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ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDC	Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture
AGRO	Agriculture Growth and Rural Opportunities
AKT	Advancing Kosovo Together
AKT-LS	Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution
APS	Annual Program Statement
BSCK	Business Support Centre Kosovo
B2B	Business to Business
CAIP	USAID Community Action Initiative Program
CDKD	Centar za Depolitizaciju Kosovskog Drustva
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CF	Community Forum
CLE	Contract Low Enforcement
CoDe	Community Development Institute
CSD	Communication for Social Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPI	Development Professionals, Inc.
EU	European Union
EMPOWER	USAID Private Sector Competitiveness and Employment Generation Activity
GOK	Government of Kosovo
IADK	Initiative for Agriculture Development of Kosovo
JPIP	Joint Project Implementation Plan
JWG	Joint Working Group
KCC	Kosovo Chamber of Commerce
LCO	Language Commissioner
LS	Local Solution
LUL	Law on Use of Languages
MACC	Municipal Assembly Committee for Communities
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
MCC	Milk Collection Center
MCF	Municipal Community Forum
MCR	Ministry of Communities and Returns
MF	Ministry of Finance
MLGA	Ministry of Local Governance and Administration
MPMS	Municipal Performance Measurement System

MOCR	Municipal Office for Communities and Returns
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOA	USAID New Agricultural Opportunities Program
NOPM	Network of Peace Movement
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSR	Own Source Revenue
OLC	Office of Language Commissioner
PFD	Partnership for Development
PIR	Project Intermediate Result
PSIF	Program Support and Incentive Fund
RFA	Request for Application
RCRC	Regional Community Resource Center
RTC	Regional Technology Center
SIAPS	Service Improvement Action Plans
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIK	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three-year USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT Prime) program launched April 16, 2014 is designed to support the achievement of the United States Government's foreign policy objective of peace and stability in the Balkans by supporting USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategy's development objective of supporting improved rule of law that meets citizen needs and intermediate result of improved integration of ethnic minorities into Kosovo's society. The program goal is to foster positive and constructive interethnic cooperation between communities in addressing common problems of unemployment, social needs, and municipal services in 16 targeted municipalities¹ throughout Kosovo comprising large Kosovo Serb populations.

¹ Gračanica/Gračanicë, Klokot/Kllokot, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Štrpce/Shtërpçë; Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Obiliq/Obilić, Pejë/Peć, Vushtrri/Vučitrm, North Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zveçan

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Since 1999, limited constructive inter-ethnic cooperation has hindered Kosovo's social, economic, and political development, prolonging the potential for instability in the region, lowering quality of life, and lengthening timetables for EU accession. This lack of collaboration causes distrust, reduces economic growth because the country is not utilizing human resources, and segregates Kosovo Serbs from the Government of Kosovo (GoK) structures. Youth of both communities do not speak the same language and do not interact. Non-majority communities perceive that governmental institutions lack willingness to respond to their needs despite that the existing legislation system. Laws, particularly those relating to integration of Kosovo Serbs in government and society, have not been fully implemented due to a lack of municipal capacity, political will, civic advocacy and knowledge of the relevant language.

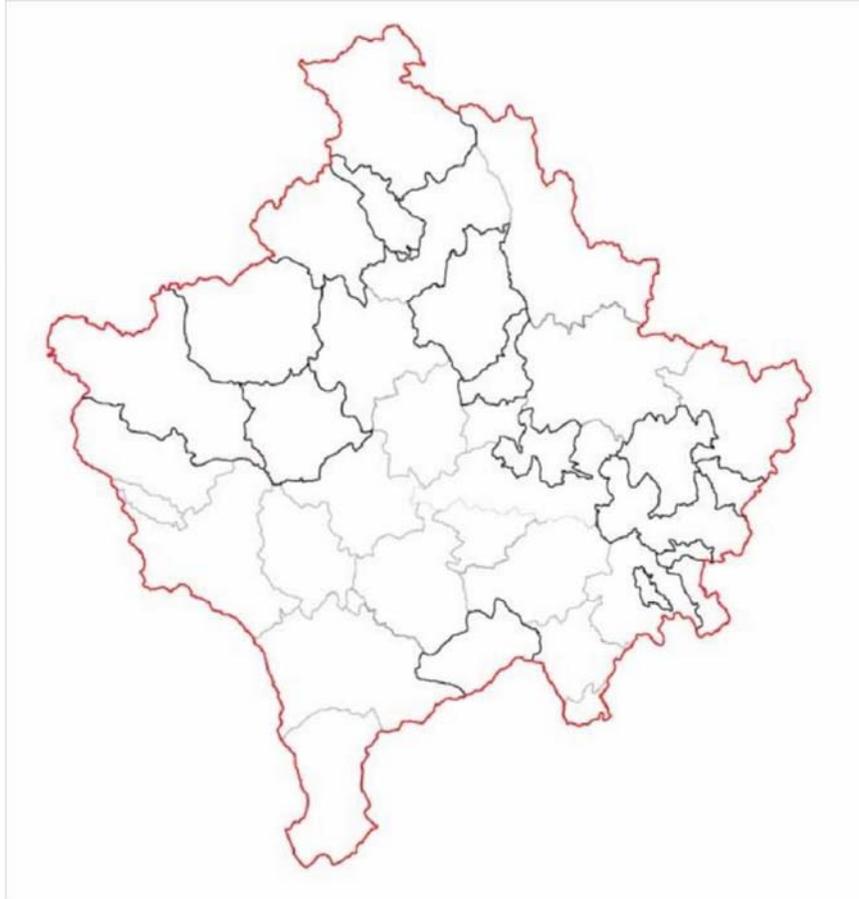
Municipalities also face difficulties in ensuring sustainable returns because when people return, municipalities do not have many opportunities to integrate them into economic and municipal structures, reinforcing displaced persons' reluctance to return. Non-majority communities and women are more exposed to lack of employment opportunities, especially in the public sector. There is limited access to affordable financing schemes, particularly for small farmers and women who are unregistered as businesses. At the same time, job-related skills of youth are not well matched to employment opportunities. AKT-US's goal is to increase constructive interaction between Kosovo Serb non-majority and Kosovo Albanian majority communities in 16 target municipalities. This is achieved through the following objectives elaborated in Exhibit 1, provisional results framework:

- 1) Improve autonomous, horizontal communications between majority and non-majority communities;
- 2) Improve economic opportunities in target municipalities; and
- 3) Increase the efficiency and capacity of targeted municipal administrations to respond to the needs of all the citizens.
- 4) Build capacity of host-country organizations to leverage cross-ethnic leadership to achieve program objectives and implement USAID Kosovo funded activities.

AKT PRIME PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES

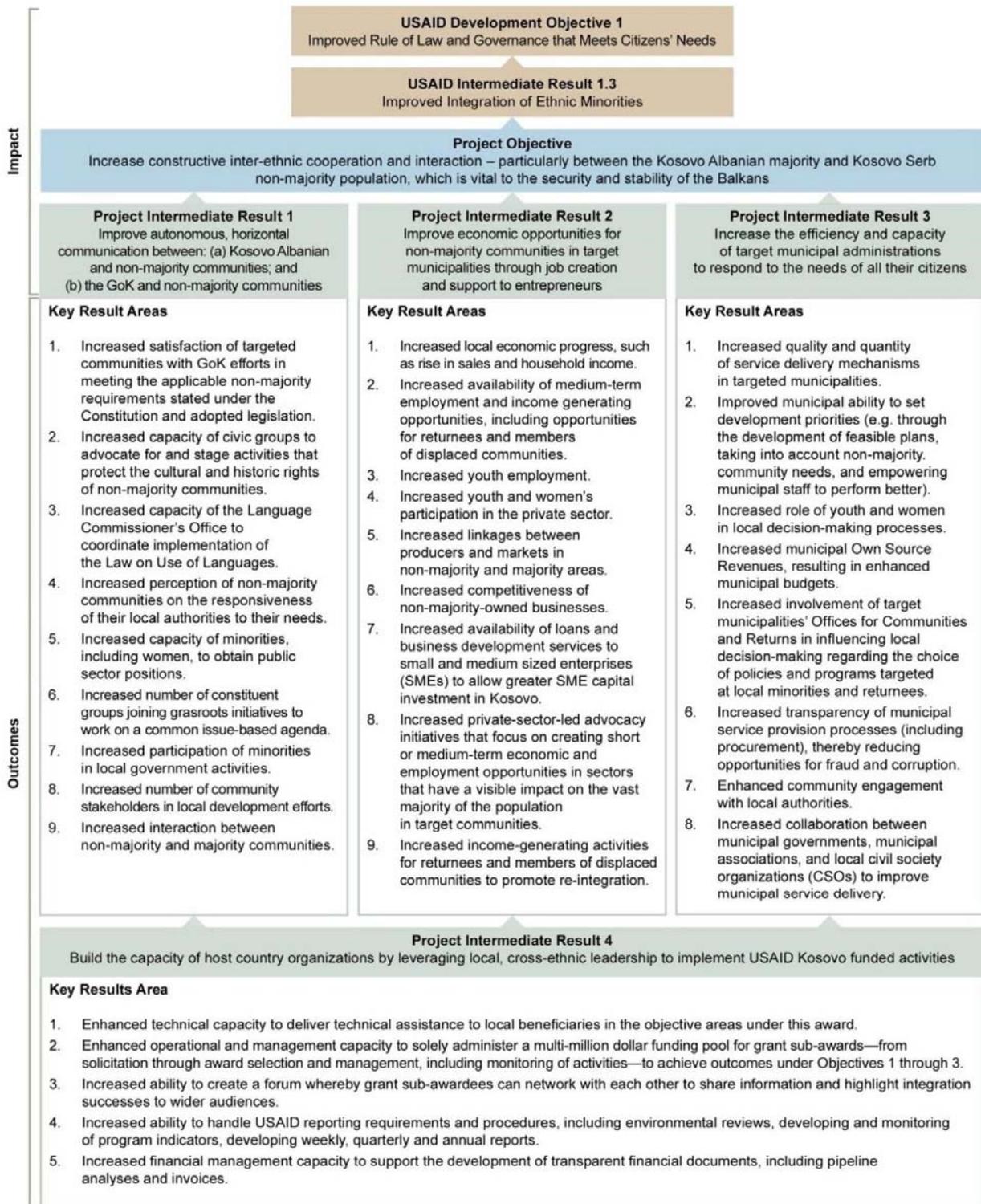
AKT Prime works in 16 municipalities:

1. Gjilan/Gnjilane
2. Gračanica/Graçanicë
3. Istog/Istok
4. Klinë/Klina
5. Klokot/Kllokot
6. Leposavić/ Leposaviq
7. North Mitrovica/
Mitrovica e Veriut
8. Novo Brdo/
Novobërdë
9. Obiliq/Obilić
10. Parteš/Partesh
11. Pejë/Peć
12. Ranilug/Ranillug
13. Štrpce/Shtërpçë
14. Vushtri/Vučitrn
15. Zubin Potok/ Zubin
Potok
16. Zvečan/Zveçan



RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Exhibit 1. Advancing Kosovo Together — Provisional Results Framework



KEY ACTIVITIES

This section describes accomplishments for each Project Intermediate Result (PIR), including information on key activities (both ongoing and completed) during the year, progress made toward relevant indicators and targets, challenges encountered and addressed, and activities planned for the following year.

Working closely with municipal officials, AKT-US identified target communities based on the following criteria:

- Large populations of non-majority community members
- Potential for interethnic cooperation
- Receiving a relatively lower level of municipal services
- Less interaction with local government

For each target community, the program worked to collect information on demographics, available services, past infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects completed by municipalities and/or other donors, and other relevant data to guide project implementation and serve as a baseline against which advances could be measured.

Project Intermediate Result 1: Improve autonomous, horizontal communications between majority and non-majority communities

1.1 Support the Government of Kosovo in the implementation of laws that protect minority rights

AKT Prime continued to provide support to the Office of Language Commissioner (OLC) via grantee Communications for Social Development (CSD) and directly via stakeholder discussions, development and dissemination of tools, and support to engagement between OLC and northern municipalities.

Working with CSD, AKT began a series of discussions on the introduction of the Guidebook on Implementation of Law on Use of Languages² in March 2015. By the end of the first quarter in project year two, CSD had organized another three discussions, with participation of 89 people, thus concluding the series of 12 discussions in all southern partner municipalities. In all, 337 participants from the communities, municipalities, and civil society sector gathered to learn more about the OLC's role, mandate, and work. Not everyone in attendance was aware of the existence of the OLC and its work, so OLC's presence was very useful and the OLC used the opportunity to distribute and discuss information material. CSD shared its findings from the secret customer activity conducted in the municipality to open discussion among participants on the challenges that each stakeholder faces with regard to implementation of the Law on Use of Languages (LUL)³. All discussions yielded similar results, with participants identifying the following common challenges to accessing public services: lack of interpreters at public institutions; unavailability of documents in their language; lack of signage in local languages; and lack of capability of municipal officials to speak both languages.

After the series of discussions concluded, AKT worked with CSD to develop a summary report on the secret customer activity findings across all 12 municipalities that participated in this activity. The findings included:

- 83 percent of partner municipalities provide notifications in more than one official language.
- In 45 percent of municipalities, the first point of contact (person behind the information desk) does not speak a minority language, but a majority of the first points of contact seek out another official who does.
- When referred to someone who does speak a minority language, 67 percent speak the minority language well.
- In 92 percent of cases, the documentation that the secret customer requested was available in the minority language.
- 83 percent of secret customers reported kind treatment and a positive experience.

The report also provides valuable conclusions and recommendations. The report was warmly received by the Language Commissioner, who appreciated the third party review of where municipalities are in their implementation of the Law on Use of Languages, strengths

² See Annex H for *Guidebook on Implementation of Law on Use of Languages*

³ See Annex G for complete research findings

as well as areas for improvement.

AKT Prime supported a three-day seminar for 28 municipal and Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives to come together, review the findings per municipality, and generate action items for improved implementation of the Law. The resulting manual reviews legislation, outlines the roles and responsibilities of different departments within the municipality and then delves into how, in the course of implementing their mandate, each department should apply LUL. For example, municipal economic development departments are responsible for, among other things, notifying people of opportunities for investment and economic development priorities for the municipality. The manual reminds employees in these departments that in order to comply with the LUL, this information should be available in all official languages.

Both the summary report and the manual have been praised by the Language Commissioner as key tools in assisting him to fill his mandate to advise institutions of their obligations under the Law. Endorsed by the OLC, AKT supported the publication and distribution of the report and manual to municipalities in Albanian, Serbian, and English languages. AKT Prime looks forward to supporting the OLC to monitor municipalities' improvements in implementation of the Law in year three.



Language Commissioner's Seminar in Gračanica/Gračanica

Expansion of the OLC's activities to the northern municipalities very much depends on political developments in northern municipalities and the goodwill and readiness of key municipal officials to undertake any activity that involves respecting the Law on Languages. While each Mayor and the OLC have individually expressed willingness to meet, AKT was successful in facilitating only one meeting between the Language Commissioner and the Mayor of Zubin Potok, Mr. Stevan Vulovic. According to

the Mayor, the municipality and citizens in Zubin Potok face difficulties accessing documents in the Serbian language - especially documents that they receive from the central government. The Language Commissioner offered his assistance to address any issue related to the use of official languages, but no further action has been realized. Schedules of the Language Commissioner and Mayors have prevented additional meetings, and AKT Prime will continue to try to arrange the meetings and delivery of LUL support to northern municipalities.

The OLC completed a draft Strategy on the Protection and Promotion of Language Rights (2016 – 2021). AKT met with the Language Commissioner to discuss the strategy and how AKT might assist in its implementation considering the upcoming final year of the AKT program. While the Language Commissioner is also working closely with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), he welcomed AKT support in working with municipalities to promote compliance with the Law and with communities and civil society to advocate and realize their rights. Further, he continued to welcome AKT support to establishing a relationship with focal points in Kosovo's northern municipalities, proposing that he would look for an opportunity in the coming months. As a result, AKT included activities in its draft Year Three Work Plan to support municipalities in addressing areas of

non-compliance with the Law; monitoring municipal compliance with the law; and building CSOs' capacity to advocate for language rights. Draft scopes of work for these activities were reviewed and agreed on with the Language Commissioner. AKT looks forward to releasing solicitations and initiating capacity building activities in May 2016.

1.2 Improve government communications, responsiveness, and engagement with non-majority communities

AKT Prime supported local governments to engage communities and concurrently explore new ideas and approaches to upgrade the level of that engagement and increase citizen capacity and participation in decision-making processes.

AKT Prime continued to work with community forum (CF) members to develop and implement community quick impact and small scale infrastructure projects: preparing project applications for approval, defining technical details for project designs, identifying and addressing all requirements for permits, evaluating offers, and monitoring. Throughout each step, AKT Prime provided mentoring to CF members, enabling them with the processes, tools, and experience that they will need to replicate and drive these tasks in the future. For example, after the full participatory process of project identification, AKT Prime presents the final project design to CF members to discuss the design and ensure that it is what they envisioned, understand what will be involved in implementation, and how to ensure that implementation is consistent with the design. Upon receipt of offers from prospective implementers, the CF members are invited to be part of the technical evaluation committee as non-voting members and in that way get familiar with competitive selection process. After award, AKT Prime objective 1 staff and engineer hold an information session with CF members to train them on how to monitor implementation of project according to the executed subcontract. With AKT facilitation and support, CFs in these communities take the lead on engaging (a) fellow community members to share information and find workable community-based solutions as issues arose during implementation and (b) municipal leadership and officials in urbanism departments to monitor the quality and timeliness of the work performed, and facilitated solutions as issues arose during implementation. By involving CF members throughout the process and providing them with monitoring and evaluation skills training and support, communities maintain a sense of ownership, build their understanding of the processes and actors involved in capital investment projects, strengthen their skills in monitoring of contractor performance, and enhance their experience and capacity to effectively engage with municipal authorities as well as influence their performance. During project year 2, AKT provided training to 58 CF members across seven partner municipalities through the course of implementation of seven projects. A full list of quick impact and small-scale infrastructure projects can be found below and in Annex D.

AKT Prime engaged grantee Regional Technology Center (RTC) to undertake a series of activities aimed at improving communications between majority and non-majority communities and between non-majority communities and local governments, and increase the efficiency and capacity of target municipal administrations to respond to the needs of all their citizens. Under USAID's guidance, AKT Prime is implementing this activity with southern Kosovo partner municipalities, as AKT Local Solution (AKT LS) will implement a similar activity in the north. The grant includes the following activities:

- Work with community members and local civil society organizations to (a) participate in public discussions; (b) gather, validate, and articulate community priorities; and (c) form functional Joint Working Groups (JWGs) composed of CSOs, community

forums, municipal community forums, community members, Village Councils, and municipal officials.

