The story of the BRIDGE implementation in Macedonia began exactly one year ago, in July 2012. Back then, highly enthusiastic about introducing this comprehensive training program in Macedonia, the State Election Commission, supported by the OSCE Mission to Skopje, and motivated by the idea of having three fully accredited workshop facilitators, organized the first BRIDGE workshop in Macedonia.

Since the Semi Accredited facilitators were given the opportunity to choose the module for this first workshop, after comprehensive analysis they decided that for the time being the most suitable would be the *Strategic & Financial Planning* foundation module. Before the workshop, there were a couple of weeks of hard work translating and adapting the materials, but by the end all the efforts paid off. This was the first time ever that BRIDGE materials were translated and presented in Macedonian! Guided and supported by the accrediting facilitator, Macedonian facilitators also did a great job introducing BRIDGE to the workshop participants and meeting the workshops objectives. For all of the participants this was the first time to meet the BRIDGE methodology, and they gave very positive feedback, highly rating both the methodology and the presented topics.

At the end of the final day of the workshop, we had elections professionals who were highly aware of the significance of effective planning and resources allocation for successful elections, and the BRIDGE community opened its doors for three newly accredited Macedonian workshop facilitators.

**Story continues**

During this one year, following the electoral cycle approach, Macedonian facilitators developed a very comprehensive program in which four more module workshops were conducted:

- *Access to the Electoral Process*,
- *Pre-election Activities*,
- *Polling, Counting & Results*, and
- *Post-election Activities*. 
As Local Elections 2013 were organized in the meantime, the capacity building helped the election officials to conduct their activities in the elections more easily.

The target group for the Access workshop was the SEC’s Regional Offices staff, as a crucial part of the electoral administration in Macedonia. Keeping in mind that the main activities of the regional staff during the year are about protecting electoral rights – both active (right to vote) and passive (right to run as candidate/s), and also updating and maintaining the Voters List, Access to Electoral Process was more than necessary to discuss during the pre-elections period. The access issues were even more actualized since new provisions concerning access to the voting procedure were implemented in the Electoral Code of Macedonia.

For the next three modules, the presidents of the Municipal Election Commissions were the target group. Anticipating the upcoming Local Elections, the Pre-elections and Polling workshops were an excellent opportunity for the participants to practice their skills in planning their activities, and also polling and counting, from a different, more enjoyable and entertaining perspective. The participants were already experienced in accomplishing the MECs responsibilities in the Parliamentary Elections 2011, so these workshops seemed to be sufficient for them to renew and upgrade their knowledge. The module activities were slightly customized due to Macedonian regulations and circumstances, and the participants’ experience as well. Regarding the objectives of the Post-election workshops, we managed to identify the good practices and challenges, to endorse the positive aspects in the implementation of the process, and to propose solutions in the areas that need to be improved.

During the workshops our days were inevitably full with positive vibrations and good energy, smiling faces, and participants and facilitators eager for the next BRIDGE workshop.

Goals for the future

The year that has passed once more proved that BRIDGE can be universal and successfully implemented regardless the language or the culture. That is exactly what happened in Macedonia. We are very happy that we have become members of the great BRIDGE family and we have no intention of stopping now.

In the short term, the BRIDGE modules will cover all the training needs that have been detected as such during the analysis conducted in and for the State Election Commission. Therefore, in the upcoming period more BRIDGE module workshops in Macedonia can certainly be expected.

In the longer term, our strategy is to develop a wider network of BRIDGE workshop facilitators in Macedonia who will implement the program on every level of the electoral stakeholders: EMBs, political parties, NGOs, media, etc. First step towards meeting this goal is to promote the current workshop facilitators to the level of accrediting facilitators. They will then be able to organize TtF in Macedonia, and make BRIDGE come true for a wider range of elections officials.

In the meantime, we will stay faithful to our commitment towards free, fair, transparent, and democratic elections.
Profile—Zage Filipovski

What is your name? Zage Filipovski

What organisation do you work for? OSCE Mission to Skopje, working as a Programme officer, providing elections assistance to the State Election Commission to implement international best practices and improve its work. I also assist the Ministry of Justice to improve the existing election legislation and to implement the ODIHR and Venice commission recommendation.

What is your nationality? My nationality is Macedonian. However working for an international organisation, I am utilising the benefits of both speaking the language and having the credibility of OSCE in approaching the stakeholders.

What is your facilitator category and when were you accredited? I was accredited as a Workshop facilitator in July 2012. In the meantime with my BRIDGE colleagues in Macedonia we have organised several workshops and fulfilled the required criteria of 150 hours of facilitation (delivery, preparation and customisation of modules) to apply to become accrediting facilitators soon.

Can you tell us about your work in elections and/or training? I was engaged in elections work since 2000 as one of the founders of the first independent domestic election organisation in Macedonia. Since then, I have been working with national and international organisations to improve the quality of elections in the country. I have also provided training to election officials and civil society organisations on various aspects of election management and administration.

