhevikj S., Pachoska N., Krstevska R., Damevska T., Stojanovska D., Dimitrovska A., Gkaitatzi Sazdov S. The Efficacy of PLH-Children Intervention Programme in Increasing p-Parenting Skills and Positive Parenting and Reducing Child Behavioral Problems: A Community-Based Implementation in North Macedonia	503
Mishevskva S., Ivanovska T. Recognition and Prevention of Domestic Violence at the Workplace.....	523
Mitkovska K. Family Education through “Team Building Family”	538
Olumcheva M., Olumchev S. Family and Parenting in the Digital World	555

Reconciliation: A Transformative Tool for Families in Post-Conflict Environments

Biljana Krsteska – Papić*¹, Sonaj Bilal², Osman Emin³

Abstract

Quality of life of families that have gone through military conflicts and now live in post-conflict regions is closely related to a complex, long-term and sensitive process of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a *conditio sine qua non* for a constructive approach by opposing family structures to the many challenges in various, yet common aspects of everyday life, such as health, social, educational, labour, civil rights, etc. Reconciliation deserves to be considered as a holistic and transformative educational tool of the lifelong learning platform. Benefits of the reconciliation process (based on capacity building for dialogue) were observed through longitudinal micro-qualitative research conducted in post-conflict regions of three Balkan countries. The research was oriented towards:

- defining the stages in building dialogue-skills of families;
- determining the factors for providing and encouraging integrative processes between families;
- monitoring the transformation of the value system in family communities.

Methodological framework of the research was based and developed using findings obtained by participant observation and semi-structured and unstructured interviews with many focus groups of family representatives, representatives of local self-governments, educational institutions, and representatives of political parties, as well as analysis of relevant documentation. The respondents sample reflected the ethnic, gender, social, educational, generational, cultural and linguistic diversity. The research findings affirmed the importance of systematic, planned and strategic guidance of opposing family representatives through a dialogue that will initiate reconciliation in several stages, with the ultimate goal of: establishing mutual relations through familiarization; building awareness of one's own viewpoints, as well as the viewpoints of the others; mutual recognition and acceptance; detecting common needs and interests and showing support for smooth institutional operation. Reconciliation is ongoing pedagogical and andragogical challenge, and its implementation should reflect a multidisciplinary approach that enables the development of a set of competencies and skills

¹ Skopje, R. N. Macedonia

² International Balkan University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Skopje, R. N. Macedonia

³ Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, "Blaže Koneski" Faculty of Philology, Skopje, R. N. Macedonia

*Corresponding author: krsteska.papic@yahoo.com

of family members, which in the long-term leads to transformation of their personal values.

Keywords: Reconciliation, Transformation, Conflict, Post-Conflict Environments, Dialogue.

1. Introduction

Reconciliation plays a critical role in improving the quality of life for families living in post-conflict environments. As a complex, long-term, and sensitive process, reconciliation is essential for addressing the challenges faced by families who have experienced conflict. Beyond merely restoring peace, reconciliation serves as a transformative educational tool that builds dialogue and fosters mutual understanding among opposing groups. In post-conflict settings, reconciliation helps bridge divides in daily aspects of life, such as health, education, labor, and civil rights.

This paper explores the transformative power of reconciliation as a tool for fostering dialogue among families in post-conflict Balkan regions. Through a longitudinal, micro-qualitative study conducted across three Balkan countries, the research examines how reconciliation can reshape family structures, values, and interactions. By focusing on the development of dialogue skills, integrative processes, and value transformation, the study highlights how reconciliation can create a foundation for peaceful co-existence in post-conflict societies.

The findings from this research emphasize the need for systematic, planned, and strategic guidance in promoting reconciliation, with a particular focus on the role of families. Through dialogue, families can work toward resolving past conflicts and building a more cohesive and peaceful future.