- Articulate community priorities in white papers intended to give actionable information for municipal decision-making. Compile white papers to form a Common Municipal Development Agenda.
- Build JWG capacity to maintain organization, implement initiatives as partners with the municipality, and monitor and evaluate municipal initiatives and service delivery.
- Organize and implement a series of meetings with local government, JWGs, and communities and representatives of CSOs to engage in productive discussions via (a) public meetings and (b) public budget hearings.

AKT facilitated 12 meetings between RTC and municipal leaders to present the project plan. In total, 59 participants (31 Kosovo Serb, 28 Kosovo Albanian) attended the introductory meetings, including five Mayors, five Deputy Mayors, and four Municipal Assembly Chairpersons. All expressed readiness to support RTC and to work together in project implementation in general and in the establishment of the JWGs in particular.

Mayors committed to appoint one-three individuals, while Village Councils will select one-two individuals to participate in the JWGs, and the remaining members (including youth and minorities, including women) will be elected from among peers. AKT held 36 meetings with community forum members, community members, CSO representatives, Village Council members, and municipal authorities to introduce JWGs as a concept, explain participation opportunities, explain the roles and responsibilities associated with participation, and hold nominations and elections. In all, 269 community members, 175 CSO members, and more than 40 municipal representatives attended. After the meetings, AKT and RTC finalized the lists of potential JWG members and submitted them to Mayors for their consent. In all, 12 JWGs have been formed, engaging 162 people, including 47 municipal representatives, 37 village council members, 36 community forum members, and 40 CSO representatives. Nearly 40 percent of JWG members are women, and K-Albanian, K-Serb, K-Turk, and K-Bosniak communities are represented in JWG membership.

All JWGs participated in a first round of capacity building trainings on the basic principles and functioning of the JWG, the municipal budget planning process, citizen priority identification and engagement, monitoring JWG performance, and the role of JWGs in organizing public discussions. In all, 143 JWG members were trained on these topics. AKT and RTC also held quarterly meetings with each JWG to elect the JWG Coordinator and Secretary, finalize the JWG annual work plan, and discuss JWG operations, community priorities, and upcoming tasks and trainings. In all, 132 JWG members participated in these meetings. Feedback on the creation and launch of JWG activities has been positive. Members reflect that they appreciate the training and tools they are gaining to represent their communities and many of the groups have quickly developed a good rapport with one another. Mr. Rashit Sahiti, a member of the Village Council from Malishevë/Malisevo in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality reflected, “These workshops are very important and through them we are all getting to know each other better.” Mr. Zoran Naskovic, a Community Forum member from Kimetovcë/Kmetovce stated, “I’m involved in development efforts within my village already. These workshops will help us increase communication between inhabitants, CSOs and the municipality. We will notify our community about everything that is happening in our development efforts as a JWG members.”

To date, five public discussions were organized by RTC-supported JWG. In sum, 28 JWG members and community members participated in those discussions. Details on the public discussions are as follows:

- *Odevce (Ranilug/Ranillug)*. The JWG from Ranilug/Ranillug organized a public discussion in April 2016 with participation of JWG members, the Assembly Chairperson, municipal officials, and citizens. At the discussion, the coordinator of the JWG introduced the JWG and role of this group to increasing participation of citizens in decision making processes and improve the quality and productivity of engagement. Municipal representatives highlighted the importance of citizen participation in budget planning and citizens presented their views on their priorities. The majority of the priorities were infrastructure related, including a water system, a sewage system, street lighting, riverbed rehabilitation, improving the electricity network, and rehabilitation of the floor at the community center.
- *Zebince/a (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë)*. In April 2016 in the Cultural Center in Zebince/a, JWG members organized a public discussion. The Mayor, additional municipal officials, JWG members, and citizens participated. Citizens had an opportunity to hear from the Mayor about the progress achieved during 2015 and plans for 2016, and to articulate their priorities. In 2015, the local government implemented projects including roads, sidewalks, a sports hall, a playground, public lightning, and school construction. Local government will continue to work on addressing citizens' needs through municipal and donor support with focus on improving infrastructure and providing support to local farmers on further developing their businesses - especially on raspberry production. Some of the priority needs presented by citizens were need for social assistance, support to agriculture production, and paving of roads to remote villages considering that this municipality has many remote villages.
- *Milloshevë/Miloševo (Obiqli/Obilić)*. In all, 70 people participated in a public discussion organized by the JWG in this village in April 2016. The Mayor and other municipal officials shared the municipalities' achievements and plans for the coming year. Young people present requested more attention to their needs and creating opportunities for youth activities. Other priorities discussed at this meeting were improvement of road infrastructure, employment opportunities, and mitigation of pollution generated by the power plant. With regard to pollution, citizens asked the Mayor to annul the ecological tax that citizens are paying.
- *Zhegër/Žegra (Gjilan/Gnjilane)*. The JWG from Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality organized a public discussion in April 2016, with the Deputy Mayor, Assembly Chairperson, heads of municipal departments, JWG members, and citizens. The public discussion was attended by not only residents from Zhegër/Žegra, but also residents from surrounding villages Perlepnice/a, Veleknice/a, Lladovë/Ladovo, and Malishevë/Mališevo. Municipal officials presented the achievements of local government and plans for the upcoming period, while the JWG presented their role and responsibilities and priority concerns raised by communities in Gjan/Gnjilane. As in many communities, infrastructure improvement is one of the top priorities, including rehabilitation of the bridge, central heating for a school, and construction of a new high school (since the oldest one is in a very poor condition and due to that fact students from high school are using premises of an elementary school which is causing difficulties due to large number of students).
- *Parteš/Partesh (Parteš/Partesh)*. Also in April, JWG members from Parteš/Partesh organized a public discussion. The Mayor and key municipal officials met with citizens

and discussed achievements and plans. The Mayor conveyed that the municipality is facing difficulties related to budgeting because of its small geographic and population size. Still, the local government, with support from different donors, has managed to implement several capital investment projects such as construction of roads, sidewalks, and two bridges; riverbed rehabilitation; and procurement of equipment that will be used for waste collection. The Mayor highlighted the importance of engagement and responsibilities of Assembly members towards their citizens. Citizens shared their concerns, which were in line with the projects that are planned for 2016, including paving of some streets in all three villages, upgrading of a sewage system, renovation of a church, central heating in a school, improvement of the water network, and riverbed rehabilitation.



JWG of Partesh/Partesh municipality working together

AKT looks forward to working closely with RTC and JWGs next year. Activities planned include training on basic principles and functioning of JWG, citizens' engagement in the budgeting process, creation of white papers and criteria for selection of projects, project cycle management, and professional and persuasive writing and (b) exercising their skills to present their white papers to municipal authorities at public discussions.

AKT Prime mobilized community members to participate in public hearings related to budget planning, capital investments, spatial planning, implementation of the rule of law, and respect of human rights at the local level and with central government representation. AKT followed the schedule of budget hearings and coordinated with communities to promote their participation and with municipalities to facilitate holding debates in our partner communities. In addition, AKT organized nine public hearings with participation of 236 community members and 17 municipal officials in the following locations:

- *Plemetine/a (Obiliq/Obilić)*. The public hearing was held in June 2015, with the participation of community members from Plemetine/a, Babin Most/Babimost and Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice and the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and municipal officials from Municipal Office for Communities and Returns (MOCR). The Mayor informed citizens about the achievements of local government for the three villages and plans for the remaining year. Citizens presented their needs and concerns mainly related to infrastructure issues, problems with flooding, lack of employment opportunities, agricultural development, and use of local languages. Community members also pointed out that they have the impression that the local government is not willing to be present in communities often. As an example, they mentioned that public hearings are usually advertised in the city and therefore the majority of citizens do not have access to the information. They would like to see improvements in access to information.
- *Priluzje/Prilluzhe (Vushtrri/Vucitrn)*. AKT encouraged community representatives from Grace, Gojbula/Gojbule and Banjska/Banjske villages to participate in the

hearing held in May 2015. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and other key municipal officials and more than 40 community members attended the meeting. Municipal and community representatives discussed municipal projects and plans from 2015 as well as capital investments.

- *Donja Bitinja/ Biti e Poshtme (Štrpce/Shtërpce)*. Public meetings brought together community members (K-Serbs and K-Albanian) and the Head of the Department for Urbanism and Planning, who shared that the municipality is trying to address the issue of water supply to this village (as well as for most of the Štrpce/Shtërpce settlements) as its highest priority and most pressing issue. According to municipal estimates, the cost of the solution will be EUR €160,000, which is nearly the annual municipal budget for capital investments. The Head of the Department cautioned the community that it would be very difficult for the municipality to implement a solution without the support of the central government and donor community. Community representatives presented several additional challenges they are facing, including needs for road rehabilitation, street lighting, a functional community center, rehabilitation of the riverbed, safe space for children to play, and more opportunities for economic development – particularly fair distribution of grants and subsidies for agricultural activities.
- *Viča/Viq (Štrpce/Shtërpce)*. The Deputy Mayor and officials from the Department of Cadaster, Urbanism and Planning participated in this public meeting on behalf of the municipality. The Deputy Mayor shared that the municipality has prepared a list of priorities based on requests presented by community leaders and conveyed that the government is doing its best to address priorities considering the small size of the municipal budget for capital investments. In Vica/Viqe, community members shared that their biggest priority is road rehabilitation, including bridge rehabilitation and street lighting. The municipality estimates that this project will cost more than EUR €100,000 and confirmed that it is looking into any opportunity for co-financing from donors. Other priority needs brought by the community at the meeting include street lighting (because a majority of the road that connects this village with the main road is not lit, and is unsafe for students on their way back from school), repairs for the schoolyard, and a playground for children.
- *Koretište/ Koretishë and Kusce/Kufcë (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë)*. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shared achievements to date and plans for 2016 with a focus on these villages. Several village needs were identified by the municipality, including road rehabilitation and opening a new satellite administrative office (due to distance between these villages and central Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, were all administrative services are provided). Sports fields, riverbed rehabilitation, and street lighting were some other priorities presented by community members.
- *Radevo/Radevë (Gračanica/Graçanicë)*. Officials from the Department of Cadaster, Urbanism and Planning and the Department for Economic Development joined community members for a public discussion in Radevo/Radevë. Municipal officials proved to be very well informed about the priority needs of this village, and informed residents that they are working closely with the Regional Water Company to resolve the ongoing water supply issues, a high priority for this village. Community members shared other priorities as well, such as road rehabilitation, street lightning, sports field rehabilitation, and opportunities for agricultural grants and subsidies.
- *Donja Budriga/ Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh)*. The Deputy Mayor and municipal officials from the Departments of Finance, Urbanism, and Sports and

Education shared information on the newly constructed school in Pasjan/Pasjane, renovation of the school in Parteš/Parteshë, construction of the sidewalk (with AKT support), and other projects. Citizens raised concerns about the privatization of the factory Jugoterm, suggesting that the municipality prevent the privatization or purchase the property itself. The municipality clarified that it does not have any power to influence the process of privatization. The municipality shared its plans to construct a police station and a fire department building.

- *Vrbovac/Vrbovc (Klokot/Kllokot)*. Community members and municipal representatives from the Departments of Finance and Public Services discussed community priorities, including water supply, sewage system, street lighting, additional sidewalks, road reconstruction, and opportunities for economic development.

Overall, the public meetings provided an excellent opportunity for the municipalities and communities to improve common understanding of the pressing needs of the citizens and municipal processes for addressing them.

Strengthening municipal outreach to citizens is an activity that is cross-cutting across objectives 1 and 3. Together, AKT Prime supports municipalities to improve their outreach through discussions, municipal websites, and bulletins. Without proper access to information, citizens do not have accurate and timely information about many issues in their respective municipalities. AKT Prime continued to offer support to Zvečan/Zveçan, confirming that the program can provide technical support to someone appointed by the municipality who will be responsible for the bulletin. So far, Zvečan/Zveçan has not appointed a person. AKT conducted a workshop with heads of public information offices and IT officers from the municipalities of Klinë/Klina and Obiliq/Obilić on improving municipal transparency and addressing the municipal needs in this respect. These municipalities would like to initiate bi-annual municipal bulletins as a new tool in communication with the citizens, which neither municipality has at the moment. AKT Prime will continue to work with these municipalities for publication of bulletins in project year three.

AKT is mobilizing citizens in the Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) process, including development, implementation, and monitoring. To date, 32 percent (42 individuals) of SIAP working group members represent communities (while the remaining 68 percent of members are civil servants). In program year 2, AKT facilitated the completion of SIAP projects in Obiliq/Obilić, Klinë/Klina, and Gračanica/Gračanicë municipalities. Community members from those working groups received training and performed project monitoring during implementation and continue to provide monitoring of municipal maintenance commitments. AKT Prime continues to work closely with SIAP working groups in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Parteš/Partesh, Pejë/Peć, Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica Veriore, Štrpce/Shtërpce, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Zvečan/Zveçan, and Zubin Potok municipalities (details on this activity can be found under Section 3.1). More details related to SIAPs and involvement of community members are presented in this report under Objective 3 updates.

1.3 Build skills of minorities and women to obtain public sector positions

Limited availability of public sector positions and pressure on municipal governments to streamline their structures in order to reduce staff size and stay within budget make increasing the number of women and minorities in public sector positions challenging. AKT Prime refined its strategy and approach to building skills of minorities and women to obtain public

sector positions. Capacity Development Plans provide some insights into the current situation and plans for improving inclusion within each partner municipality, as do recent reports from United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and National Democratic Institute (NDI). AKT met with OSCE and DEMOS, which are also working to empower women, youth and minorities for increased participation in the public sector. Using this information, AKT defined its approach for targeted and complementary support.



Roundtable on citizens' participation in municipal decision-making processes in Istog/Istok

AKT Prime engaged Ms. Vjollca Krasniqi, an expert on gender and peace- building, to conduct a roundtable on the Importance of Participation of Women and Minority Communities in Employment and Management in Public Institutions, gathering together municipal gender officers, human rights officers and chiefs of personnel in AKT partner municipalities to identify challenges and develop recommendations for higher participation of women and minority communities in

employment and management in public institutions. A total of 29 municipal officials participated in this roundtable held in Pristina (16 female and 13 male; 15 Kosovo Albanian, 13 Kosovo Serb, and 1 RAE). The first part of the roundtable was dedicated to open discussion, while the second part consisted of group activities with working on challenges and recommendations that will contribute toward increasing employment of women and minority communities in public institutions. Challenges identified pointed to both women's and minorities' demands for public sector positions, public sector practices, and macro-environmental, including:

- 1) *Demand side/women and minorities*
 - a) Women hesitate to take on more responsibilities.
 - b) Women lack political readiness.
- 2) *Supply side/public sector*
 - a) Certain types of jobs have workplace requirements that are troublesome for women and other minorities.
 - b) Lack willingness to nominate women for leadership positions.
 - c) Lack of access to information on job opportunities in the public sector, and a low number of available positions.
 - d) In a majority of cases, key positions are politically nominated.
- 3) *Macro-environmental*
 - a) Women lack support from their families and society (patriarchal environment), even when they have the education and professional background for the job.

There are only a small number of NGOs that are working on these issues.

Recommendations resulting from group discussions include:

- Increase awareness (especially among minorities) of management positions and potential for involvement in politics through awareness campaigns, trainings, roundtables, etc.
- Provide support to development of kindergartens and institutions for care for elderly people and people with disabilities to enable women to dedicate more time for their professional development.
- Enforce the law on gender equality.
- Improve the process of disseminating information to minority communities on available job positions, and encourage minority communities to apply.
- Improve coordination among institutions related to engagement of minority communities.
- Focus on increasing participation of women and minorities in public debates organized by local and central institutions.

Based on this roundtable and research recently completed by NDI and UNDP skills gaps, experience gaps, and recruitment practices are some of the main causes hindering representation of women and minority communities in and among different levels of municipal government. In order for future assistance to municipalities on inclusion to be more targeted at root causes, AKT initiated two activities: leadership training for women and minority communities working in public sector in municipalities and a labor force study.

The *Leadership and Participation of Women in Politics* report produced by UNDP in July 2014 examines (1) Kosovars' perceptions concerning women's leadership skills and positions and the factors contributing to the perceptions and (2) women's participation in political activities and provides some analysis of the different factors affecting women's participation levels. Based on the survey findings, the report includes a recommendation to set-up leadership programs for women that will help women acquire skills to become more confident and assertive. Similarly, the *Kosovo: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Political Participation* report produced by NDI in February 2015 focuses on challenges in the recruitment of women candidates, women's access to decision-making positions, their nomination for positions by political parties, and women's roles within political parties' campaigns. The report found that women are not cultivated as candidates or leaders, and includes a recommendation to explore opportunities for leadership skills development training. Accordingly, AKT organized and held four two day-long regional trainings on centered leadership attended by 81 women in mid-level public sector positions across AKT's partner municipalities. Facilitated by short-term consultant Geeta Raj, the trainings were organized in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Prishtinë/Priština, Peja/Peć and Zvečan/Zveqan with participation of women from 15 partner municipalities.

Centered leadership is a leadership model developed by McKinsey and Company distilled from their research and work with women leaders from across the globe. The model focuses on ways women can build their skills to become more self-confident and effective leaders. It comprises five interrelated dimensions: (1) meaning, or finding your strengths and putting them to work in the service of an inspiring purpose; (2) managing energy, or knowing where your energy comes from, where it goes, and what you can do to manage it; (3) positive framing, or adopting a more constructive way to view your world, expand your horizons, and gain the resilience to move ahead even when bad things happen; (4) connecting, or identifying who can help you grow, building stronger relationships, and increasing your sense of belonging; and (5) engaging, or finding your voice, becoming self-reliant and confident by accepting opportunities and the inherent risks they bring, and collaborating with others.



Geeta Raj conducting a training on centered leadership

Over the course of two days, participants learned about each dimension and then engaged in reflective individual and engaging partner activities. Every participant in the training prepared their own professional development plan with their own goals and activities to help them progress over the next two years. Participants took a deeper dive into the engaging dimension and the public speaking and body language segments were particularly appreciated. All cohorts had active discussions about public speaking and challenges that they face when they talk to larger audiences, particularly when the audience is composed mainly of men. They learned about how body language can communicate power and status, psychological distance (feeling close or feeling remote), influence dynamics of relations and interaction, and what messages or intention it can provide. They practiced exercising different types of body language through exercises, including a public speaking exercise.