From the side of international electoral assistance, Zage works side by side with the SEC staff utilizing BRIDGE skills in introducing most needed improvements in the SEC work. You can read Zage’s full profile below!
tion monitoring initiative in Macedonia. At that time I was learning from the best international consultants from election assistance organisations. Naturally I got engaged working with OSCE on election monitoring in different countries. Since 2003 I joined the OSCE Mission to Skopje, mostly providing training and capacity building for different state institutions and ministries. In the last five years, election administration and the State Election Commission became priority stakeholders in my work.

**Can you tell us about your experience in facilitating BRIDGE?** I have been training civil servants for 12 years and both delivering and participating in training to advance my skills. When I got acquainted with BRIDGE I found it was one of the most comprehensive training tools I had used. The advantage of BRIDGE is that it is developed by practitioners and its system is of continuous improving and adjusting to the changing environment. The modules offer solutions to almost any problem the election administration might face. It is interesting to learn that all countries face similar challenges in elections and they found different and innovative approaches and solutions described in the key studies provided by BRIDGE as part of the training material.

BRIDGE also brings its aura of internationally recognised tool and the election administration recognises its value. During the first BRIDGE workshop we facilitated in Macedonia the participants were overwhelmed because they felt it is a training customised to their needs.

**What do you like most about being a BRIDGE facilitator?** The excitement of fulfilment, after a well performed training. This moment at the end of the workshop when you get positive feedback from the participants and you see fulfilment of the learning outcomes and that the participants have understood the key understandings. The satisfaction is even bigger when the key understandings are transformed into new procedures and practices and implemented in everyday work. In the past several years the BRIDGE team has managed to introduce some novelties and procedural changes in Macedonia.

**What are the challenges of being a BRIDGE facilitator?** Yes, being accepted by others who haven’t been exposed to BRIDGE. Grown people are afraid from the unknown. The first steps are to establish rapport and respect with the stakeholders. Especially when people with many years experience working in elections are resistant to changes. Even if they face difficulties in fulfilling their work, they can still be resistant to proposed changes.

**What advice would you have for any new BRIDGE facilitators?** Believing in the set goals, being persistent and motivated are the key supporting traits to being a successful BRIDGE facilitator. Working with BRIDGE means addressing the basics of building democracy in a country, whether it is our own or a neighbouring country or any other country in the world. Doing BRIDGE we are members of the ‘club’ contributing to a better global society.

Spread the word, introduce BRIDGE to your colleagues and bring new supporters and practitioners. BRIDGE is viable tool only if it is growing and spreading.
Great news! The Media & Elections module has now been updated. The updated module has been approved by the BRIDGE partners and is just undergoing final proof-reading by the BRIDGE Office before publication at the end of August, when it will be available for download on the Curriculum page of the website.

Changes to the module include:

- New activities, including content on new and social media
- A new structure, with sections and documents renumbered
- Amended KUs, LOs and ACs
- Some original material edited and updated
- Some obsolete material removed

We would like to thank International IDEA who updated the module. Contributors to the update were: Gillian McCormack as the curriculum writer for the updating; Catherine Barnes; Belen Alvaro; Deryck Fritz; Kate Nobel; Shana Kaiser and Rushdi Nakkerdien as representatives of International IDEA’s Elections Programme. We’d also like to thank Ornella Moderan from Togo who contributed a new icebreaker. The BRIDGE Office also reviewed and updated material.

An updated Electoral Dispute Resolution module is currently being reviewed by the BRIDGE Office. It will bring in a new, higher-level focus, while also providing the option of including the more practical, on-the-ground perspective of the current module. The new materials will draw on International IDEA’s Electoral Justice handbook.

We ask all facilitators to ensure they are using the most up to date materials for their workshops.
Comment vous appelez-vous?
Je m’appelle Agnès NDAYIKEZA. Le nom que l’on aimait m’appeler dans BRIDGE c’est Any. Any c’est donc mon nom de famille BRIDGE.

Pour quelle organisation travaillez-vous?
Je travaille pour la Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) du Burundi.

Quelle est votre nationalité?
Je suis de nationalité burundaise.

Quelle est votre catégorie de facilitateur et quelle est votre date d’accréditation?
Je suis « Facilitateur d’atelier » depuis le 19 avril 2013.

Détaillez votre expérience et/ou formation électorale.
J’ai travaillé à la Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante du Burundi depuis 2004 en tant que chargée de la Communication.
La CENI qui a organisé les élections de 2005 a été mise en place en Septembre 2004 pour une durée d’une année.
Le rapport général pour ce processus a été présenté au mois de décembre 2005 (j’étais parmi le comité de rédaction de ce rapport) et c’était la fin du mandat de la CENI de l’époque.
Au cours de ce processus, j’ai pu suivre une formation électorale (FORMELE) au mois de mars 2005 à Bujumbura/Burundi, organisée par IFES pour les cadres de la CENI.
La CENI de 2009 (qui a organisé le processus électoral de 2010), est une structure permanente. J’ai été recrutée en tant que Chef de Cabinet du Président.
Je suis impliquée (comme les autres cadres) dans la conception des modules et surtout l’animation des séances d’éducation civique et électorale à l’endroit des partenaires électoraux; et dans la formation des démembréments de la CENI, des agents recenseurs et des membres des Bureaux de vote, pour les préparer à bien accomplir leur mission.
Toutes ces formations (modulaires et TTF) ont été organisées par IFES en collaboration avec la CENI du Burundi.