2. The Role and Importance of Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Environments

The reconciliation process should be considered as a complex, multilayered, and long-term cycle that is crucial for managing opposing sides in post-conflict social contexts and conditions. The term itself underscores the importance of building peaceful relations and the need to bridge gaps between hostile and opposing parties. Reconciliation has a strong impact on the transforming and rebuilding of relations between communities and groups that were endangered, disrupted, or entirely severed by violence and conflict. It should occur on both a horizontal level, by fostering peace-building initiatives between individuals, and a vertical level, by strengthening relationships between people and institutions (Clogg, 2021).

Designing and managing reconciliatory commitments, steps, and efforts requires a unique approach and policy tailored to the specif-

ic local social and political context. When examining and comparing global experiences in this field, it becomes clear that reconciliation, as a long-term effort, is a crucial aspect of this process. However, one must not overlook the so-called *soft* component, which includes building trust, developing collaborative relationships, improving mutual dialogue, and maintaining peace and harmony within society. These benefits are essential for the overall well-being and survival, in the broadest sense, of families who have experienced or are still facing conflict situations.

The goal of reconciliation, as one of the holistic policy approaches, is to foster new connections between people and families, creating a foundation for better mutual understanding. While reconciliation does not have to be the only relevant intervention, it is crucial for building peace in post-conflict periods, as it is closely tied to the potential for further democratic, economic, cultural, and educational development. Viewing reconciliation from this perspective highlights its pedagogical and psychological dimensions, with dialogue serving as its primary tool.

2.1. Dialogue: A Tool in the Reconciliation Process

The reconciliation process is rooted in dialogue building, which serves as both a method for gaining insight into the truth and an approach to life (Bryn, 2015). Dialogue is a key driver of reconciliation because it actively engages a variety of participants across multiple stages in building channels for understanding and recognizing different, even opposing, viewpoints, values, beliefs, and historical narratives. The broad benefits of this approach stem from its unobtrusive nature – free of any propaganda or advocacy – and its flexible structure, with the primary goal being for people to learn from one another, following the “listen–learn–change” cycle. The noble and transformative aspects of this sensitive process include a deeper understanding of *others*, the ability to overcome stereotypes, and the capacity to change personal viewpoints, seen not as a weakness but as a strength and a personal capacity (Bryn, 2015).

International experiences (in Northern Ireland, Libya, the South Caucasus, Georgia, Abkhazia, Ukraine, etc.), as well as field practices from the Balkans, clearly highlight the need to establish partner networks in these efforts, emphasizing the role and impact that families can have in supporting peace initiatives.

Understanding the principles of dialogue management is a prerequisite for proper strategic involvement of families as a key pillar in reconciliation. It outlines the subtle boundary between debate and dialogue (Bryn, 2015).

Table 1. Debate – dialogue comparison

Debate	Dialogue
The goal is to win	The goal is to understand
Convince / argue	Explain / tell
Search for the other’s weak argument	Look for the counterpart’s strengths
Talk	Listen
Moral judgment	Make the counterparts feel safe
Confrontational body language	Tolerance
To change one’s opinion is a sign of weakness	Self-discipline/self-criticism

When initiating the transformative process with families, the aforementioned specifics should be used to design pedagogical and psychological approaches that support and facilitate reconciliation, while also respecting the characteristics of local social and political context. International experiences offer a clear roadmap for shaping an algorithm for long-term, systematic, and constructive management of reconciliation, i.e.:

- openness, transparency and sense of community in planning the goals, topics, schedule, methods, etc.;
- getting to know each other face to face;
- equal, not similar participants;
- detecting the easiest and most acceptable common topics;
- continuous active and careful listening;
- well prepared questions as support for the development of dialogue;
- right to express personal opinions and experiences;
- avoiding to ascribe viewpoints to certain groups or sub-groups because of their particular affiliation or characteristic;
- comparing experiences, perceptions and practices of participants with different viewpoints;

- ♦ respecting the privacy when discussing certain topics;
- ♦ ensuring safe socio-emotional climate for developing and conducting dialogue;
- ♦ continuous and cyclic nature of a dialogue (Bryn, 2015).