“To be a leader in Kosovo means having possibilities and skills to lead together with a certain group of people toward a common goal. S/he should be ready for cooperation, to accept errors in certain cases, to give guidance, be ready to work in a group, and always to say “we”. It is important to be an inspiration for others.”

Iliriana Muriqi, Municipal Information Officer

Coming from different municipalities and spending two days together was a significant opportunity for women to share their experiences and talk about challenges that they face in their work as municipal officials and as part of municipal assemblies. About 85 percent of participants reflected that they gained confidence in their abilities as a leader and skills to enable them to execute certain tasks as a leader.

The Law on Gender Equality calls for the equal representation of gender in all central and local institutions. However, individual municipality compliance with the Law varies. In sum 27 percent of employees in municipalities are women and only four percent of them are in decision-making positions (MPA May 2014). The *Assessment on the Employment of Members of Non-Majority Communities in the Kosovo Civil Service and Publicly Owned Enterprises* produced by UNDP in 2013 goes into further detail on the representation of

minority communities in public sector positions at all levels. With regard to municipal representation, every local-level institution should have a quota of non-majority civil servants that is proportional to the ethnic composition of the municipality. On average, 8.8 percent of civil servants are from minority populations. Despite what appears to be satisfactory average representation of minority communities in municipalities, there are some communities such as the Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani, Roma and Turks that are underrepresented compared to their share of the municipal population. Further, representation of municipal minorities in leadership positions is low and municipal minority and female civil servants have a tendency to be primarily represented in certain positions, such as Gender Officer and within the MOCR.

The project initiated a labor force study to identify obstacles faced by women and minorities in obtaining public sector positions. Short-term consultants Rachel Muth and Joanna Lipari developed three survey instruments appropriate for the positions of Human Resources Director, Gender Officer, and municipal employees; instructions for interviewers; and an online survey via Survey Monkey to supplement in-person responses. The team received 135 total responses from the in- person and online interviews from 72 women and 63 men. Some highlights from initial raw data analysis:

- When asked whether or not they thought it was important to have a balance in ethnic majority and non-majority representation in the workplace, a majority of respondents overwhelmingly agreed that it is important and necessary to obtain balance in order for the rights and voices of the non-majority groups to be heard and represented fairly.
- When asked to identify what they saw as the top three skills or gaps people of ethnic non- majority groups lacked in order to advance in the workplace, the majority of respondents cited a lack of education, language barriers, and a lack of work experience.
- When asked if they had personally experienced ethnic-related challenges when supervising or being supervised by someone of an ethnicity other than their own, the majority of those surveyed responded that they had *never* experienced challenges that were ethnically charged in the workplace.

Ms. Muth will draft a final report that analyzes the data and proposes concrete recommendations for increasing inclusivity in public sector positions.

1.4 Facilitate community-led initiatives among majority and non-majority communities to address common issues

AKT Prime organized two “Together in Sports” events aimed at bringing municipal officials, CSOs, and community members together in friendly activities and competition. The first was organized in Zubin Potok. The event gathered 84 municipal officials, community members, and CSO representatives of different ethnicities to promote inter-ethnic communication and community- municipality-CSO relations. Participants included municipal authorities (Mayor of Zubin Potok, Mayor of Obilq/Obilić, Deputy Mayor of Ranilug/Ranillug, Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly in Zubin Potok and others) and representatives of the communities and CSOs from eight partner municipalities: Gračanica/Gračanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Ranilug/Ranilluge, Obilq/Obilić, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok and Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica Veriore. The participants were divided by groups so that municipal authorities played soccer, CSO representatives competed in table tennis, while basketball games were contested among teams composed of community representatives and two women’s groups - one from the north and one from the south. While off the field,

municipal representatives took the opportunity to meet and discuss challenges facing their municipalities, such as infrastructure and employment.

The second “Together in Sports” event was organized in Pristina. In all, 115 municipal officials, community representatives, and CSO representatives from Gnjilane/Gjilan, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Istog/Istok, Klokot/Kllokot, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Obiliq/Obilić, Parteš/Partesh, Pejë/Peć, Ranilug/Ranillug, Štrpce/Shtërpcë, Vushtrri/Vuçitri, and Zvečan/Zveçan participated in the event. Teams were divided by lottery,



“Together in Sports” Tournament in Pristina

resulting in multi-ethnic teams from multiple municipalities, to play football, basketball, and volleyball. They enjoyed cheering for colleagues and socializing at a joint lunch. Nevena Lazić, a 14-year-old from Donja Gušterica/Gushtericë e Poshtme (Gračanica/Graçanicë) said, “The opponents are very good, but we have high expectations. But more important than a score, is the opportunity given to us today to build new friendships and to socialize with young women from Gjilan/Gnjilane”. Avdi Tahiri, a Community Forum member from Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme (Štrpce/Shtërpcë) stated, “Sports tournaments are a great opportunity to connect members of majority and minority communities. We need to have more events like this because they are vital in building relations and friendships with people from different communities. And this I say from the bottom of my heart! If we can have more events like this, they will bring us closer. And this tournament today gives me hope that we can overcome all our obstacles.”

Promoting tolerance, accepting ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and integrating ethnic minorities are all important for building a prosperous and stable society. To encourage this process and help raise the awareness of importance of interethnic cooperation, AKT, in partnership with Gračanica/Graçanicë-based NGO Community Development Institute (CoDe), implemented a four- month initiative, “Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sports and Culture.”



CoDe – Multiethnic Tennis Tournament in Gračanica/Graçanicë

As part of this initiative, AKT and CoDe sponsored eight tennis lessons in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, and Istog/k with children from these municipalities. More than 260 children, ages 12 and younger, of different ethnicities participated. “Before this tournament, I never had an opportunity to play tennis with children of other ethnicities. So this is important to me,” said 12-year-old Binesa Kora from Prizren who participated in the multiethnic

tennis tournament in Gračanica/Graçanicë. “I have been playing tennis for two months now and I would like to win today. I met children from other municipalities and I am happy about it,” proudly explained eight-year-old Marija Crvenković from Gračanica/Graçanicë. Amir Sadiković, a fifth grade student from Pejë/Peć, has been playing tennis for two years: “This tournament is important because it brought children from across Kosovo together.”

Another part of this initiative was “The Beauty of Diversity” photograph exhibition and competition in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, Istog/k, Ranilug/Ranillug and Štrpce/Shtrepcë. The call for photographs inspired by Kosovo’s diverse cultural heritage was promoted through local radio and social media. Photos featured in the traveling exhibition were included in a competition, where the public cast votes via Facebook. Top photographs were exhibited during “The Beauty of Diversity” conference in Gračanica/Graçanicë on August 14, 2015, which celebrated the importance of cultural heritage preservation in Kosovo. Jozefina Kolić, winner of the contest, described one of her photographs, a dove of peace, as one that “means a lot to me because it shows our children and they are our future. We have responsibility to preserve our heritage so we could pass it on them.” The program was a positive influence in communities, especially among youth in selected municipalities.

As a final activity, the CoDe organized a discussion on “The Beauty of Diversity” where panelists including Archaeologist Haluk Çetinkaya, Journalist Predrag Radonjić, and psychologist and former European Perspective and UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) representative Evangelos Tsempelis presented their perspectives on the benefits of Kosovo embracing its diversity.



CoDe – Street Photos Exhibition in Gračanica/Graçanicë

Youth from Budriga/Budrigë village (Parteš/Partesh) used the AKT-supported community forum as a vehicle to approach AKT and request assistance in organizing a community voluntary initiative: cleaning a central area in the village, including a sports field, playground, and riverbed. AKT supported this activity by providing plastic garbage bags, gloves, and refreshments, and participated in the community cleaning initiative. In all, more than 20 citizens participated in this community-initiated activity that demonstrated dedication among young community members to work on improving their living environment.

AKT worked with its four grantees Srpsko Slovo, Future without Fear, Entermedia, and Radio Kontakt Plus to improve inter-ethnic communication through human touch and inspirational stories, reaching an estimated 260,000 citizens across Kosovo via television, radio, and social media.

Srpsko Slovo produced 20 “Good News” shows (each 20-30 minutes in length) and broadcast them on RTK, RTV Kim, RTV Puls, RTV Mir and RTV Herc every Monday from September 2015 to February 2016. The shows focused on positive stories that showcase a human element and contribute to improved interaction between majority and non-majority

communities. The content covered current economic, social, and political developments in Kosovo discussed through a positive prism among journalists, representatives of local and central government, civil society, artists, and other community stakeholders. Broadcast each Monday, the format of the show included interviews with people on the street on their perspective on a current issue and then discussion among guests in the studio on the issue. Topics covered over the show series included the government decision on increasing pensions, the stabilization and association process, appointment of deputy ministers from minorities, internships programs for youth and minorities, the new fiscal package, extremism and radicalism in Kosovo, and the Brussels discussions. The show hosted many important stakeholders including ministers, deputy ministers and experts, representatives of civil society.

AKT supported Future without Fear on the production of a documentary featuring inter-ethnic groups of artists working together, respecting their diversity. The documentary features the multiethnic Rock School in North Mitrovica, the band Gypsy Groove, and “Daske koje su život znače” (a cooperation between theaters from Gračanica/Graçanicë and Pristina).

- “We are Rock and Rock is Ours! /Mi smo Rok i Rok je Naš!” is about creating a unique musical education institution in northern and southern Kosovo. It also tells a story of how two rock schools, one Kosovo Serb and another Kosovo Albanian, struggled and came together to become Rock School Mitrovica. The School is working to restore the former glory of this divided town as a center of rock and roll in the region. Mitrovica Rock School commenced its work in 2008, and draws young musicians from the region together to play rock and roll. They have even created a mixed band that now plays venues across Europe.
- “Bob Marley is our Godfather/Bob Marli je naš kum” is a story about the establishment of the Gypsy Groove band that encourages positive activism to dispel interethnic boundaries. The band consists of members representing a mix of regional nationalities, including Macedonian, Roma, Serb, Ashkali, and Albanian.
- “Boards that Mean Co-existence/Daske koje su život znače” is a story of cooperation between the Ghetto theatre from Laplje Selo (Gračanica/Graçanicë) and Jeton Nerizaj, a famous screenwriter and director from Pristina. What connected Ghetto with Nerizaj was the idea of creating a play about missing and kidnapped persons. When it comes to kidnapped and missing persons, the pain is the same, no matter the nationality. The production was delivered seamlessly, and this was just one in a series of successful artistic Kosovo Serb-Kosovo Albanian productions. Members of the Ghetto theatre cooperated with "Pristina Film" as well as with NGO Art Polis.

A pre-screening of the documentary was held in Gračanica/Graçanica and a screening was held in Štrpce/Shterpc. Both were well attended and the documentary was well received.

AKT supported Entermedia to deliver a series of activities under the theme of “See the World through My Eyes”. Entermedia posted billboards in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Pec, Gračanica/Graçanicë and Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica Veriore with compelling images and a simple and powerful message “See the World through My Eyes”. Entermedia promoted the message of improved intercultural communication through social media, highlighting activities and powerful messages from civil society and individual actors from around the world and the activities of AKT Prime and AKT Local Solution. Finally, Entermedia produced and broadcast a hidden camera feature and behind-the-scenes video. The hidden camera video shows interviewers approaching strangers on the street and asking questions in their mother tongue to gauge reactions. Strangers were welcoming and offered their thoughts on everything from becoming Facebook friends with the interviewer and grabbing coffee to reflections on inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Through a targeted promotion in AKT’s partner municipalities as well as to the general public living in Kosovo, AKT estimates that this campaign reached 150,000 people, including visitors to the Facebook page and 55,000 views of the videos.

“We all strive for a better life. We all want that, but we have to work at it.”
Improving Intercultural Communication
documentary participant

Grantee Radio Kontakt Plus produced and broadcast 24 stories in a series called “These Are Our Stories” between January and May 2016. Radio show stories included:

1. *Inter-ethnic youth cooperation.* The show is dedicated to challenges and multi-ethnic cooperation among youth. It covers NDI’s implementation of the USAID Conflict Transformation project, within which several informal youth groups were created. Interviewees include NDI Deputy Chief of Party Artan Alijaj and Aca Mitić, a member of the informal multiethnic youth group.
2. *Cooperation between NGOs.* The show is a story about friendship and business cooperation between Hasime Tahiri from Mundësia and Olivera Mlošević from Association of Women Entrepreneurs and how they are working together to improve income generating opportunities for women and women business owners in northern Kosovo.
3. *Mixed trade in Bosniak Mahala.* This is a story on the history of trading in this part of North Mitrovica/ë and interethnic business cooperation. Interviewees recollect old times in Yugoslavia and point out that business is crucial to reconciliation of society, showcasing positive examples of trading and business cooperation.
4. *Mixed Marriage in Gazivode (Zubin Potok).* A touching story about a Kosovo Serb husband and a Kosovo Albanian wife, their challenges and love.
5. *Bosniak Mahala Good Neighbors.* The story showcases positive examples of inter-ethnic communication in this mixed part of North Mitrovica/ë. Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian neighbors talk about their friendship, overcoming challenges imposed on them during the war, and taking care of each other.
6. *Neighborly relations between Serbs and Albanians in the settlement of Suvi Do/Suhodoll (North Mitrovica/ë).* Interviewees are Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians who are living in this mixed village. They point out that living conditions are much better today and talk about the process of reconciliation.
7. *Mitrovica Big Band.* An inspirational story featuring Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian classical musicians, their previous cooperation, current obstacles, and shared commitment to overcome those obstacles through music.
8. *Market in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.* The show highlights good neighborly relations

between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs and the multiethnic market that both use to trade and purchase products from each other.

9. *Cooperation of Journalists in Kosovo*. Guests are acclaimed journalists Nehmedin Spahiju, Budimir Ničić and Alidina Damato, who speak about their experience and perspective on the role of media.
10. *Expanding Markets*. This show highlights AKT Prime's support to linkages, focusing on the new business connection between Agroprodukt from Istog/Istok and farmer Milić Bozovic. Guests discuss their positive business linkage experience, the importance of the medicinal herbs buying center, and their cooperation with Business Center Zvečan.
11. *Business Cooperation between Businesses from Southern and Northern Kosovo*. Guests Jelena Savic from Business Center Zvečan and Muzafer Luma, an agricultural expert from Pristina, discuss challenges and opportunities for business cooperation.
12. *The Importance of Sports in Social Cohesion*. Guests are acclaimed football player from Pristina Fadil Vokri and the famous sportsman from North Mitrovica/ë Petar Milosavljević. They share their opinions on the situation of sports in Kosovo.
13. *Multi-ethnic Cooperation in Gračanica/Graçanicë*. The show highlights the municipality as home to the center of trade for Kosovo Serbs from central Kosovo and, on its outskirts, successful Kosovo Albanian-run businesses.
14. *Cooperation in Culture*. Guests Jeton Neziraj, the Director of Multimedia Center in Pristina, and Nenad Todorović, the Director of Pristina Theater located in Gračanica/Graçanicë, discuss cooperating with many art institutions in Kosovo and the region. Neziraj shares his perspective on culture as a key factor in reconciliation.
15. *Neighborly Relations between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in Mikronaselje*. This settlement is an ethnically mixed neighborhood in Mitrovica/ë. Guests Nusha Haradinaj and Jasmina Pejakovic discuss the past and life today.
16. *The Multi-ethnic Primary School in Poneš/Ponesh*. In the Sveti Sava/Vesel Muja School, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb teachers share the same office. Kosovo Serb students attend the first shift, and Kosovo Albanian the second. The guests praise current cooperation and express optimism that again the time will come when all students will share the same shift and the same classroom.
17. *Inter-ethnic Cooperation in Peja/Peć*. After the war, Kosovo Serbs partly returned to nearby villages. Four families in the city discuss their life, challenges and friendships.
18. *Neighborly Relations in Prizren*. The show highlights the multi-ethnic city of Prizren and the Eastern Orthodox Seminary Kirilo and Metodije, which stopped its work during the war, but was renovated and re-opened in 2011.
19. *Company "Aqua Breza"*. Aqua Brez (Štrpce/Shterpce) packages and distributes spring water in Kosovo. The owner of company Rasko Milenkovic and his friend Artan Gorani talk about challenges and successes of growing the company, their experiences, and views about the current situation and future of Kosovo.
20. *Healthcare in Kosovo Today*. Dr. Haxhi Avdili, University and Clinical Center in Pristina, and Dr. Sonja Rakocevic, Head of the Pediatrics Department in Gračanica/Graçanicë, discuss the overall health system in Kosovo and explore questions like care-seeking preferences and behavior of Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians.
21. *Living Under the Same Roof*. Tri Solitera in North Mitrovica/ë is one neighborhood

where Kosovo Serbs, Albanians, Gorani and Bosnians live together. Two residents, Nemanja and Ismet, talk about problems that they face, coexistence, and their views for the future.

22. *Religious Tolerance*. Chief Imam in Mitrovica Rexhep Lushta and Orthodox Priest Stavrofor Milija Arsovic discuss religious tolerance in Kosovo.
23. *Štrpce/Shtërpce*. Director of the Department for Communities Beqir Hazilaju and Coordinator of the Business Support Center in Štrpce Nenad Janicevic talk about Štrpce's/Shtërpce's diversity and natural beauty as a foundation for economic growth and development.
24. *Good Neighbors in Zubin Potok*. Cabra village, which is ethnically Albanian, and Zupce which is Serbian, serve as a good example of how Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians can live next to each other.

Finally, AKT supported grantee Center za Depolitizaciju Kosovskog Društva (CDKD) and the production of a TV documentary on the topic *Our Diversity is an Advantage, Not a Weakness*. The TV documentary highlighted successful cooperation between communities by presenting positive examples such as people working together, business cooperation, and one story about successful multi-ethnic marriage between an Albanian woman and Serbian man. It was prepared with the support of "RTV PULS" from Šilovo, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality and broadcasted on RTV PULS.

Bringing people together to address common issues will continue to be a priority activity in Year Three. Program staff have been preparing solicitations for local non-governmental organizations to propose ideas that can bring together majority and non-majority communities, including activities that will bring communities together in public spaces; activities that increase interaction between communities in the north; and activities that leverage completed and ongoing AKT small-scale infrastructure and procurement projects, such as social or advocacy activities.

1.5 Increase CSO capacity to preserve and advocate for non-majority rights

According to the Joint Project Implementation Plan, wherein AKT Prime and AKT-LS outline their areas of focus in implementing the shared AKT scope of work, AKT-LS plays a more dominant role in this activity area than AKT Prime. Still, in Year Two AKT Prime supported a series of CSO capacity-building activities through its grantee CDKD, via the following activities: (a) support youth councils in four municipalities (Klokot/Kllokot, Partesh/Parteš, Ranilug/Ranillug and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) to develop and adopt action plans for youth and implement select activities included in their action plans and (b) strengthen capacity of nascent CSOs in target municipalities.