Détaillez votre expérience de facilitation du programme BRIDGE.
J’ai eu mon accréditation partielle au mois de décembre 2010.
Depuis ce temps, moi je me considérais déjà comme faisant partie de la famille Agnès (en costume chocolat) en fdi de décembre 2010, à l’hôtel club du Lac Tanganyika.
BRIDGE, et j’ai attendu mon accréditation complète jusqu’au mois d’avril 2013. Évidemment, cela a pris du temps car les opportunités étaient rares.

Mais entretemps, j’ai facilité un atelier « abridge », de cinq (5) jours, financé par IFES/Burundi pour les cadres de la CENI, c’était au mois de février 2011. C’était une occasion de faciliter un atelier modulaire après ma qualification comme semi accréditée.

Je suis nouvellement accréditée au cours d’un atelier modulaire sur « Introduction à la gestion électorale et à la collaboration avec les parties prenantes », qui s’est tenu à Ngozi (Nord du Burundi) du 15 au 19 avril 2013.

Je n’ai donc pas suffisamment d’expérience en matière de facilitation des ateliers BRIDGE, mais je crois que j’aurais suffisamment d’opportunités pour enrichir mon expérience et surtout mettre en œuvre ce que j’ai appris et partager avec les autres administrateurs électoraux ce que je connais en matière de gestion d’un processus électoral.

**Qu’est ce que tu aimes le plus en tant que facilitateur BRIDGE ?**

Dans BRIDGE, j’aime comment l’équipe de facilitateurs est soudée pendant la préparation et au moment de l’animation des sessions. J’aime la méthode de facilitation, la maïeutique souvent utilisée par les facilitateurs, l’ambiance qui règne entre les facilitateurs et les participants. Ils sont tellement proches que personne ne sent le poids de l’autorité s’il advenait que autorité et subalterne participent à un même atelier.

**Quels sont vos défis en tant que facilitateurs du programme BRIDGE ?**

- Les occasions, les opportunités pour mettre en œuvre ce que j’ai appris dans BRIDGE et le partager avec les autres ne sont pas courantes.
- Devenir un jour expert facilitateur reste mon obsession.

**Quels conseils donnez-vous aux nouveaux facilitateurs ?**

- A tous ceux qui sont récemment accrédités et ceux qui le seront demain, je leur demande de s’intéresser beaucoup au curriculum BRIDGE pour les raisons suivantes :
  - BRIDGE est un excellent cadre d’apprentissage pour adultes. On s’édifie mutuellement entre facilitateurs et participants, chacun apporte du nouveau aux connaissances de l’autre et à son expérience.
  - J’admire la créativité dont font preuve les facilitateurs et les participants. Dans BRIDGE, beaucoup de talents cachés sont mis à découvert.
  - BRIDGE est une occasion de rencontre de cultures surtout quand il s’agit d’une TTF.
  - Dans BRIDGE on dirait que l’on se trouve dans une famille.
  - Dans BRIDGE on noue des contacts très utiles pour la professionnalisation des administrateurs électoraux, pour l’échange d’expériences et d’informations.
- Ils sont donc les bienvenus dans la grande famille BRIDGE.
Australian Federal Election 2013

There will be an Australian Federal Election at some point before November 30 this year. This may mean that it will take the BRIDGE Office a little longer to respond to requests and queries as the office is part of the Australian Electoral Commission and staff will have commitments in the lead up to and during the election.

If you would like to know more about the Australian election, please go to the Australian Electoral Commission website at www.aec.gov.au. You can also see the results as they come in and find information about the Australian electoral system there.

We thank you for your patience at this time.

Welcome back Raelene!

Many of you may remember Raelene Hunt, who was working on the DG BRIDGE project with Yvonne Goudie. Raelene is returning to the BRIDGE Office to take over from Ben Patterson and to cover for Melanie on the days she is away.

Melanie will also leave the BRIDGE Office to work on the Australian Federal Election when it is called, so please contact Raelene or Ben Murray should you have queries during this time.

A reminder about email

To make sure your emails come through to everyone in the office, please email projectoffice@bridge-project.org rather than individual staff.

And finally, farewell Ross

For those who did not already know, the BRIDGE Office has very sadly farewelled Ross Attrill as BRIDGE Office coordinator and manager. Ross has decided to leave the AEC and will continue working in the electoral assistance field through consultancies, so we expect him to remain fully involved in the BRIDGE world!

Ben, Melanie and Raelene would like to thank Ross for being such a great boss, an awesome facilitator, but most of all a wonderful friend. We will miss you very much indeed.

Check out the BRIDGE website for a goodbye article from Ross but keep an eye out for his next adventures.