To ensure that reconciliation and dialogue pave the way to peace and harmonious relations in post-conflict circumstances, it is crucial to establish a broad yet clearly structured network of participants working together on this task. Positive international experiences suggest involving the following entities in the overall efforts: local political and municipal authorities and institutions; teachers and educational authorities; families (including parents, guardians, and students); representatives of refugees and displaced persons; and representatives of the international community. Families play a key role as an inter-generational and unifying element in interactions and communication with all other stakeholders.

2.2. Reconciliation of the Balkan Area

The last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century was marked by extensive political turmoil, tension, violence, and armed aggression in many Balkan countries. The necessity of continuing (co)existence in a common, shared space – despite later redefinitions and transformations in territorial, administrative, institutional, and legislative terms – strongly highlighted the need for reconciliation, which lasted for years. The Balkan experience in reconciliation is viewed as a relevant and unique approach on the international level, offering valuable lessons and recommendations from its development stages.

The adverse effects of wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia were the primary drivers behind the planning, organizing, and implementation of hundreds of dialogue-seminars held over a decade. The initial efforts began in 1995, led by a group of experts and enthusiasts from the Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, Norway. They pursued their mission through a network of Nansen Dialogue Centres in nearly all the former Yugoslav republics, now independent countries. These centres supported initiatives to encourage local stakeholders across different countries to engage in reconciliation efforts. Analysis of the extensive archive and documentation of these activities points to several significant insights:

- the complexity of the conflicts in the Balkans can be fully understood only through direct mutual communication, free from media or political propaganda. The personal involvement of all key stakeholders fosters an awareness of one's own position as well as the positions of *others* during the conflict;
- life in segregated societies does not imply everyday living in physically divided territories;
- international efforts that focus on peacebuilding through institutional capacity building often overlook the importance of the "soft" component, which involves advancing dialogue to break the transgenerational transfer of viewpoints, stereotypes, and prejudices towards *others*;
- building a network of local dialogue supporters that would reflect the diversity of local contexts.

This initiative is the largest international project ever undertaken by the Nansen Academy and has been internationally recognized, receiving numerous notable awards.

3. Transformative Role of the Dialogue

In response to the series of tragic events and turmoil in the Balkans over a single decade, which created a pressing need for reconciliation, the research focused on a qualitative analysis of extensive archives of data, insights, records, and documents. These were compiled after longitudinal monitoring of the role and impact of reconciliation in three Balkan countries that have undergone various social and political transformations and experienced armed violence and aggression of differing durations and timings. Our research focused on three key moments: the need for dialogue and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after 1995, Kosovo after 1999, and North Macedonia after 2001. This approach provides a foundation for assessing the benefits of dialogue and comparing its impact both on a macro level (social interactions) and a micro level – family, as one of proactive social entities.

3.1. Methodological Framework

The research focused on a qualitative analysis of an extensive database created during the planning and implementation of reconciliation efforts in three Balkan countries from 1998 to 2008. The research goals were oriented towards:

- ♦ defining the stages of building dialogue-skills among families;
- ♦ determining the factors for establishing and supporting integrative processes between families;
- ♦ monitoring the transformation of the value system in family communities.

The methodological framework of the research was developed based on the advantages of participant observation, as well as semi-structured and unstructured interviews with various focus groups, including family representatives, local government officials, educational institutions, political party representatives, and an analysis of relevant documentation. The respondent sample reflected ethnic diversity (Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosniak origin), as well as variations in gender, social status, education, generational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian languages). The experiences from all three Balkan countries underscored the necessity of reciprocity in participation in dialogue sessions and seminars by all stakeholders. This requirement implied a broad diversity within all focus groups with which the Nansen Academy team worked. The analysis focused on sets of statements, testimonies, perceptions, values, expectations, and projections for future developments from all participants in the dialogue seminars, aiming to identify common topics, challenges, and issues.