One of the youth councils attending a CDKD action planning workshop

CDKD worked with youth councils to develop action plans that articulate

their approaches and activities to resolve challenges in four municipalities. With four youth councils, CDKD developed 91 activities, of which four were supported by AKT through CDKD. One hundred and ninety five beneficiaries participated in the activities organized by CDKD, including trainings workshops, sports and voluntary initiatives.



CDKD - Cleaning in Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë

The following core topics were identified by councils in their action plans and activities: volunteering, youth public sector participation, youth employment, non-formal education, healthcare, and security. CDKD worked with youth councils to explore topics like identifying opportunities, educating youth about volunteering, establishing cooperation with associations of volunteers and volunteer exchanges, and recognizing the value of the volunteer experience. In keeping with this topic, CDKD supported implementation of two initiatives: a soccer match between clubs from neighboring

villages Koretine and Ranilug/Ranillug and a "clean mountain" clean-up initiative in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo.

CDKD delivered training for 22 youth in Klokot/Kllokot municipality on the public sector and the role of youth to participate and mobilize participation of others. Youth councils identified the need for performing regular market research on the needs of business entities and labor market, improving offerings of educational institutions attuned to business needs, and opportunities and consideration for non-formal education. Youth councils also identified areas for activities relevant for youth in healthcare, including preventative care, sexually transmitted diseases, and addiction. Finally, some youth councils identified priorities in security, including bullying and domestic violence.

CDKD conducted three workshops in summer 2015 for approximately 60 representatives from six NGOs:

- Proposal writing techniques, including designing projects, writing successful proposals, ensuring alignment of projects with an organization's mission and values, and fundraising strategies.
- Regulations and organizational development of NGOs, including updates to regulations, appropriate organizational statutes and aligning organizational strategies, structures, and procedures accordingly.
- Financial operations, including bookkeeping, internal control systems, financial reporting, fraud detection, audit preparation, managing donations, and tax liabilities.
- Advocacy skills, including lobbying, networking, negotiation, and professional, persuasive communication.

In addition, as part of building capacities of local NGOs, CDKD itself received support from AKT on installation of Quick Books, a financial management and reporting software. This software will improve CDKD's capacity in financial management and reporting to donors

and the Tax Administration of Kosovo.

Further, AKT Prime promoted the inclusion of its current and previous grantees in the AKT-LS current capacity building grant with the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC). Accordingly, 16 of AKT Prime’s grantees have performed organizational capacity assessments, facilitated by ACDC. Training will begin next quarter on topics including: financial management; organizational management; program management; project performance management; and human resources management.

1.6 Provide constructive engagement through small-scale infrastructure projects



*Road asphalting project in Dragolec/
Dragoljevac in Istog/Istok municipality*

AKT Prime continued to promote constructive engagement between minority and majority populations within municipalities and between citizens and municipal authorities utilizing community-identified small-scale infrastructure and quick impact activities as catalysts for cooperation. To date, AKT Prime has brought together 834 community members and 45 municipal officials to work together across its 16 partner municipalities to implement these activities.

To date, 20 quick impact and 14 small-scale infrastructure (or alternative, large procurements for north) projects have been completed. While a list is included below, details on the scope of each project, stakeholders, timing, contractors and their performance, as well as photos can be found in Annex D.

Quick Impact Completed Projects			
#	Municipality	Location	Project
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Livoq/Livoč	Playground
2	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Ponesh/Poneš	Sveti Sava Playground
3	Istog/Istok	Sine/Sinaje	Community Center Equipment
4	Istog/Istok	Dobrush/Dobruša	School IT Equipment
5	Klinë/Klina	Krushevë e Madhe/Veliko Kruševo	Playground
6	Klokot/ Kllokot	Klokot/ Kllokot	Youth Center Equipment
7	Klokot/ Kllokot	Mogila/Mogille	School IT Equipment
8	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Koretiste/Koretishte	Community Center Equipment
9	Obiliq/Obilić	Babin Most/ Babimost	School Equipment
10	Obiliq/Obilić	Crkvena Vodica/ Caravodice	School IT Equipment
11	Obiliq/Obilić	Plemetine/Plementina	Community Center Equipment
12	Parteš/Partesh	Donja Budriga/ Budrikë e Poshtme	School Furniture
13	Parteš/Partesh	Parteš/Partesh	School IT Equipment
14	Pejë/ Peć	Belo Polje/Bellopoje	Community Center Equipment
15	Ranilug/Ranillug	Donje Korminjane/ Korminjane I Ulet	Community Center Equipment
16	Ranilug/Ranillug	Ranilug/Ranillug	School IT Equipment
17	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme	School IT Equipment
18	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Viča/ Viqe	Playground

Quick Impact Completed Projects			
19	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Gojbule/Gojbulja	School Sports Equipment
20	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Prilluzhe/Priluzje	Health Clinic IT Equipment

Small-scale Infrastructure (or alternative for north) Completed Projects			
#	Municipality	Location	Project
1	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Radevo/Radevë	Primary School Central Heating System
2	Istog/Istok	Dragolec/Dragoljevac	Road Paving
3	Klokot/ Kllokot	Vrbovac/Vrbocë	Pedestrian Sidewalk
4	Leposavić/Leposaviq	Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit	Chess Club Rëvatskë/Rvatska
5	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Bostane	Playground
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Kufcë e Epërm/ Gornje Kuvce	Public Lighting
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice	School Central Heating System and Rehabilitation
8	Parteš/Partesh	Donja Budriga/ Budrikë e Poshtme	Pedestrian Sidewalk
9	Pejë/ Peć	Gorazdevce/Gorazdevac	Public Lighting
10	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Kindergarten Furnishings
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme	Sports Field Fencing
12	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Viça/ Viqe	Rehabilitation of Water Supply System
13	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Banjske/Banjska	Storm Water Drainage and Road Rehabilitation
14	Zvečan/ Zveçan	Zvečan/ Zveçan	Kindergarten Kitchen Equipment

In addition, AKT initiated the following quick impact and small-scale infrastructure projects during the reporting period:

Quick Impact Initiated Projects			
#	Municipality	Location	Project
1	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Susica/Sushice	Primary School Schoolyard Fencing
2	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Sveti Sava School Furnishings

Small-scale Infrastructure (or alternative for north) Initiated Projects			
#	Municipality	Location	Project
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Livoq/Livoç	Road Paving
2	Klinë/Klina	Rudice/Rudicë	Road Paving
3	Leposavić/Leposaviq	Dren	Primary School Equipment
4	Leposavić/Leposaviq	Vracevo	Primary School Equipment
5	Ranilug/Ranillug	Ranilug/Ranillug	School Technical Cabinet
6	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	Suhodoll i Epërm/Gornji Suvo Do School Furnishings
7	Zubin Potok	Zubin Potok	Çabër/Çabra Primary School Equipment
8	Zubin Potok	Zubin Potok	Primary School Equipment
9	Zvečan/ Zveçan	Zvečan/ Zveçan	School IT Equipment

Project Intermediate Result 2: Improve economic opportunities in target municipalities

2.1 Assess and facilitate market linkages between majority and non-majority businesses

AKT facilitated many business to business (B2B) meetings between majority and non-majority businesses during project year two. Details of B2B meetings are as follows:

- *Raspberry producer from the Firaja village (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) and an AKTIVA representative from Vushtrri/Vučitrn.* AKT organized a B2B meeting in Štrpce/Shtërpçë between a raspberry producer from the Firaja village (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) and an AKTIVA representative from Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The topic of discussion was starting a new venture between berry producers and a company specializing in production, collection, warehousing, and sales in Kosovo: AKTIVA. AKTIVA identified berry varieties as a key area for development, expressing interest in meeting the association of berry producers from Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality to start a new partnership. Due to fast growing production and development of new plantations, berry producers are looking for production partners to gain higher and more secure prices for their products.
- *Vegetable producers' association from Mogila/Mogilla (Klokot/Kllokot) and ABI Progres in Prizren.* AKT facilitated a B2B between a vegetable producers' association from Mogila/Mogilla (Klokot/Kllokot) and ABI Progres, one of the biggest food processing firms in Prizren. Both parties discussed the identification of production capacities and varieties, price and payment issues, and cooperation between producers and the processing company. Fresh champignons (mushrooms) were identified as a starting point of collaboration and ABI is prepared to buy all second and third class vegetable varieties for processing purposes. Additionally, ABI expressed interest in buying first class peppers for its supermarket in Prizren. Following this meeting, producers from Mogila/Mogilla discussed with individual members the types of products, price, and timing that would be offered to ABI. Another B2B meeting was organized between parties to finalize details of the agreement. At the second meeting, ABI agreed to buy mushrooms and peppers preserved in barrels during the harvesting season. Initially, ABI will purchase 1,000 kg of mushrooms. If this test purchase goes well, ABI will sign a contract with the producer, buying up to 10,000 kg of mushrooms per month. Verbal agreements were reached between producers and buyers, with contracts to be signed with the first delivery of products during harvest season. The B2B was facilitated by AKT grantee Business Support Center Štrpce.
- *Vegetable producers' association from Mogila/Mogilla (Klokot/Kllokot) and food processor JEGE.* A separate meeting was held in Prizren between vegetable producers from Mogila/Mogilla and a food processing firm, JEGE. This firm primarily produces pickled cucumbers, pickled peppers, and mushrooms and is interested in buying these items from Mogila/Mogilla producers. If producers are able to provide good prices to the firm this harvesting season, a deal is expected between the parties.
- *Food and Drink B2B in.* In collaboration with AKT LS and American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), the program organized a multi-ethnic Business to Business (B2B) meeting in the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. The aim of the event was to initiate inter-ethnic business linkages between AKT partner minority and majority businesses. USAID Mission Director James Hope officially opened the event,

followed by the Mayor of Gračanica/Graçanicë Mr. Vladeta Kostić, AmCham Secretary General of the Board Mr. Ardi Shita, and Kosovo Chamber of Commerce President Mr. Safet Gërxhaliu. The Mission Director met with participating businesses and discussed the business environment in which they are operating and



Business to Business event in Gračanica/Graçanicë

how the environment might be improved through cooperation among businesses of all communities in Kosovo. AKT Prime supported 11 partner minority businesses to conduct 34 individual meetings with majority businesses. Three large majority businesses are following up with three of AKT Prime’s partner businesses to establish future partnership. The following businesses from majority community participated as buyers: Viva Fresh, Meridian Corporation, Devolli Corporation, Oaza, Price Caffè House, Emona, and Toscana & Oxa Group. During the same event, USAID Contract Law Enforcement (CLE) Program presented a “Put it on Paper” session to raise awareness on the importance of written contracts and its benefits, and standard form contracts for common transactions, with commentary and usage notes. In addition, Crimson Finance Fund (CFF) delivered an access to finance session to AKT minority partner businesses informing them on financing decision-making and access to finance in Kosovo.

- *Two medicinal aromatic herb growers from Zubin Potok and Agroproduct from Istog/Istok.* Two deals have been solidified between medicinal aromatic herb growers from Zubin Potok and the largest horticulture producer in Istog/Istok, “Agroproduct Sh.p.k”. Contracts have been signed stipulating that Agroproduct Sh.p.k will buy the entire harvest of oregano and black hollyhock from these two producers, guaranteeing price stability and stable domestic market share. Both Northern Kosovo-based producers run family farms producing raspberries, strawberries, plums, and apples. With USAID AKT support, in cooperation with Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), the farmers received irrigation pipes, black plastic folia, and training on soil preparation, seeding, planting, harvesting, and drying to grow medicinal aromatic herbs. There is great demand for these agricultural products and Agroproduct, a business that runs approximately 40 agricultural purchasing centers Kosovo-wide, will export the medicinal aromatic herbs to the EU market, mainly Germany.
- *Raspberry producer Predrag Ristic from Graçanicë/Gračanica and Eurofruti from Mramor.* The program facilitated another interethnic business linkage between Predrag Ristic, a raspberry producer from Graçanicë/ Gračanica, and Eurofruti, a key buyer and distributor. Eurofruti signed a contract to purchase all harvested raspberries over the next three years. During first year, it is estimated that 1,200 kg of raspberries will be delivered, generating €2,200 in sales.
- *Producers in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Eurofruti from Mramor.* To expand the

linkages between minority micro enterprises and majority large-scale buyers, the project is partnering with Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality and soft fruits collector Eurofruti from Pristina. A partnership agreement has been signed from the Mayor of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, contributing to the purchase of EUR €10,000 in raspberry seedlings, and setting up a new cooling collection point in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. AKT Prime will assist in purchasing raspberry seedlings and setting up a second cooling collection point in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, while Eurofruti will offer training and technical assistance to farmers, transportation of harvested raspberries, and long-term contracts for purchase of all harvested raspberries. Farmers of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë will participate and contribute up to 50 percent of the total cost of this activity. The aim of this project is to increase interethnic business linkages between majority and minority businesses through supporting farmers and businesses cultivate raspberries in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. Fifteen farmers will be supported with raspberry seedlings and linked to cooling collection points, and 10 additional farmers will be linked to the two established collection centers.

- *Roundtable and B2B – north and south agricultural business linkages.* AKT Prime held an event in North Mitrovica/ë between four prominent agricultural businesses from southern Kosovo and 35 multi-ethnic farmers and agricultural businesses from northern municipalities. Businesses from the south included Frutomania, a juice and smoothie processor, Euro Fruti, a collector and processor of forest fruits, Agro Product, a collector and processor of medicinal plants and herbs, and AgroUnion, a seller of agricultural seeds and raw material. USAID/Kosovo Deputy Director for Democracy and Governance Office Randall Olson officially opened the event and welcomed participating businesses. AKT and its partner, Business Center Zvecan (BCZ), moderated an engaging discussion on the business environment in northern Kosovo and opportunities for improving inter-ethnic business cooperation, mainly between northern and southern Kosovo. Buyers from the south offered candid insight into the potential for new market linkages, their own eagerness for expansion, and their criteria for engaging new suppliers. The discussion was followed by AKT and BCZ-facilitated meetings between northern and southern businesses. To date, one contract has been signed between Frutomania from Gjilan/Gnjilane and Buying Center from Leposavić/Leposaviq as a result of this event. Buying Center will sell all wild apples collected from farmers of northern municipalities at a set market price. Based on last year's yield, the expected total value of the contract is \$4,200.

AKT also supported businesses to participate in two trade fairs during the reporting period: the Agro-Industrial and Inverse Trade Fair in Pristina and the AgroKos Fair in Pristina:

- *Agro-Industrial and Inverse Trade Fair.* AKT Prime supported seven partner businesses and associations from minority communities to participate in the Agro-Industrial and Inverse Trade Fair in Pristina from September 30 to October 3, 2015. The Fair was organized by the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC) and supported by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and PPSE/Swiss contact program. In total,

the program organized nine B2B meetings and three verbal partnerships were established between AKT's minority businesses and majority businesses present at the fair. Šijak, a business from Parteš/Partesh, agreed with a restaurant in Pristina to provide 20 jars of ajvar per week. Aqua Breza agreed with Dani from Pristina to supply water and Brendi-Kos from Gračanica/Gračanicë will produce and pack their Turkish delights under Intercoop branding. The program is assisting businesses to formalize these deals through contracts, and agree on the volume of products and amount of sales between both parties. Brendi-Co and majority larger-scale buyer Interex from Prishtina/Priština.



AKT partner business Aqua Breza participates at a trade fair in Pristina

- *AgroKos Fair.* AKT Prime supported three minority partner associations and four minority partner businesses to exhibit and participate at the AgroKos Fair in Pristina in October 2015. The four-day event was an Agribusiness, Food, Drink and Gastronomy Fair organized annually by the Congress and Event Organization (CEO). AKT-supported exhibitors included those businesses that (1) participated successfully in previous AKT Prime activities, such as branding assistance, training in marketing and access to finance, and B2Bs; (2) operate in agribusiness, food, or drink; and (3) had the capacity and commitment to successfully expand their market to buyers visiting the Fair. AKT Prime supported exhibition by Association of Raspberry Producers Šarska Malina (70 members, Štrpce/Shtërpçë), Association of Beekeeping Producers Šarski Roj (43 members, Štrpce/Shtërpçë), Association of Raspberry Producers Sušice (eight members, Štrpce/Shtërpçë), Sani/AquaBreza (water, Štrpce/Shtërpçë), Brendi-Co (Turkish delight, Gračanica/Gračanicë), Šijak (agricultural production and processing, Partesh/Parteš) and Trboljevac (bakery, Leposavić/Leposaviq). Over the course of the Fair, each exhibitor met with an average of over 100 visitors. AKT partner businesses established 53 new contacts and seven leads, which AKT continues to assist businesses to realize.

In addition to B2B meetings, AKT supported study visits for non-majority business owners in northern Kosovo to businesses in southern Kosovo to reduce barriers to business cooperation and linkages by building businesses' networks and initiating dialogue on opportunities for market linkages:

- As part of the "Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo", AKT-US, in cooperation with Business Center Zvečan, organized three linkages visits for northern farmers and businesses to established businesses in Southern Kosovo. The first was a site visit to a successful agro-businesses in Southern Kosovo, with 11 agricultural producers from Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zvečan participating. Herb and fruit growers and honey producers from the north had an opportunity to visit "Frutomania" production facilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane and "Natyra", a medicinal herb purchasing center in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, and learn about ways to

improve production and develop market exchange between North and South Kosovo. This site visit is the first in a series of six site visits with the goal of establishing business linkages and improve agriculture in Northern Kosovo.

- Ten agricultural producers (six women and four men) from Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zvečan participated in a visit to a successful agro-businesses in Southern Kosovo. Raspberry and strawberry growers from the north had an opportunity to visit “Scardus”, a fruit and medicinal herb purchasing center and its raspberry fields in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Participants also had an opportunity to visit the “Biobuzmi” raspberry and strawberry plantations in Ferizaj/Uroševac to learn about improving their production and developing market exchange of agriculture products between Northern and Southern Kosovo.

- During a third linkages visit, 10 northern farmers and businesses visited Me Agro apple and pepper plantations in Lipjan/Lipljan. The farmers showed great interest in acquiring knowledge from the owner of the business who is an expert in the field. The same group of farmers was brought to Dobrotin village to visit asparagus fields and undergo practical training on how to cultivate these products. Several farmers are interested in replicating



Farmers from northern municipalities visited apple plantations in Lipjan/Lipljan

the asparagus growing methods witnessed during this trip as there are great market demands for this product. These visits will be concluded with a B2B meeting where farmers from Northern Kosovo will have an opportunity to learn how to adjust their production to meet market demands in Southern Kosovo.

- Another meeting, organized by AKT-US grantee Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), sought to share experiences between farmers from North and South Kosovo. Ten farmers from Leposaviq/Leposavić, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zvečan municipalities participated. During the visit, farmers had the chance to visit a dairy farm and milk collection center in Vushtri/Vučitrn municipality, the dairy processor “Aldi” in Mitrovica municipality, and a milk laboratory at the Kosovo Veterinary Agency in Pristina. At the “Dairy Farm and Milk Collection Center”, participants learned about milk production, animal feeding, the importance of milk quality, and procedures for milking from the owner. Farmers also learned how the milk collection centers (MCC) operate and how they control the milk acidity, fat content, and added water. In addition, the director of the Milk Laboratory at the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency in Pristina showed farmers how milk samples from farms are tested for quality and the correlation between milk quality and price. The director also express the laboratory’s willingness to take milk samples from northern farmers and encouraged them to participate, as testing is provided for free and ensures better milk quality. These visits are expected to improve the quality of milk

and in return generate more sales for farmers.

- A visit was conducted at Agroprodukt Syne from Istog/Istok, the largest collector and processor of medicinal aromatic herbs, wild fruits, and mushrooms in Kosovo. Ten businesses and farmers from northern municipalities participated and learned from the company CEO methods of cultivating, harvesting and processing the herbs and fruits.
- A similar visit was organized between 10 farmers and businesses from the four northern municipalities and EuroFruti from Mramor, Pristina. The owner of EuroFruti delivered theoretical and practical education for raspberry processing to agricultural producers and farmers and introduced them to technology for storage and processing. Agricultural producers and farmers had the opportunity to visit the entire cold storage complex and to see on the spot how company employees sort and prepare frozen fruits for export. Interested raspberry growers from northern municipalities will meet with EuroFruti at the upcoming B2B meeting to initiate new business linkages.
- Another visit was conducted at the Novo Monte Association of rural tourism from Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to show 10 northern farmers the potential of rural tourism and how agricultural producers and farmers can benefit.
- Business Centre Zvecan conducted a visit in Reçane/Reçan in Prizren, where 10 agricultural producers participated in the Berry Days Fair. Farmers met their counterparts from southern Kosovo and jointly attended a presentation on "How to Grow Berries" delivered by successful berry growers from Prizren region.

Eligible participants from previously organized entrepreneurship and business trainings in partner municipalities submitted 41 business grant applications to expand their businesses. From these applications, the evaluation committee shortlisted 29 minority-owned businesses. Based on site visits and the previously submitted business plans, the evaluation committee refined the shortlist to 16 businesses to be considered for small business grants. AKT prepared all documentation for the environmental reviews and, after USAID approval, entered into grant agreements with 16 businesses from 9 AKT partner municipalities. The aim of the small grants is to increase small scale businesses' competitiveness, productivity, sales, and job opportunities. The grantees operate in the following sectors: agricultural production and processing, packaging, wood processing and furniture, water, services – printing and tourism, and machinery. Grants are generally one year in duration and include procurement of equipment to improve production, sales, and employment. They are accompanied by training and onsite technical assistance based on needs assessments, which identified needs in the areas of marketing and sales, operations, accounting and financial management, and human resources.

While a description of AKT's support and the performance of each business grantee can be found in Annex E, the following the following equipment was procured for each business grantee to assist them in attaining expected improvements in productivity, sales, and jobs:

1. *Agrosera Toplika*. Small business grantee Agrosera-Toplika from Banjska of Vushtrri/Vučitrn received a tractor Tafe 42 to expand its production of potatoes. It has a long-term contract with Pestova from Vushtrri/Vučitrn, the largest processor of potatoes in Kosovo.
2. *A-Stil*. A CNC Graver machine used in processing and production of wooden and laminated products was delivered to A-Stil business grantee in Peja/Peć.

3. *Dini*. A greenhouse of 500 m² was delivered in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to NTP Dini. Dini will grow additional lettuce and green salads.
4. *Food Pack*. A machine for printing cardboard packaging has been delivered to business grantee Food Pack from Zvečan/Zveçan.
5. *Lazić Stil*. Small business Lazić Stil from Gračanica/Graçanicë, a furniture, kitchen cabinet and other wood and plywood furniture producer, received a small business expansion grant which includes a machine for cutting wooden plates, an electric circular saw, and an air compressor.
6. *Lulishtja Agonisi*. One 320 m² greenhouse was delivered to Lulishtja Agonisi from Pejë/Peç, where flowers and ornamental plants will be cultivated.
7. *Natyra-M*. Honey harvesting and extraction equipment and beehives were delivered to Natyra- M from Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.
8. *Nderi-R*. A 500 m² greenhouse with quality pipes, plastic folia, a 5-year warranty, and natural ventilation has been delivered to Nderi-R business grantee from Peja/Peç.
9. *Pac Process*. Business grantee Pac Process from Klokot/Klllokot received a CNC Plazma cutter machine to expand its production.
10. *Sani (AquaBreza)*. A professional machine for automatic bottling of 10-liter water bottles was delivered to grantee Sani PPT from Štrpce/Shtërpçë. The company is a private business with a water factory that fills and bottles natural spring water under the brand name AquaBreza. Notably, this machine has been produced by another AKT grantee, Pak Process, from Klokot/Klllokot.
11. *Šijak*. Partner business Šijak from Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme village in Parteš/Partesh received tools and equipment for making red pepper spread (ajvar) and a machine to spread out black plastic folia, which will assist in cultivating vegetables.
12. *Sito Print Desing*. Expansion equipment has been delivered to AKT partner small business Sito Print Desing in Zvečan/Zveçan. This includes a professional Konika Minolta printer, equipped with a staple finisher and a paper cutting knife.
13. *Tapetarija Stil*. Tapetarija Stil from Zvečan/Zveçan received two upholstery sewing machines to assist the business in expanding its services.
14. *Valoni*. AKT-Prime partner business Valoni NTP in Istog/Istok received a wood drilling machine and a machine for banding wooden products.
15. *Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni*. Guesthouse inventory and equipment has been delivered to small business grantee Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. A rural tourism business, the Villa offers rooms for tourists and other customers with health issues. Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni received three water boilers, three toilet seats, three refrigerators, three televisions, three dishwashers, three shower heads, six faucets,



CNC Plazma Cutter machine received by a business grantee PacProcess from USAID AKT Prime

three shower cabins, three stoves, three wood-burning ovens, three wardrobes, three television stands, laminate flooring, and six mattresses.

16. *Zogu (Agroelita)*. One thousand young turkeys have been delivered to grantee Zogu (Agroelita), a small family-run business with a long tradition in the agriculture sector. The business currently employs 50 seasonal employees, while four employees/family members are engaged as long-term employees. The business has already signed a contract with Meka, a manufacturer of meat products. Due to the high interest of customers in consuming turkey meat, the business will sell the meat to local markets in the region of Peja/Peć.

AKT hosted a round table discussion on improving the business environment in Kosovo through stimulation of agricultural production and the establishment of cooperation between south and north Kosovo. Approximately ten agricultural and food processing experts from north and south and representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), GIZ, Swiss Contact, and USAID Agriculture Growth and Rural Opportunities (AGRO) Program participated in a discussion on the current state of Kosovo's agricultural sector and areas for improving its production and development of agricultural product market exchange.

AKT also hosted a roundtable discussion to discuss the milk sector value chain with multiple stakeholders throughout Kosovo. Participants included individual farmers from majority and non-majority municipalities, milk producer and processor firms, the Faculty of Agriculture, Agency for Agriculture Development, Association of Milk Producers of Kosovo, Association of Milk Processors of Kosovo, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency. Non-majority farmers showed interest in cooperating with the Ministry of Agriculture on grants and other subsidies. The majority of milk producers are concerned about competing with imported dairy products that enjoy a high percentage of market share by maintain low prices and high quality. Recommendations from this roundtable include: the Ministry of Trade to control the usage of oil palm in Kosovo; the Ministry of Agriculture to redesign schemes for supporting farmers; the Food and Veterinary Agency to perform analysis on imported dairy products' quality; and the associations of milk producers and processors to ensure the proliferation of contracts between milk producers and processors in Kosovo.

Finally, AKT facilitated the membership of 25 minority-owned partner businesses and business associations at the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC), including businesses from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Zvečan/Zveçan, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Parteš/Partesh and Klokot/Kllokot. All members have received certificates of membership. Through KCC membership, businesses will benefit from participation in KCC trade fairs, business to business (B2B) meetings, trainings, seminars, networking, lobbying, and mediation. KCC will also support minority businesses in identifying potential partner businesses from the majority community.

2.2 Promote SME competitiveness and access to finance and support youth entrepreneurship and employability, including returnees

AKT grantee Business Support Center Štrpce (BSCS) organized 10 workshops with five business associations and 15 businesses from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, and Ranilug/Ranillug. The aim of these workshops was to develop branding for business associations and develop branding and labeling. These services will ensure both

businesses and associations a better market share and potential growth into larger markets. Associations developed banners, brochures, and business cards and businesses developed logos, labels, banners, and business cards. One business was offered bar codes from the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce as a means to place their products into large supermarkets. After completion of these activities, BSCS organized an award event and delivered all of the designed and printed products to businesses and associations from four partner municipalities.

In order to assist partner businesses from northern municipalities to understand the importance of written contracts and using mediation and arbitration services in their everyday business transactions, AKT hosted the USAID Contract Law Enforcement (CLE) Program to deliver a “Put it on Paper” roundtable at the Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC) in North Mitrovica/ë. Twenty three minority-owned businesses heard presentations and participated in discussions on the using written contracts when doing business. In addition, each business was provided with sample contracts in local languages to encourage using written contracts. During this workshop, CSSP Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation presented its services arbitration and mediation services among businesses in northern Kosovo. USAID CLE and CSSP will be available to support AKT businesses in drafting contracts and resolving contract disputes through mediation and arbitration.

Moreover, the program brought together 14 partner minority businesses and seven majority businesses to participate in a seminar on food safety and food standards as required by local legislation. This seminar was facilitated by the Director of the Public Health Department of Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA). The seminar will help businesses improve food hygiene and adhere to required food standards before placing products in markets.



Seminar on Food Standards and Quality

In collaboration with its subcontractor, the Berman Group, the project organized a workshop for its partner businesses to provide assistance in managing their day- to-day activities. The workshop comprised four sessions: Marketing and Branding, Business Legal Structures, Social Media Usage, and Attracting Investments. With participation of 19 partner businesses from the majority and minority communities, attendees shared positive feedback on their new knowledge and on the potential for additional workshops. This activity is the first in a series of trainings and seminars that will be delivered to our partner businesses, aiming to enable them to fully leverage their grants and reach their business growth potential.

AKT in partnership with the Berman Group provided onsite business needs assessment services. Based on that information, consultants from subcontractors Berman Group and BSCK provided technical assistance to AKT’s business grantees. The aim of this ongoing initiative is to enable grantees to maximize the use of their USAID AKT grants to reach productivity, sales, and jobs growth goals. The examples below highlight some illustrative activities that are part of this initiative:

- *Agrosera Toplika*. Agrosera Toplika, a producer with a guaranteed market for its

potato produce, was advised to find a water source closer to its land in order to decrease production costs, consider new retail options for the produced potatoes (such as smaller packages), and diversify its customers to negotiate better prices and even diversify its production in order to reduce risk. AKT also assisted the company with a financial plan.

- *A-Stil*. A-Stil, a producer of wooden and laminated products, has been advised to differentiate tasks between employees to align human resource strengths with their most relevant skills. The business was also advised to reinforce its branding through social media and focus on producing products that have the best potential for sale.
- *Dini*. Dini produces five different types of salads. Located in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, it has potential to expand further, especially with the expected increase in production resulting from the greenhouse delivered by AKT. Consulting focused on direct sales to hotels and restaurants as a more efficient sales method.
- *Food Pack*. Food Pack, whose product line includes producing pizza carton boxes, was identified as a potential business to be linked with a larger producer in southern Kosovo,
- *VIPrint*. An introductory meeting between the potential partners was facilitated with AKT support. Also, Food Pack was advised to establish a brand and make use of social media to minimize door-to-door sales. The company was also encouraged to strategically divide tasks between the owner and her brother and to hire additional staff to take on administration and finance. Additional assistance was given on tax compliance.
- *Lazić Stil*. Lazić Stil is a small furniture producer mainly dealing with kitchen cabinets. As the business has a lot of competition, consultants advised the company to focus in non-majority municipalities where there is less competition and to partner with larger companies from majority municipalities, particularly in terms of supply of raw materials.
- *Lulishtja Agonisi*. Lulishtja Agonisi, a large producer of flowers in Pejë/Peć, was advised to rely less on word of mouth and instead use social media to attract customers.
- *Natyra-M*. Natyra-M of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë produces natural honey. This is a small business with a professional owner in the field of beekeeping, located in good area and with good facilities. Marketing and promotion are limited for this type of business and only direct sales are employed. Consultants advised the company to link with shops of the region for improved distribution channels and diversify human resources as the company grows – particularly hiring someone for finance and administration. Also, consultants advised that the company begin to focus more on queen bee rearing, which is more profitable. AKT will deliver time of a specialist to support the company in this focus.
- *Nderi-R*. Nderi-R, a producer of vegetable producer was advised to start investing in branding and use social media to expand its customer base to ensure the expanded produce output expected through the greenhouse provided through AKT-Prime assistance can be absorbed in the market.
- *Pac Process*. Pac Process has produced machines for Kosovo's beverages sector, and was advised to specialize in the few machines that are best sellers and in high demand. As the business grows, the owner should hire additional staff and diversify responsibilities. The company should also expand its marketing to include

social media.

- *Sani (AquaBreza)*. Sani produces and fills bottled natural water in Brezovica. Its brand AquaBreza is mainly distributed in minority areas and some small shops in majority markets. The business has a prime location to produce water and needs assistance in both marketing and operations. The grant of a machine from AKT resulted in increased production. AKT's local consultant will assist in finding new distribution channels to majority markets.
- *Šijak*. Šijak in Parteš/Partesh offers high quality tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and freshly produced ajvar. The family has a long tradition of producing ajvar and excellent land. Because of limited production capacity, the business cannot be connected with large buyers and supermarkets. The consultant proposed marketing these products as exclusive and supported the search for joint ventures with majority businesses.
- *Sito Print Desing*. Sito Print Desing was also identified to link with a business in southern Kosovo. The business received marketing tips to both attract youth and maintain its current customer base. This business was also advised to make use of social media to market products.
- *Tapetarija Stil*. Tapetarija Stil was advised to leverage its high demand and make use of social media to promote its business among southern municipalities. In addition, to handle its volume of orders, the business was advised to expand its premises. The owner was encouraged to seek new linkages with businesses from southern Kosovo, and a new lineage was facilitated with Nuka Company for the supply of raw materials.
- *Valoni*. Valoni, a producer of furniture with a prime location and a showroom, was advised to focus on producing bedroom furniture as a specialty, and to avoid time-intensive products that do not generate the same volume profit. Leveraging the business' past experience in making two sales shipped to Switzerland, the business was advised to focus on leveraging this existing contact to make a permanent partnership, and to explore ways to export products to Kosovo's diaspora.
- *Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni*. Located in the mountains, near the castle and an old mosque and church, Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni has the possibility to attract summer and winter tourism. It is an easy trip from Pristina and attractive for local as well as international guests. The consultant advised that with the grant from AKT and even a small amount of promotion, Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni should realize significant growth. One member of the family has an interest in marketing, and with training should put in place effective online publicity tools, such as a website and a social media page, and establish partnerships with travel agencies.
- *Zogu (Agroelita)*. Zogu produces meat though raising turkeys on the farms. The business has been advised to use Facebook to generate interest, and to supply another family member's restaurant business with turkey meat. Zogu is looking for opportunities to partner with larger meat processing businesses to sell turkey wholesale.

In collaboration with Crimson Finance Fund (CFF), the program organized the Access to Finance for Women in Business Workshop for more than 30 majority and minority women entrepreneurs and business-owners at the Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC) in North Mitrovica/ë. The aim of the workshop was to introduce women business-owners to potential sources of financial accessing in Kosovo that could help them grow their businesses. Women business-owners found the workshop very helpful and requested to meet with banks

and other finance institutions to learn about loan requirements from these institutions.

In order to help partner businesses better understand financial services and products available to support their business growth, AKT Prime organized an Access to Finance workshop in Gračanica/Graçanica. Representatives from NLB Prishtina, Crimson Finance Fund, TEB Bank, ProCredit Bank, Finca Kosovo, KEP Trust, and Agjensioni për Financim ne Kosovë presented their small business services and products. In total, 25 AKT partner minority businesses from northern and southern municipalities attended the workshop. Minority businesses are following up individually.



Access to Finance workshop in Gračanica/Graçanica

AKT also provided several trainings to non-majority producers on farm management and sector-specific training on milk production and quality and medical aromatic plant cultivation. Via grantee Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), AKT provided a training on farm management and increased milk production for farmers from Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zubin Potok. This training brought together 10 farmers in each municipality to attend five training sessions. Farmers received technical assistance to improve farm management, facility standards, breeding, milk quality and calibration, milk storage and transportation, and business skills for record keeping and gross margin calculation.

AKT and IADK also organized a training on improvement of milk quality for the farmers of Štrpce/Shtërpçë and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. This five day training saw participation from 20 farmers from majority and non-majority communities. The training sessions covered topics such as milking procedures using hygienic equipment, milking machine calibration, preventing mastitis diseases, balancing feed ration, and improving feed quality. After the training, milk hygiene packages were distributed that will help improve milk quality for farmers. The packages contained materials for cleaning milking machines, iodine for udder disinfection, pre milking cups, and udder disinfection cups.

Fourteen farmers from Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zubin Potok attended a cultivation of medical aromatic herbs training, delivered by AKT via grantee IADK. This training helped to facilitate and promote the cultivation of oregano, the medical plant with the highest potential in the current regional marketplace, and black hollyhock for new farmers in the Northern Kosovo. The training covered topics such as soil preparation for medical aromatic plant cultivation (bed forming, establishing irrigation system, seedling preparation, and planting) and harvesting and post-harvest activities (drying, storage, and cost of production). Two beneficiaries from this training were linked with Agroproduct from Istog/Istok (as described above) and have been given material support in the form 50 square meters of greenhouse covered by black plastic folia as natural dryer and an irrigation system to grow oregano. The beneficiary that will grow black hollyhock has been given 50 square meters of greenhouses covered by black plastic folia as natural dryer and an irrigation system. Later, AKT organized a field day promotion of medicinal aromatic plants "Growing

White Oregano" in Zubin Potok, village Dobrasevina. With participation from 19 farmers, successful farmers and partners from IADK explained the benefit of growing these plants, and visited the oregano beneficiary farmer and provided onsite guidance.