Given the extensive data available, the research interest remained on focus groups composed of family members as crucial agents and supporters of changes in local environments, which is a prerequisite for improving relations on a broader societal level.

3.2. Research Findings

Participation of family members was crucial for initiating transgenerational changes, which had a definitive and decisive impact on potential qualitative advancements in several areas of life. The findings will be presented as a cross-section of multi-year monitoring of the transformations that took place in:

- ♦ 24 family communities (12 Macedonian, 12 Albanian) from the municipality of Jegunovce;
- ♦ 18 family communities (11 Albanian, 7 Serbian) from the municipality of Novo Brdo;

- ♦ 36 family communities (15 Bosnian, 21 Croatian) from Prozor-Rama municipality.

The majority of participating families were traditionally oriented: in two municipalities with a predominant focus on agriculture as the primary source of income. The smallest family unit consisted of four members, while most were larger families with three generations living together.

Three focus groups representing family communities from three different Balkan contexts shared several common characteristics. One commonality was their rural origins. Another similarity was found in the significantly larger participation of male family members (grandfathers, fathers, and uncles) in dialogue seminars compared to the much less frequent participation of female members (grandmothers and mothers). Male family members primarily shared personal family stories and experiences, and they were also the ones making key decisions that drove transformative processes. What also emerged as a recurring experience was the inclusion of multiple male members from the same families, reflecting generational differences. Extremely rare were examples and challenges where a unified stance was not established within a family unit, considering the possible generational gap. Encouraging were the cases where the inclusion of one family member led to the gradual involvement of the extended family, particularly when there was a high level of mutual trust and a safe climate within the focus groups. Profiling the participating families led to another common characteristic: lower social status and issues with unemployment in local communities. An additional challenge was that some male family members had been involved in military conflicts on opposing sides, despite originating from nearly the same territory. This highlights the importance of the reconciliation process, showing that it aims not only to overcome ethnic challenges and barriers but also to foster dialogue in divided and deeply segregated societies (Bryn, 2015).

The extensive work of the expert team with groups of parents revealed another specificity: the need not only for conducting dialogue with the help of facilitators but also for supporting the restoration of forcibly interrupted connections, relationships, and communication between the local populations in the targeted municipalities. These populations had maintained various forms of interaction before the war, including familial, economic, legal, commercial, educational,

sports, and cultural connections. Following the outlined algorithm for providing a reconciliation platform, all steps are reflected through the summarized benefits for the three focus groups:

- ♦ openness, transparency, and sense of community were crucial in planning goals, topics, schedules, and methods. Parents consistently played an active and decisive role in negotiating and specifying details for all dialogue seminars and sessions. This included selecting session locations, tailoring the dynamics of implementation to their professional and family responsibilities, choosing relevant topics for the group, and using methods that provided greater flexibility and autonomy while aligning with their real-life experiences, prior knowledge, and lifestyles. Achieving a sense of community within the group was a top priority in this complex process, requiring significant effort to identify common interests, which in turn enhanced openness, communication, and connections. It is also important to highlight the effective practice of holding dialogue seminars in neutral locations – whether in a home, a neighbouring country, or at the Nansen Academy. This practice helped shift the focus from local to international, offering a broader perspective and dimension;
- ♦ getting to know each other face-to-face: in most cases, family members were able to re-establish relationships interrupted by the military conflict. The immediate and direct meetings during the dialogue seminars provided a safe space, allowing participants to meet, see, and hear each other;
- ♦ equality, not similarity of participants: given the diversity within the focus groups, it was essential to create an environment where everyone felt equal, rather than similar to others. Despite potential similarities in individual family settings, it was crucial for each participant in the reconciliation process to feel equal to all others. This is why round table discussions were used, titles were omitted, and speaking time was equally allocated, ensuring that everyone can be heard and recognized (Bryn, 2015);
- ♦ detecting the easiest, most acceptable common topics: identifying common topics that are both easily acceptable and relevant is a crucial turning point in shaping and managing dialogue with families. This is especially important once families recognize that certain topics are equally relevant and critical for the future

quality of their lives. Family focus groups typically acted cohesively regarding the perspectives and future well-being of their children, grandchildren, and descendants, highlighting the importance of the upbringing and educational process. Additionally, a unifying effect was observed in discussions about local infrastructure, such as water supply networks, the quality and safety of local roads, and the conditions of local upbringing and educational institutions;

- continuous active and attentive listening: it was essential to create an atmosphere of empathy and heightened awareness to prevent any type of ignoring or underestimating among the reconciliation parties;
- well- prepared questions to support dialogue development: open-ended questions are crucial as they facilitate open communication between participants and provide diverse perspectives. In contrast, closed-ended questions, or those requiring concise answers, as well as questions that resemble an interrogation, are highly unfavourable for this type of process (Bryn, 2015);
- right to express personal opinions and experiences: a crucial message for families participating in reconciliation efforts was the recognition that their opinions were valued from the outset, and that no one would be coerced or directed to alter their views;
- not ascribing viewpoints to certain groups or sub-groups based on some affiliation or characteristic: it was observed that family members developed trust much more easily towards others in the focus groups after they saw that the expert group did not encourage any kind of generalizations based on ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural origin, level of education, social status, etc.;
- comparison of experiences, insights and perceptions of participants with different viewpoints: many participants in the family focus groups confirmed that the dialogue seminars provided a unique opportunity to encounter, for the first time, the diverse viewpoints, experiences, fears, expectations, and hopes of the other side, which enabled them to understand the concept of multiperspectivity;
- respect for privacy when discussing certain topics: crucial aspect of conducting the dialogue seminars was the strict rule against asking questions that could induce fear, shame, unease, or dis-

comfort among participants, or that might infringe upon their privacy, political or religious affiliations, family background, and other sensitive areas;

- ♦ provision of a safe social and emotional climate for developing and conducting dialogue, which implied the readiness of the expert team to recognize and address a range of feelings, with different signs, without labelling, ridiculing, or ignoring any participant. While the dialogue process is not a therapeutic session, it should allow space for participants to express joy, sadness, anger, rage or revolt;
- ♦ dialog must be implemented in continuous and cyclic manner: dialogue should not be confined to a specific timeframe but should continue on later occasions, since it fosters ongoing understanding between participants, which is permanent need and challenge.

4. Conclusions

Reconciliation through dialogue as the main tool enabled the transformation of values and perceptions within family communities from different, previously opposing sides. This transformation was encouraged by identifying common, important, and relevant topics that fostered cohesion, agreement, complementarity, and support. Hence, qualitative changes were observed in the statements and actions undertaken by family communities from diverse ethnic backgrounds. These transformations are reflected in:

- ♦ joint initiatives for educational activities (extracurricular, curricular, and free courses). A notable example is the municipality of Jegunovce, where families requested free non-native language courses, which saw increasing interest from local families. The initiative was successful because family communities viewed it as a way to enhance their children's language skills and competencies, rather than perceiving it as a threat to their ethnic or linguistic identity;
- ♦ mutual assurance of safety while moving through the municipality, particularly in former monoethnic war zones, and negotiating and coordinating joint activities for children;