2.3 Support youth employability

Together with grantee Management Development Associates Foundation (MDAF), AKT reviewed the 103 applications for the advanced entrepreneurship skills training for majority and non-majority entrepreneurs. Out of all applicants, 48 majority and non-majority youth with the best business ideas were invited to attend the training.

The four-day Advanced Entrepreneurship Skills Training offered to 42 youth from partner municipalities was divided in two groups, and each group had majority and non-majority entrepreneurs and fostered interaction among the two groups.

Following the training, entrepreneurs were delivered business plan development support and individual coaching. After receiving business plan development support, 14 participants submitted their completed business plans. Ten were selected to present their plans in front of an evaluation committee comprised of representatives of MDAF, AKT, and the MDAF Network of Business Angels. The committee selected the two best business ideas and awarded them with a grant in the amount of EUR 1,000 each and three-month incubation at MDAF. The MDAF Business Incubator is providing business skills training, technical and administrative support, and advice in management, business development, legal services, and access to finance. The two winning business ideas selected by the committee:



1. Ana Staletović from Štrpce/Shtërpce produces raspberries. As she possesses land and aspires to continue her family tradition, she developed her business plan for improving productivity and received support to implementation.
2. Diell Misini from Vushtrri/Vučitrn provides marketing services via smartphones and tablets through a special device called MicroTik Router. Before connecting to a free WiFi from any café, an ad appears for few seconds. The ads are paid by businesses advertisers.

In addition, MDAF provided internships to five successful participants from the entrepreneurship training. Based on performance during the training and a desire to gain employable skills through the internship program, five interns were selected for a two-month internship at MDAF or a MDAF partner organization. At the onset of their internships, participants hoped to gain experience working at a professional organization, working on teams, and managing projects. As their internships drew to a close, they reflected on the skills they gained in professional communication with clients and within teams, performing research, managing their workload to tight deadlines, and event management. Three participants were

extended as research assistants for various projects implemented by the parent organization MDA.

AKT launched a solicitation for soft skills training and internship placements for beneficiaries in the project's 16 partner municipalities. The purpose of the internship program is to enhance participation of majority and non-majority youth in the local economy by providing them with relevant skills for employment, and placing them as interns in different companies throughout Kosovo with the aim of continued long-term employment. Through this activity, 75 youth and returnees will be provided soft skills trainings, and upon completion of the training and orientation program, 20 participants will be placed in a 10-12 week paid internship program, comprised of 40 hours per week. Internship opportunities will be provided to 15 minority participants and 5 majority participants. The program is currently in its final phase of negotiating this project with one of the bidders that scored the highest during the evaluation process.

2.4 Support women-owned enterprises

While women business owners and entrepreneurs are among AKT's grantees and participants in AKT's other capacity-building efforts above, AKT provided several trainings specifically targeting women with the aim of building skills and productivity in largely home-based economic activities, including homemade food and dairy processing, beekeeping, soap-making, and running a business, as follows:

- *Fruit processing.* AKT, in cooperation with IADK, finalized the practical and theoretical training sessions on fruit home food processing for women from Štrpce/Shtërpçë. In these ten training sessions, twelve women members of two multiethnic women associations, "Ikebana" from the village of Gotovuša/Gotovushë (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) and "Borovnicë" from Brod (Štrpce/Shtërpçë), had an opportunity to learn about hygiene and standardization of products. IADK possess portable kitchen equipment which was used during this training for hands-on learning.
- *Vegetable processing.* Grantee IADK engaged 14 women from Leposaviq/Leposavić in ten training sessions on vegetable home food processing. Training topics included: hygiene during processing, product standardization, cost of production, product marketing, vegetable processing, salad processing, and cucumber processing. The participants showed great interest in acquiring these skills as they already have the raw materials necessary on their farms. With this knowledge, participants are now able to produce and sell vegetable products in the market and increase sales.
- *Fruit and vegetable processing.* This training covered theoretical and practical fruit and vegetable processing skills. This activity aims to increase employment opportunities and household incomes of women entrepreneurs in northern Kosovo by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products and finding new markets. Ten multiethnic women have attended this 12 session training.
- *Sweets and baked goods.* With AKT support, the women's association Mundësia organized a training workshop in Zvečan/Zvečan on the production of sweets and baked goods during which 15 multiethnic women from Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zvečan, and North Mitrovica/ë had an opportunity to exchange their experiences in this sector. This activity was part of the "North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building" initiative aimed is to increase employment opportunities and household incomes for women entrepreneurs primarily in Northern Kosovo (with a focus on

ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers) by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products. Participants learned how to make approximately ten products and numerous recipes were exchanged between the women. After completing the training, participants promoted their businesses and shared their experiences on a radio talk show at a local radio station in North Mitrovica. The recorded show was broadcast through a series of radio talk show programs dedicated to the promotion of businesses and women entrepreneurs in northern Kosovo on Radio Contact Plus in North Mitrovica/ë.

- *Soap-making.* AKT grantee Mundësia delivered a series of courses on decorative soap-making for women of the Roma community in North Mitrovica/ë. In total, 10 women attended the eight sessions of this course and acquired hands-on knowledge on making and selling soaps. The same women received assistance on soap design and packaging to increase their sales and expand markets.

- *Beekeeping.* AKT grantee Sabor delivered a series of 8 theoretical and practical sessions for beekeeping to 10 women in Lučka Reka, Banov Do, Zerovnica, Ceraja, and Leposavić/ç.



Women producers from northern municipalities conduct a practical beekeeping training

- *Dairy processing.* Grantee Mundësia delivered a series of 12 courses in Leposavić/ç, Srbovac, Veliko Rudare, and Zubin Potok. Eight women have expanded their skills in dairy production according to the HACCP standards. The practical sessions of this course were held at Laki Farm in Zvečan/Zveçan.

- *Business management.* At RCRC in North Mitrovica/ë, Mundësia engaged 15 majority and non-majority women from northern Kosovo for Business Professional Skills training. This training equipped women with knowledge on general business conditions and environment in Kosovo, business and financial planning, and general business skills required to successfully run a small business. Participants came from all four northern municipalities.

- *Business management.* AKT grantee Association of Women Sabor delivered four training modules for 48 women entrepreneurs and business owners from the four northern municipalities. The training modules included: Kosovo Law for Women Entrepreneurs (business registration; financial and tax obligations); Product Branding; Advertising and Selling Skills; and Public Speech and Professional Appearance.

- *Marketing.* Through grantees Sabor and Mundësia, AKT supported 25 women business owners from northern municipalities with branding, labelling and packaging for their products, including jars, plastic containers, newly designed labels, business cards, paper bags, and logo development. The business owners participated in a four-part series on marketing products and organizing targeted marketing campaigns.

- *Production and sales.* This four-part training was delivered to 15 women. Theoretical training was delivered over the course of two days at the Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC). Participants then spent one day at the company Sofra, a small family business located in Frashër/Svinjare, learning about the equipment used during food processing including duplicators, food sterilizers, mixers, cutters, and blenders for homemade products.
- *Financial Management.* Also at RCRC, 15 women learned how to prepare financial plans for their small businesses and how to pay income taxes.

As a capstone activity, Sabor and AKT staff facilitated a roundtable discussion with 15 minority women-owned businesses at RCRC in North Mitrovica/ë. They reflected on their experience in AKT activities, exchanged ideas in business collaboration, and discussed opportunities and challenges of the business environment in northern Kosovo.

AKT grantee Mundësia organized the Women's Entrepreneurship Day (WED) Conference in North Mitrovica/ë, to mark the international day of women-owned businesses. AKT Prime's program director welcomed the participants and pledged continued AKT support to women-owned businesses in northern Kosovo. Two panel discussions were organized to discuss the empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The first panel discussion, Women in Entrepreneurship: Starting, Growing and Leading New Ventures, included panelists Adriana Hoxhic from North Mitrovica/ë's Administration Office, Katarina Adžančić from the Kosovo Tax Administration, North Mitrovica/ë, and Mihone Kerolli, a lecturer at the International Business College Mitrovica. The second panel discussed about Women in Business: Networking, Negotiating and Bridging the Gender Gap, included panelists AKT US Program Director Amy Denkenberger, Agnesa Shipoli, a woman business-owner from South Mitrovica/ë, Olga Ilić, a woman business-owner from North Mitrovica/ë, Rrustem Abiti from the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, and Jelena Džokić, a North Mitrovica/ë UNDP Advisor. This conference was organized in cooperation with AKT grantee Mundësia.

Also with Mundësia, AKT Prime organized two meetings with 20 multi-ethnic women-owned businesses to establish the Multi-ethnic Women Entrepreneurs' Network in North Mitrovica/ë. Participants generated ideas on how the established network can assist businesses to grow and link with donors, investors and markets. Representatives of the network were elected and all documents were submitted to the Ministry of Public Administration for registration. Members of this network include 25 businesses of all ethnic communities in Kosovo from the four northern municipalities and South Mitrovica. As a first official activity, AKT supported their participation at the General International Fair Prishtina 2016 organized by the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC). The Multi-ethnic Network of Women Entrepreneurs from Mitrovica Region formally registered at the Ministry of Public Administration's Department of Registration and Liaison of NGOs. AKT will continue to support organizational development and networking of the Network in year three.

AKT Prime hosted representatives of the U.S. Embassy to Kosovo in North Mitrovica/ë to meet with four women-owned business beneficiaries from northern municipalities. Participating businesses informed the Embassy representative about challenges and opportunities that women business-owners face in northern municipalities. The U.S. Embassy to Kosovo expressed their support to women business owners and assured them that U.S. government will continue supporting vulnerable minority communities.

In an effort to leverage resources to assist women entrepreneurs and business owners, the

business development staff participated in a coordination meeting on women's economic empowerment organized by the EMPOWER Private Sector program. Participants identified common activities and discussed the best ways to share information as the initial step coordinate current and future activities. Discussion topics included training opportunities, awareness raising actions, identification of the needs of women entrepreneurs, employment, and financial and networking support for women entrepreneurs. The coordination meetings on women and economic growth issues continue on a bi-monthly basis.

Four women business owners from among the businesses that we have supported in the north participated in a discussion with the U.S. Ambassador, the Honorable Greg Delawie, and USAID Kosovo Mission Director James Hope to discuss their successes, challenges, and the business environment in northern Kosovo. Both the U.S. Ambassador and Mission Director expressed their support to women business owners and assured them that USG will continue supporting vulnerable minority communities.

Project Intermediate Result 3: Increase efficiency and capacity of target municipal administrations to respond to the needs of all their citizens

As a central approach of the program, AKT supported improved collaboration between central and local governments by coordinating all program activities with relevant ministries: MLGA, MF, and MOCR. For example, AKT engaged MLGA in building the capacity of the MOCR to protect the interests of communities and returnees more effectively; the MF in expanding knowledge on public funds and the project management cycle, and introducing overall policies on municipal own source revenues (OSR) and property tax to the four municipalities in the north; and brought together the Ministry of Communities and Returns (MCR) and the Assembly of Kosovo with all MOCR heads in Kosovo to discuss methods to improve their cooperation.

3.1 Enhance capacity of municipal administrations for strategic planning and to deliver and oversee quality service

AKT Prime finalized customized Capacity Development Plans (CDP) for 16 partner municipalities and conducted a number of trainings, workshops, and informational exchanges among municipalities to strengthen their capacity to deliver efficient and effective services that meet the needs of their citizens. AKT Prime also completed 10 Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAP), with an additional four SIAPs currently under development and three projects being implemented under the leadership of 14 working group members. A total of 781 municipal officials attended AKT Prime's capacity building events during year two. In sum, 125 municipal officials were involved in SIAP development and 6,770 beneficiaries were positively impacted with improved services via SIAP projects.

The demand for municipalities to provide more efficient services to their citizens is constantly increasing, and there is ever-present pressure for municipalities to further develop their internal capacities and improve their performance. In September 2014, AKT assisted municipal officials in conducting a self-assessment in the program's 16 partner municipalities. The purpose of the self-assessments was to gather new information about existing needs in six areas of the local governance: (1) leadership and management; (2) municipal administration; (3) municipal assemblies; (4) citizen participation; (5) service delivery; and (6) local economic development. To help partner municipalities guide their human and institutional capacity development initiatives,

AKT (in coordination with the MLGA Department of Regional Cooperation and Development and Department for Municipal Performance and Transparency) facilitated preparation of customized Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) for the 16 partner municipalities. These plans, finalized in May 2015, incorporate findings of the municipal self-assessment, as well as the Ministry of Local Government Administration's (MLGA) Report on the Functioning of Kosovo Municipalities and General Audit Report. In addition, the CDPs envision/propose more than 200 interventions related to capacity building in the 16 partner municipalities. AKT supported translation of the plans into three languages (Albanian, Serbian, and English) and



their presentation to mayors and municipal leadership, who approved the CDPs.

Across municipalities, capacity assessments revealed several common, priority challenges:

- *Human resource capacity and human resource practices, tools, and systems.* Weak human resource capacities, large administration size, performance-based incentives, employment record-keeping, and lack of educational standards and appropriate skill sets are all challenges that partner municipalities face.
- *Municipal procurement system.* Although all municipalities in Kosovo are obliged to comply with existing legislation and internal municipal regulations on public procurement, assessments of partner municipalities showed that inefficient expenditure of public funds and instances of corrupt practices still occur.
- *Sound internal control environment.* Municipal governments in Kosovo have weak systems of controls and have difficulties understanding the importance of internal auditing for ensuring transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness in municipal operations.
- *Financial management systems.* Municipalities are striving to establish sound financial management systems to address challenges related to adequate planning and the efficient execution of their municipal budgets, but many have limited capacity to execute the planned budget and limited ability to identify and design projects that respond to citizens' needs.
- *Municipal decision-making processes.* The extent to which municipal assemblies are fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations to set policies, adopt regulations, oversee municipal administration, and represent the interests of their constituencies is not yet at a satisfactory level.
- *Innovative municipal service delivery model.* Although the donor community has provided much support to improve the quality and efficiency of the municipal administrative and public services, key challenges to physical and technological infrastructure remain, which inhibit the ability of municipal governments to reduce the number of procedures and decrease response times.

AKT Prime prepared a summary report on the major challenges facing AKT's 16 partner municipalities. After approval from USAID, the report was distributed to stakeholders and other donors. The assessments and CDPs are maintained by each municipality. Avni Sahiti, Director of MLGA's Department for Municipal Performance and Transparency expressed high appreciation for the process of preparing the CDPs and said that this activity fully aligns with MLGA's plans and objectives.

While the activities included in each CDP are too extensive for comprehensive AKT support, CDP priorities are integrated with the activities that AKT is performing with municipalities.

In year two, AKT conducted the following capacity building seminars, workshops, roundtables, and trainings:

- *Seminar on Inter-Municipal Cooperation.* AKT supported counterparts in AKT-LS to conduct a "Seminar on Inter-Municipal Cooperation." The seminar, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), gathered together 12 municipal legal officers and municipal EU integration officers working in

the AKT partner municipalities to discuss inter-municipal cooperation. During the seminar, AKT Prime staff conducted a presentation on best practices, challenges, and potential for inter-municipal cooperation in the European countries.

- *The Role of Local Government in the Process of European Integration.* In an effort to help southern partner municipalities address their weaknesses and familiarize northern municipalities with the Kosovo legal framework, AKT staff collaborated with the MLGA to conduct a workshop entitled “The Role of Local Government in the Process of European Integration.” The workshop brought together 25 Municipal Assembly Chairs, Municipal Assembly Deputy Chairpersons for Communities, and Municipal Officials for European Integration, including senior officials of the MLGA’s Department of European Integration Development. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the roles and responsibilities of municipalities (Assemblies and Administration) in the process of European integration. During the workshop, participants familiarized themselves with the process, the role of municipalities, and EU cooperation with the government to meet the criteria of *Acquis Communautaire*.
- *Municipal Budget and Public Funds: Planning, Management, and Execution.* AKT staff conducted a workshop entitled “Municipal Budget and Public Funds: Planning, Management, and Execution.” The workshop brought together Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons for Communities in the Municipal Assemblies from seven partner municipalities⁴ for knowledge-sharing discussions. This was the latest in a series of workshops designed to empower the MOCRs in AKT partner municipalities.
- *Introduction to Municipal Socio-Economic Development Strategy and Plan Models.* In close coordination with the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), AKT conducted a two-day workshop on the municipal socio-economic development strategy and plan for all municipalities in Kosovo. The workshop brought together 36 representatives from 24 municipalities (including 10 AKT partner municipalities) to discuss strategic planning for socio-economic development at the local governance level. During the workshop, MLGA representatives presented a model municipal strategy for socio-economic development, while AKT Prime introduced the SIAP methodology as a tool for municipalities to develop these strategies. AKT offered support in assembling working groups in partner municipalities, to include community forum members and businesses. During the workshop, a majority of the municipalities requested technical support in strategy development from both MLGA and AKT. MLGA has since assessed the status of existing economic development strategies across all municipalities and developed a list of those strategies that meet the socio-economic development plan model and those that require additional work or need to be created from scratch.

Additionally, AKT Prime facilitated a meeting with MLGA and AKT Local Solutions (AKT LS). AKT Prime will support AKT LS to assist selected municipalities to develop their socio-economic development plans in coordination with MLGA. This activity aligns with the economic development planning focus of the AKT LS cooperative agreement and supports AKT Prime’s work with AKT LS under Objective 4.

- *Publication of Municipal Acts in Official Languages on Municipal Web Portals.*

⁴ Pejë/Peć, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Istog/Istok and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë

Section 3.4 below includes a complete description of related activities.

- *Certifications of municipal officials in Zubin Potok for the Public Internal Financial Control System.* A complete description of related activities is detailed below.
- *Roundtable on the Importance of Women’s Participation in Employment and Management in Public Institutions.* The purpose of this roundtable was to gather together municipal gender officers, municipal human rights officers, and chiefs of personnel to identify challenges and list recommendations for higher participation of women and non-majority communities in employment and management in public institutions.
- *Importance of Public Participation in the Municipal Decision-Making Process.* AKT Prime conducted four roundtables on citizen participation in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Obiliq/Obilić, Istog/Istok and Gjilan/Gnjilane.
- *Roundtable on SIAPs: Review of Progress, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps.* A complete description of related activities is detailed below.



AKT Prime revisited the

SIAP E-kiosk Project in Vushtri/Vuçitrn

During the reporting period, AKT Prime conducted individual meetings with partner municipalities to identify projects compatible to their CDPs. With the support of AKT, four partner municipalities (Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh and Ranilug/Ranillug) identified, developed, and submitted project proposals to complement other activities AKT has implemented with municipal departments, specifically procurement (with cost-share) of information technology equipment to improve department performance. Departments included the Municipal Office for Communities and Returns (MOCR), Municipal Public Information Office, Municipal Youth Department, Gender Office, Municipal Urbanism and Geodesy Department. To ensure a focus on innovative solutions, municipalities to discuss alternative and even more innovative capacity improvements for potential AKT support.

Pejë/Peć, Vushtri/Vuçitrn, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë have identified and developed project applications for e-kiosks. The e-kiosks will bring municipal administrative services closer to citizens and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Civil Registration Office in the municipality. At present, Pristina, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë are the only municipalities in Kosovo that use e-kiosks to deliver civil registration services. Due to the complexity of the project idea, AKT Prime worked with the Information Society Agency within the Ministry of Public Administration to obtain their commitment to support the e-kiosks and develop technical specifications. The mandate of this Agency is to ensure Kosovo’s e-Governance Strategy is implemented, to allow usage of e-governance tools in public institutions and public spaces, and to prevent possible violations of the law on protection of personal data. After holding coordination meetings with agency staff, AKT Prime received a professional opinion



SIAP E-kiosk Project in Pejë/Peć

and comments from the executive director of the Information Society Agency within the Ministry of Public Administration on specifications for the e-kiosks. AKT Prime also facilitated discussions between IT specialists of the respective municipalities and the agency on the technical specifications. AKT Prime has proceeded with procurement of e-kiosks for Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Pejë/Peć, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë. AKT continues to assist Klokot/Klllokot, Parteš/Partesh, and Ranilug/Ranillug municipalities to identify small procurements that will enable them to realize elements of their CDPs.



Workshop on Drafting Mid-Term Budget Framework, Zvečan/Zveçan

AKT continued to provide robust assistance to municipal officials in northern Kosovo. The director of the Department for Municipal Budgets in the Ministry of Finance (MF) approached AKT staff with a request to facilitate the very challenging process of preparing the fiscal year 2016 budgets for the four municipalities in the north. The director specifically requested the program’s support in reaching out to northern officials and raising awareness among them regarding the upcoming FY2016 budget preparation process, in general, and the development of a

mid-term budget framework, in particular. The program conducted a seminar with finance officers in the four northern municipalities to identify existing challenges in the FY2016 budget preparation process, and provide recommendations and guidelines for developing a mid-term budget framework and preparing annual budgets.

The mayors of Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan requested AKT Prime’s assistance in drafting their mid-term budget framework. In response to this request, AKT staff in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the USAID Partnership for Development (PfD) program conducted the workshop “Drafting Municipal Mid-Term Budget Frameworks for Zvečan/Zveçan and Zubin Potok Municipalities.” The workshop was held in the northern municipality of Zvečan/Zveçan and brought together 15 municipal officials from Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, and senior representatives of the Ministry. The participants received clear guidance on legal budget requirements, budget calendar, public budget hearing requirements, and other instructions relevant for the development of a mid-term budget framework. As result of the workshop, municipal representatives developed initial draft mid-term budget frameworks.

As part of customized support on the provision of basic legal counsel in effective municipal administration in northern municipalities, AKT Prime, in cooperation with USAID’s Municipal Advisor for northern municipalities, provided guidance on the municipal budget preparation process for 2016 and the MLGA Performance Management System for Municipal Services. AKT



SIAP Workshop North Mitrovica and Leposaviq/Leposaviq

Prime provided a set of documents, including the Budget Circular 2016/02 for municipalities, MLGA Regulation Nr. 02/2013 for Performance Management System of Municipal Services, Municipal Service Performance Management System Handbook, and Handbook for Local Governments - SIAP methodology and applicable legislation, which the municipalities may take into consideration while performing their duties in the future.

The chief of staff for Leposavić/Leposaviq municipality requested advice on Kosovo procedures for allocating subsidies to citizens, organizations, and associations. In response, AKT Prime specialists provided guidance on the matter. Moreover, the AKT staff provided a set of documents⁵ and applicable legislation that the municipality of Leposavić/Leposaviq will need to consider, and offered support in the preparation of municipal regulation on subsidies that could be submitted to Municipal Assembly for approval.

In an effort to provide basic training in effective municipal administration in the northern municipalities, AKT Prime continued to facilitate training modules in the Kosovo Treasury for a group of nine municipal authorities from the northern municipality of Zubin Potok on the Public Internal Financial Control System. As a result, the following municipal authorities from Zubin Potok were certified:

- Officer for commitment;
- Procurement officer;
- Officer for receiving goods;
- Officer for expense;
- Certification/approval officer;
- Officer for assets;
- Officer for revenues;
- Officer for reporting; and
- Officer for allocation.

These municipal employees are now authorized/certified to perform their duties and responsibilities related to the Public Internal Financial Control System (PIFCS). The PIFCS software and computers will be delivered and installed in the Zubin Potok municipal administrative building in the forthcoming period, and AKT Prime is working with USAID's Northern Advisors and MLGA and MF to facilitate this process. AKT Prime, in coordination with USAID's Northern Advisors, is encouraging the mayors of Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zvečan/Zveçan to nominate individuals and commit to the same certification process.

AKT Prime continued to provide legal counsel to northern municipalities on Kosovo's legal framework on an ad hoc basis. This quarter, the Mayor of Leposavić/Leposaviq requested guidance and advice on social housing and duties and responsibilities of local governments (operating under the Kosovo legal framework) related to housing financing

⁵ MF's Administrative Instruction No.01/2015 Use of Fiscal Electronic Devices and Systems; MF's Regulation no.03/2014 Allocation of Funds; MF's AI no. 08/2005 Economic Classification of Expenditures; MF's Financial Rule no. 01/2013 Public Funds Expenditure; Law no.2008-03-L048 on Public Financial Management and Municipal Accountability; and Regulation on Municipal Subsidies in the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

programs. Consequently, the project provided a set of model documents and relevant legal and sub-legal acts on this issue.



SIAP Working Group Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut and Leposavić/Leposaviq

This quarter, AKT staff continued to support partner municipalities in improving their strategic planning and service delivery. AKT met with municipal leadership to generate interest and buy-in for the Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) methodology, provided introductory and follow-up workshops with working group members to produce SIAPs, delivered one-on-one assistance to SIAP working groups during finalization, and facilitated presentations and discussions with municipal leadership during the approval process. AKT provided assistance in year two to SIAP working groups in Gjilan/Gnjilane,

Gračanica/Gračanicë, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Klokot/Kllokot, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Obiliq/Obilić, Parteš/Partesh, Pejë/Peć, Ranilug/Ranillug, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Vushtri/Vuçitrn, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan/Zvečan. In Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut and Leposavić/Leposaviq, AKT worked steadily with municipal leadership to appoint working group members.

As of the end of project year two, the status of SIAPs across AKT's 16 partner municipalities is as follows:

Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs)			
#	Municipality	Selected Service	Status
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Preschool Education	Under development
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Public Lighting	Finalized and approved by municipality
3	Istog/Istok	Public Lighting	Under development
4	Klinë/Klina	Public Lighting, Waste Management	Finalized and approved by municipality
5	Klokot/Kllokot	Primary Healthcare	Finalized and approved by municipality
6	Leposavić/Leposaviq	Healthcare	Service selected and working group members being identified
7	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Public Lighting	Finalized and approved by municipality
8	Obiliq/Obilić	Public Lighting	Finalized and approved by municipality
9	Parteš/Partesh	Energy Efficiency	Finalized and approved by municipality
10	Pejë/Peć	E-services	Under development
11	Ranilug/Ranillug	Culture	Finalized and approved by municipality
12	Severna Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut	University Education	Service selected and working group members being identified
13	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Energy Efficiency	Finalized and approved by municipality

Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAPs)			
14	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Traffic Mobility	Under development
15	Zubin Potok	Energy Efficiency	Finalized and approved by municipality
16	Zvečan/Zveçan	Energy Efficiency	Finalized and approved by municipality

AKT delivered the following trainings, workshops, and roundtables with municipalities on SIAP development, implementation, and lessons learned:

- AKT staff conducted a joint introductory workshop with 15 members of the three working groups from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Gračanica/Graçanicë, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and guided them through major steps of the SIAP development process: (1) situational analysis; (2) defining performance indicators; (3) data collection; (4) setting objectives; (5) action planning; and (6) monitoring and reporting. The SIAP working group members drafted templates for SIAPs on Public Lighting and Energy Efficiency, and defined performance indicators for selected services.
- AKT conducted a joint introductory workshop with 19 members of three working groups from Ranilug/Ranillug, Parteš/Partesh, and Klokot/Kllokot. The working groups consist of municipal experts, external experts, community representatives, and (in the case of Ranilug/Ranillug) members of Informal Group of Women, Local Councils and Municipal Youth Council. In the workshop, AKT guided participants through the major steps of the SIAP development process. The SIAP working group members drafted templates for SIAPs on culture (Ranilug/Ranillug), energy efficiency (Parteš/Partesh) and primary healthcare (Klokot/Kllokot).
- AKT Prime conducted two separate introductory workshops, in the same format as those described above, to introduce the SIAP methodology to Gjilan/Gnjilane, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Pejë/Peć and Istog/Istok municipalities. Both workshops gathered together 37 participants, who received clear guidance on major steps in developing SIAPs for selected services.
- AKT Prime, in collaboration with AKT LS, conducted a follow-up workshop with the Zvečan/Zveçan and Zubin Potok working groups. In the workshop, the coordinators of SIAP working groups presented data that they had collected in the field. The collected data showed roughly how much energy was consumed by public institutions (administration, health, and education) as well as existing public lighting in Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan. The collected data was then jointly reviewed, analyzed, and incorporated into draft SIAPs on Energy Efficiency.
- AKT Prime conducted a follow up workshop with four partner municipalities: Gjilan/Gnjilane (preschool education), Vushtrri/Vučitrn (traffic mobility), Istog/Istok (public lighting) and Pejë/Peć (e-services). In the workshop, AKT provided guidance to 21 members of the four working groups on next steps in development of their SIAPs.
- AKT hosted a roundtable with 26 representatives of SIAP working groups that completed their SIAPs (Klinë/Klina, Obiliq/Obilić, Zubin Potok, Klokot/Kllokot, Ranilug/Ranillug, Gračanica/Graçanicë, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) and were in the final stage of drafting (Zvečan/Zveçan, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, and Parteš/Partesh). Those who had completed their SIAPs presented them, shared their experience and challenges, and further familiarized themselves with the type of project that AKT Prime and AKT LS could finance. Those who were still drafting their SIAPs asked questions

and drew from the examples and lessons learned from others. During this workshop, the participants also shared their desire to initiate exchange visits among municipalities that apply the SIAP methodology in improving municipal services and share SIAP success stories with all of Kosovo's municipalities by publishing a SIAP Handbook.

- With AKT support, the working group coordinators in Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan, Parteš/Partesh and Štrpce/Shtërpçë submitted their SIAPs for energy efficiency to the Kosovo Agency for Energy Efficiency (KAEE) within the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and formally requested their opinion and comments. KAEE provided minor comments, considered the four SIAPs as very qualitative documents, and recognized efforts of AKT Prime to support the four Kosovo's municipalities in fulfilling their legal obligations in terms of energy efficiency strategic planning. Subsequently, AKT hosted a roundtable with MLGA's Department for Regional Development, KAEE and SIAP working group members from Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan, Parteš/Partesh and Štrpce/Shtërpçë to strengthen vertical communication between central and local governments, and to explore opportunities for implementing a priority project envisioned in the SIAPs for energy efficiency.

While AKT Prime leads and LS supports AKT assistance to the development of SIAPs across all 16 municipalities, AKT Prime and LS split their support to implementation of SIAP projects. The two USAID-funded projects came together to divide responsibilities for among partner municipalities as follows:

SIAP Projects	
AKT Prime (10)	AKT LS (8)
Gjilan/Gnjilane	Klinë/Klina
Gračanica/Graçanicë	Klokot/Kllokot
Istog/Istok	Obiliq/Obilic
Klinë/Klina	Partes/Partesh
Leposavic/Leposaviq	Pejë/Pec
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Ranilug/Ranillug
Obiliq/Obilic	Štrpce/Shtërpçë
Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovicë Veriore	Vushtri/Vucitrn
Zubin Potok	
Zvečan/Zveçan	

To date, AKT Prime has supported completion of three SIAP projects. While a list is included below, details on the nature of each project, stakeholders, timing, contractors and their performance, as well as photos can be found in Annex F.

SIAP Completed Projects			
#	Municipality	Location	Project
1	Gračanica/Graçanicë	Gračanica/Graçanicë	5,880 meters of public lighting in the city center and neighboring streets
2	Klinë/Klina	Klinë/Klina and villages	3,355 meters of public lighting along several roads
3	Obiliq/Obilic	Obiliq/Obilic and Milloshevë/Miloševo village	1,200 meters of public lighting along two streets

In addition, AKT initiated several additional SIAP projects, as follows:

- *Novo Brdo/Novobërdë*: 3,850 meters of new public lighting in the villages of Prekoc/Prekovce, Stanishor/Stanisor, and Koretiste/Koretishte, affecting 1,845 people. These rural and remote villages have been without street lights for the past 40 years. Expected results: increased safety and security; ensured free movement of citizens

during the night time-specifically for the children who attend classes in late afternoon school sessions; increased public lighting quality through LED technology; increased coverage of public lighting from the current 9 percent; and increased citizen satisfaction with services and performance of the municipality. The Mayor has committed a 22 percent cost-share to this project.

- *Zubin Potok*: Equip the municipal building and cultural center with a heating boiler to permit efficient heating of the assembly hall and entire cultural center premises. On an annual basis, between 12,000 and 15,000 people visit the building. Expected results: increased cultural events in winter months and opportunities to bring multi-ethnic communities together; removal of temperature-related hindrances to assembly performance; lowered municipal electricity consumption bill; and increased citizen satisfaction with services and performance of the municipality.
- *Zubin Potok*: Equip the Municipal Assembly Hall with translation equipment to enable improved participation of minority populations in the public sector and compliance with the Law on Use of Languages. The Mayor has committed a 22 percent cost-share to this project.
- *Zvečan/Zveçan*: Equip the municipality with 80 large metal containers and households in four villages (Banjskë/Banjska, Rudar i Madh /Veliko Rudare, Korilë/Korilje and Lipa) with 1,160 plastic trash bins. Implementation of this project will deter illegal dumping and will enable citizens to properly dispose of their waste. Furthermore, implementation of this project will reduce citizens' dissatisfaction with the current situation where waste dumps have been created due to lack of containers. As a non-majority municipality, this project will also demonstrate commitment of the municipal administration to provide equal access to services to all citizens, such as those from Lipa, which has a majority population. Household containers will be distributed to 1,160 families and 80 larger containers will be placed in public spaces. The project will impact 5,400 people. The Mayor has committed a 15 percent cost-share to this project.
- *Istog/Istok*: 3,700 meters of new public lighting in Istog/Istok and village Sinajë/Sinaje, affecting 1,040 people. Expected results: increased safety and security; ensured free movement of citizens during the night time; increased public lighting quality through LED technology; increased coverage of public lighting; and increased citizen satisfaction with services and performance of the municipality. The Mayor has committed a 20 percent cost-share to this project.

3.2 Support municipalities to increase own-source revenue (OSR) for municipal services and capital projects

AKT hosted a forum on OSR and property tax registration in June 2015 in Zvečan/Zveçan. The forum had two main goals. First, the four northern municipalities do not yet implement Kosovo's legal framework on local government finances and are hesitant to impose taxation on citizens. Second, the MF faces challenges while trying to meet expectations of the four municipalities in the north in regard to funds that the GoK needs to allocate to these municipalities. To address



OSR Workshop

some of these issues at least in part, AKT staff organized the OSR Forum which brought together mayors, municipal assembly chairpersons, finance directors of the four municipalities, and senior MF's authorities (Director of Department for Municipal Budget and Director of Property Tax Department) to discuss (1) challenges and implementation of the FY2015 budget, (2) preparation of FY2016 budget, and (3) overall policy concerning municipal OSR and property tax registration. More than 30 senior municipal authorities attended this event. The mayors and assembly chairpersons presented major problems that municipalities in the north face while implementing the Kosovo legal framework on local government finances. Some of the issues raised by municipalities in the forum include:

- Funds planned by MF for FY2016 for municipalities in the north are not sufficient.
- The GoK (Grants Commission) takes into consideration the number of the citizens based on a census conducted in 2011, which is disputable because the Serb community in the north boycotted the census.



- Some municipalities in the north have not yet given compensation to members of the Municipal Assemblies and Municipal Assembly's Committees for the work they performed in the past.
- Implementation of the FY2015 budget in northern municipalities is questioned due to existing issues with the Kosovo Treasury, municipal procurement, and implementation of capital investments and preparation of master projects.

All of the participants appealed to MF and the AKT program to continue conducting follow-up sessions on preparation of the 2016 municipal budgets with municipalities in the north.

AKT conducted routine quarterly analysis on property tax collection rates, comparing year on year to assess trends and identify areas for improvement. A majority of AKT's partner municipalities experienced a marked downward trend in property tax collection, due largely to the GOK's decision to write-off public debts of all natural and legal persons (Procedures for Forgiveness of Public Debts and Law No. 05/L-043 on Forgiveness of Public Debts). In addition, the four municipalities in the north have not yet introduced property tax policies under Kosovo legal framework.

To help municipalities better understand how to implement the Law on Forgiveness of Public Debts, AKT Prime, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance's Property Tax Department, conducted a seminar "Procedures on Forgiveness of Public Debts." The workshop gathered together approximately 25 property tax managers, property tax data base operators, and budget and finance directors from AKT partner municipalities to discuss recently-adopted procedures that municipalities must follow while writing off the public debts. Further, AKT supported MLGA to host a conference entitled *Analysis of the Revenues of the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo* to heighten awareness among stakeholders of property tax trends and opportunities for improvement. The Minister of Local Self-Government, Deputy Minister of Finance, representatives from USAID/Kosovo, and representatives of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, local governments, media and civil society organizations were in

attendance. The aim of the conference was to present an overview of revenue trends in Kosovo’s municipalities for the period 2010-2014 and possibilities for revenue enhancement in cooperation with the stakeholders involved in the process. AKT Prime is also supporting MLGA in the publication of their report on Own Source Revenue 2010-2014.