- the change in one generation within the family most often initiated transformative processes both horizontally and vertically within the family. If there was any obstacle to supporting reconciliation steps, it was more frequently observed among family members directly involved in military actions or among the oldest members of the families;
- mutual support and assistance to families in their local communities, especially when (in the initial stages of reconciliation) some were labelled as “traitors” or collaborators with *others*. Through the conducted interviews, families reported the discomfort and unpleasant experiences they faced from their neighbours, fellow citizens, and compatriots. Despite these challenges, their primary motivation remained the well-being of their children and grandchildren;
- after the initial positive experiences with the dialogue seminars and the easing of tense relations, family representatives began positively influencing their neighbours, relatives, and friends, thereby expanding the support network. Additionally, the participation of female family members, particularly mothers, gradually increased over the following years. Their involvement significantly contributed to the reconciliation process, especially through their valuable support for intercultural educational activities;
- what became evident was the clear separation between past events that contributed to conflict and violence and the common aspirations for the future of their descendants. This distinction served as a guideline for the development of national strategies that support dialogue as a holistic and effective practice;
- the crucial role of the family as a connective tissue in the reconciliation process is evident in cases where central-level decisions were made without consultation and direct involvement of family communities. Consequently, these decisions often failed to be implemented effectively and efficiently. In such circumstances, some families became sources of significant passive resistance (due to insufficient information, fear, hasty decisions, unprepared ground, and lack of human capacities and resources);
- for an extended period, families played a direct role in supporting pioneering upbringing and educational efforts to address school segregation issues, such as two schools operating under one roof,

ethnic shifts, and instruction in different languages at physically separated school facilities. Particularly notable were instances of self-initiated volunteer participation from nearly all families to improve school infrastructure, all in the best interest of their children.

The above highlights the potential of families as a key element in reconciliation and underscores the necessity for their interaction with all other stakeholders in this complex network of teachers, school governing bodies, municipal and administrative authorities, and political parties. Dialogue has made families more visible as active subjects and pioneers of change, demonstrating that reconciliation efforts cannot rely solely on immediate centralized decisions that overlook the family's central role. Furthermore, dialogue with families has emphasized the human dimension in post-conflict settings, addressing aspects such as children's upbringing, healthcare, environmental care, music, food, sports, crafts, and volunteering.

Understanding the *other* as a mission of reconciliation is closely related to the essential role of the family in fostering human values and developing the capacities of future generations. The transformative power of the family in the reconciliation process stems from its inherent capacity for significant and profound influence. This potential should be harnessed systematically and strategically from psychological, pedagogical, and sociological perspectives.

Literature:

Bar-Tal, D. (2009) 'Reconciliation as a Foundation of Culture of Peace', in De Rivera, J.: *Handbook on Building Cultures of Peace*. New York City: Springer, pp. 363-377.

Bryn, S., et al. (2015) 'Understanding the other', Lillehammer: Nansen Freddsenter. Nansen Dialogue Center for Peace and Dialogue.

Clogg, R. et al (2021) *Reconciliation is not only possible but needed in all stages of conflict*, <https://www.c-r.org/news-and-insight/reconciliation-not-only-possible-needed-all-stages-conflict-0> (Accessed 2 August 2024).

Tucker Green, D. (2012) *Truth and reconciliation*, London: Nick Hern Books.

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски",
Скопје

316.812(062)

INTERNATIONAL Conference – Challenges of Contemporary Families
(1 st)

Зборник на трудови [Електронски извор] = Conference proceedings
: of
the 1 st International Conference – Challenges of Contemporary Families

/ [editor in chief Irena Avirovic Bundalevska]. - Текст во ПДФ формат,
содрж. 578 стр., илустр. - Skopje, 2025 : Ss. Cyril and Methodius
University, Faculty of Philosophy

Начин на пристапување (URL):

<https://repository.ukim.mk/handle/20.500.12188/33572>. - Фусноти кон
текстот. - Наслов преземен од екран. - Опис на изворот на ден
26.05.2025. - Библиографија кон трудовите
ISBN 978-608-238-256-2

1. Гл. ств. насл. 2. Bundalevska, Irena Avirovic [главен и одговорен
уредник]

а) Семејство, современо -- Предизвици -- Собири

COBISS.MK-ID 66018821