In order to improve tax collection and fairness of application of tax in 12 of AKT’s partner municipalities, AKT Prime commenced a series of trainings targeting municipal property tax offices. The trainings were designed in close cooperation with the Kosovo Property Tax Department (Ministry of Finance) and specific to the needs of municipal property tax officers. On-the-job training was delivered onsite with each individual Tax Office, with up to four employees participating in each location.

Kosovo’s Property Tax System (KPTS) is a Market Value Based Property Tax System, a tax structure that is regarded highly worldwide. The biggest disadvantage of this kind of Property Tax is that it is quite a challenge to follow the property market value. The project aimed to address two key KPTS implementation challenges (1) the property register, and (2) the financial register:

- Train Municipal Property Tax Office staff on the process of registering property and taxpayer information, including (a) change of the building / building unit; (b) registering co-ownership; (c) improving the primary residential attribute; and (d) improving the property category “Unfinished”, and improving the attribute “Quality of Construction”.
- Train Municipal Property Tax Office staff on financial calculations, analyses and reporting, including (a) manual calculation of interest for previous tax years; and (b) usage of system’s reports for reporting, auditing, action taken, and planning of the tax rates for future tax years.

The Property Register contains all information regarding taxpayers that are liable for the tax as well as all property information, including important value factors that determine the Taxable Value of the Property. The main attributes covered in the training include:

- *Taxpayers benefiting from Primary Residential Deduction more than one time.* According to the Property Tax Law of Kosovo, residential properties that are used by taxpayer for living on them are officially called Primary Residential Property. For these kind of properties, taxpayers benefit from a €10,000.00 deduction in the taxable value of the property. The legal rule is that one taxpayer can benefit from the deduction only for one property, so if s/he has more than one residential property, s/he has to choose only one as primary residence. However, in the property register, there are many cases in which the same taxpayer receives the deduction benefits more than once. This data error has direct impact in the tax assessed value as well as in the fairness of the property tax. The following table shows the extent of the problem in the 12 AKT partner municipalities.

Municipality	Number of cases
Gjilan/Gnjilane	2,261
Gračanica/Gračanicë	143
Istog/Istok	783
Klinë/Klina	339
Klokot/Kllokot	31
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	86
Obiliq/Obilić	181

Municipality	Number of cases
Parteš/Partesh	13
Pejë/Peć	1,978
Ranilug/Ranilluk	112
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	69
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	482
TOTAL	6,478

Municipal officers were trained on how to identify and solve these cases, and also have been trained on how to make sure to prevent it from happening in the future. Property Tax Department Officers were also reminded that this problem should be fixed in the software. However, in the interim, municipal officers now maintain the knowledge of how to address this challenge until an IT solution is implemented.

- *Properties with Category Unfinished.* One of the property value categories is “Unfinished”. All properties registered as unfinished will be taxed only at 40 percent of the value. This is a serious benefit and should be only being applied in properties that are unfinished in terms of construction. Municipal officers are aware of how to differentiate these properties, but lack of knowledge of how to identify and treat the cases in the IT system. The following table shows how many unfinished properties are currently registered in targeted municipalities:

Municipality	Number of Cases
Gjilan/Gnjilane	1,802
Gračanica/Graçanicë	53
Istog/Istok	1,212
Klinë/Klina	1,377
Novo Berdo/Novobërdë	86
Obiliq/Obilić	282
Parteš/Partesh	1
Pejë/Pec	332
Ranilug/Ranillug	168
Štrpce /Shtërpçë	1
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	35
TOTAL	5,349

Municipal officers are trained how to identify and treat these cases. Because the Property Register contains pictures and geographical location for more than 80 percent of properties in Kosovo, municipal officers were trained on how to use this extra information to easily check for buildings that no longer qualify as “Unfinished”.

- *Quality of Construction.* The formula for calculating the value of the property in KPTS is simple: area is multiplied with value per square meter. However, this formula is too simplistic. For example, if there are two houses with same area in the same location (close to each other) and one of the houses is very good quality while the second one is of very poor quality, they will be taxed the same. The solution is to enrich the formula of calculating the value of the property. A new element of the formula is introduced by Property Tax Department that is called Quality of Construction. After adding this element, the formula has become:

$$\text{Property Value} = \text{Area} * \text{Value per Square Meter} * \text{Quality of Construction}$$

Quality of construction is an extra coefficient that can increase or decrease the value of the property based on the quality of construction or better to say the current status of the building. This new formula is known as the “New Valuation Model”. Twelve municipalities that participated in the training do not use the new valuation model yet,

but have become familiar with it. These municipalities will face a challenging impact on the annual tax assessed value. The following table shows that except Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality, all the others will experience a negative impact on revenues:

Municipality	Tax Assessment with Old Valuation Model	Tax Assessment with New Valuation Model	Impact of new Valuation Model
Gjilan/Gnjilane	1,933,503.62	1,835,265.64	-5%
Klinë/Klina	338,315.13	328,024.72	-3%
Ranilug/Ranillug	41,593.35	37,701.32	-10%
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	261,629.44	265,004.48	1%
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	94,614.76	87,918.61	-8%
Istog/Istog/Istok	505,760.34	498,231.56	-2%
Vushtri/Vuçitri	745,925.12	719,455.73	-4%
Pejë/Peć	2,140,243.39	2,027,226.09	-6%
Obiliq/Obilić	387,921.36	359,976.52	-8%
Klokot/Kllokot	68,892.35	67,510.06	-2%
Parteš/Partesh	8,033.99	7,729.47	-4%
Gračanica/Graçanicë	561,744.39	558,791.81	-1%

- *Taxpayers with ownership 0%*. After the Taxable Value of the Property is assessed, the tax liability is spread out to each co-owner of the property based on their share of ownership. The most common cases are 100 percent ownership, or 50/50 percent ownership, but there are other cases where ownership percentages vary. In some of these cases, the Property Register indicates that taxpayers are associated with properties, but have ownership of 0 percent. In these cases, there is no impact on tax assessment, but the registers simply contain incorrect data. Municipal Tax Officers were trained on how to treat these cases. The following table shows how many cases are identified per municipality that need to be fixed:

Municipality	Number of cases
Gračanica/Graçanicë	10
Gjilan/Gnjilane	72
Istog/Istok	58
Klokot/Kllokot	7
Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	21
Obiliq/Obilić	9
Parteš/Partesh	7
Pejë/Peć	135
Ranilug/Ranillug	8
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	22
Vushtri/Vuçitri	69
TOTAL	418

- *Duplicate Registered Buildings*. Even though the property tax in Kosovo applies only to buildings, not the whole building is being taxed. Buildings are divided into building units, which represent the taxable units. For example, an apartment block is registered as one building, with 10 building units of apartment type. The Property Register also contains a lot of errors in this area, such as duplicates of the registered buildings (i.e. instead of registering one building with 10 building units, surveyors have registered 10 buildings, with each containing one apartment). Property Tax Officers have been trained to identify and fix these cases by using GIS provided by the Property Tax IT System.

The Property Tax System in Kosovo has a module that deals with property tax financial

information. The financial part is quite challenging due to business rules that demand the administration of Tax Assessment, Interest Assessment, Penalty Assessment as well as payments for all three tiers. Furthermore, the payment distribution for different tax years makes the process difficult. Complicating matters, the IT system was totally replaced in 2008, introducing completely new technology and centralization without significant training or support. The scale and scope of challenges associated with property tax financial administration is staggering. Further complicating matters is the implementation of the Law of Debt Forgiveness, which has extensive requirements for administration adds a further layer of complexity. The training addressed property tax financial administration including the following:

- *Manual calculation of assessed and paid interest.* Due to the complexity of the financial register, the IT system does not provide automatic calculation of assessed and paid interest for previous tax year debts. The most frequent requirement for calculating assessed and paid interest for previous years is when (a) a Tax Officer treats the Appeals from Taxpayers and (b) implementing the Law on Debt Forgiveness. Tax Officers have been trained how to manually perform the complex calculations of the assessed and paid interest for previous tax years.
- *Reporting and auditing.* The property tax IT system provides functionalities for reporting and auditing. Municipal Officers were trained how to exploit the functionalities that the IT system provides and in combination with Microsoft Excel to provide rich reporting and auditing results. During the implementation of the training, conducted in close cooperation with the Property Tax Department, two new functionalities have been developed that have distinct impact in the efficiency of reporting and analysis process: (1) Financial Balance Report; and (2) Property Register Report.
- *Analysis and planning.* Analysis and planning for future tax years represent one of the most important business processes in the property tax system in Kosovo, especially considering that property tax is one of the most important sources of revenue for municipal budgets. Two main tiers of the analysis and planning are:
 1. Planning of the Tax Rates for the next tax years; and
 2. Planning the survey process for registration of new properties, as well as resurveying the registered properties.

Property Tax Officers have been trained on how to effectively utilize IT system functionalities to be able to produce more accurate and richer analysis and predictions regarding the property tax for previous years, current year and future years.

In keeping with AKT's regular coordination with the Swiss-funded Decentralisation and Municipal Support (DEMOS) project, DEMOS leadership confirmed that it will replicate this activity in its localities, extending impact beyond AKT's 16 partner municipalities.

3.3 Build Capacity of target Municipalities' Offices of Communities and Returns (MOCR)

AKT implemented an ambitious curriculum designed to empower MOCRs in partner municipalities. Grantee "Network of Peace Movement" continued to implement a project entitled "*Enhancing capacities of Municipal Assembly's committees for communities (MACC) and MOCR to advocate for minority communities' needs*" in four partner municipalities:

Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. Grantee ASD Group covered the remaining 12 municipalities with a number of trainings designed to strengthen the role of MOCRs and build the capacities of other municipal bodies to govern efficiently. Meanwhile, AKT staff delivered ad hoc assistance and promoted application of new skills via involvement of MOCR and MACC in AKT's community engagement activities and projects. In all, AKT delivered 17 trainings, workshops, and roundtables with 211 MOCR representatives, including the following:

- *Training on lobbying and advocacy for MOCR and MACC staff in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Ranilug/Ranillug.* The purpose of the training was to enhance the capacity of MOCRs and MACC to advocate for minority communities' needs. The training was conducted in Gjilan/Gnjilane and it gathered 20 participants, mainly heads of MOCRs, communities committees' chairs and deputy chairs, MOCR officers, members of the MACC, and municipal public information officers of targeted municipalities. This was an excellent opportunity for the participants to obtain broader knowledge about advocacy as well as techniques and methods that municipal staff could utilize to empower the MOCR and MACC in municipalities. In addition, our grantee NOPM accompanied MOCR staff to individual meetings with respective Mayors, Deputy Mayors, and Chiefs of Mayor's Cabinet to update them on plans and activities to contribute to increased visibility of MOCRs in municipal decision-making processes. Following meetings between MOCR staff and municipal leadership, most of the MOCR staff stated that they had not often been in the position to conduct "face-to-face" meetings with their Mayors.
- *Workshop on development of municipal budget and municipal revenues for MOCR and MACC in 16 partner municipalities.* The purpose of this workshop was to discuss existing challenges and possible tools that could be utilized to enhance MOCR and MACC's influence in the process of municipal budget development. The event brought together 20 representatives from MOCRs and MACCs, including representatives from three northern municipalities. The participants were able to find out more about Kosovo's financial legislative framework, mid-term budget framework, budget calendar, and opportunities in influencing budget planning process. In the workshop participants were coached on development of the MOCR budget that could serve as a model to partner MOCRs.
- *Workshop on drafting the 2015 action plans for MACC in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.* The purpose of this workshop was to familiarize MACC members with positive aspects of effective work planning that could improve the efficiency and performance of the MACC. The workshop gathered 15 representatives of MACC from Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, and Klokot/Kllokot who used this opportunity to prepare a first draft of their action plans. The participants also agreed upon the next steps aim at finalizing the action plans in a later stage. The MOCR head of Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality participated in this workshop as well.
- *Workshop on drafting the 2015 action plans for MOCR in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.* The purpose of this workshop was to familiarize MOCR staff with positive aspects of effective work planning that potentially could improve MOCR performance and influence over decision making process in the municipality. The workshop gathered 11 representatives of MOCRs from of Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, and Klokot/Kllokot who used this opportunity to prepare under our mentorship the first draft

of their action plans. The participants also agreed upon the next steps aimed at finalizing the action plans in a later phase.

- *Training on transparency, communication and citizens' outreach at the municipal level.* The purpose of this workshop was to expand knowledge of MOCR staff and MACC members in 12 partner municipalities on legal framework concerning municipal transparency, internal and external communication. Seventeen participants learned about practical communication tools and mechanism that might be used by MOCR in day-to-day work. The workshop paid special attention to the importance of deeper coordination of MOCR and MACC with the Public Information Office in partner municipalities.
- *Workshop on finalization of the 2015 MOCR and MACC action plans in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Ranilug/Ranillug.* The purpose of this workshop was to finalize action plans for MOCR and MACC, which were previously drafted with program support. In the workshop, 10 representatives of MOCR and MACC finalized 2015 action plans. The MOCR action plan envisions MOCR's SWOT analysis, anticipated activities during the year, outlines required budget for efficient performance, and reporting and communication measures. During the workshop, the participants had additional opportunities to present their work plans and get the feedback from their counterparts about the content of developed action plans.
- *Advocacy visits for inclusion of MOCR and MACC action plans in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Ranilug/Ranillug.* The primary aim of the visits was to advocate with municipal officials for inclusion of MOCR and MACC action plans in the agenda of MACC meetings. To familiarize municipal leadership with developed action plans of MOCR and MACC and ensure their support, AKT staff facilitated meetings with Municipal Assembly Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons for Communities, and Deputy Mayors for Communities in said municipalities.
- *Workshop on project cycle management for MOCR.* The workshop gathered 26 representatives of MOCRs to discuss legislative procedures of project management at the municipal level of governance. The participants were able to find out more about steps regarding identification of the projects, project prioritization, project design, budget planning and procurement, efficient coordination among municipal departments regarding priority project, project implementation, and monitoring and reporting following project implementation.
- *Workshop on project writing and advocacy.* This workshop was designed to strengthen capacities of MOCR staff and representatives of the MACC on writing projects related to non-majority issues, and designing and implementing effective advocacy campaigns to protect and promote communities' rights in the municipalities. The MOCR and MACC representatives of AKT partner municipalities had the opportunity to learn about practical steps of the advocacy, "problem tree", "SWOT" analysis, advocacy approaches and other detail of the advocacy. This was also an excellent opportunity for participants to share the experience among them regarding the advocacy and project writing.
- *Workshop on community rights, legal framework and responsible institutions for 16 partner municipalities.* The overall objective of the workshop was to acquaint MOCR heads with several applicable laws and provisions therein relevant for protection of the communities' rights. The workshop gathered 13 participants to discuss mechanisms

that could be used in monitoring local government institutions to ensure they are meeting legal requirements and obligations towards minority rights at the local level. The participants were excited to share experiences among themselves bringing different stories from their respective municipalities. As illustration of very lively discussion, a number of MOCR heads, for example, underlined the fact that there are tendencies to change ethnic makeup in some municipalities through massive construction of weekend houses that is usually followed by massive migration of a population (belonging to particular community) to that municipality. In the workshop, however, this particular issue was further clarified and MOCR heads understood that in such cases legislation strictly prohibits the new inhabitants to obtain a status of permanent residence, including entitlements, such as right to vote in the municipality.

- *Workshop on communication, citizens' participation and the role of civil society.* This workshop was designed for Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons for Communities in Municipal Assemblies. It gathered four Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons for Communities in partner municipalities to discuss how to ensure constructive engagement of local civil society organizations and ordinary citizens in the work of the Municipal Assembly. *Workshop on outreach activities in the field for MOCR, MACC and Public Information Office (PIO) in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Ranilug/Ranillug.* The purpose of this workshop was to further build capacities of MOCRs, MACCs, and PIOs on general principles of outreach activities that could have a positive impact over the communities and returnees in selected municipalities. The 14 attendees were coached to prioritize communities' needs but also to design and efficiently carry out outreach activities in their municipalities in order to address issues that occupy communities and returnees. They also received material that provides guidelines and step by step instructions concerning outreach activities, which municipal authorities could utilize in their future work.
- *Exchange of experience among MOCR & MACC in partner municipalities.* The AKT staff conducted six exchange visits with the MOCR operating in partner municipalities. The purpose of these visits was to learn how high performing MOCRs in Kosovo promote and protect communities and returnees' rights and interests. MOCR staff shared experiences and best practices learned in their day-to-day work. To ensure interaction and communication between majority and non-majority municipalities, particularly between municipal bodies that protect rights and interests of communities and returnees in Kosovo, the AKT staff offered an opportunity for small MOCRs to see large MOCRs in terms of the staff they employ or budget they have at their disposal; also, MOCRs that employ members of non-majority community in Kosovo paid a visit to MOCRs that employ members of majority community in Kosovo.
- *Conference "The effective representation of the communities' interests at the local and central level of the governance in Kosovo".* Based on meetings with the Minister of Return and Communities in the Government of Kosovo to discuss program activities designed to empower MOCRs in partner municipalities and discuss how the Ministry could contribute to this process. Staff also explored the possibility of organizing a national conference or forum to bring MOCR officers together with senior central government authorities to learn about mutual challenges, opportunities, and possibilities for collaboration. The minister welcomed the initiative and confirmed his participation in such a conference⁶. Consequently, the AKT staff has approached other

⁶ The AKT Prime work plan for year 1 envisioned this activity. However, Minister Municipal Development Staff was not able to organize the event as initially planned due to dismissal of the previous Minister for Communities

senior authorities dealing with community issues at the central level, such as the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) and the Assembly of Kosovo and the Presidency of Kosovo to ensure participation in the conference.

- *Conference “The effective representation of the communities’ interests at the local and central level of the governance in Kosovo”*. The conference, which was held in Pristina,

brought together 48 representatives of MOCRs in all 38 municipalities of Kosovo, Minister of Communities and Returns (Mr. Dalibor Jevtic), Chairperson of the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities in the Assembly of Kosovo (Ms. Jasmina Zivkovic), Advisor to the Minister of Local Self-Government (Mr. Zoran Moasilovic), and Political Advisor for Communities to the President of Kosovo (Mr. Dejan Cosic). The conference was widely covered by relevant media in Kosovo. The participants had a very lively discussion about common MOCR issues. The purpose of this conference was to (1) further promote relations between MOCRs, the Ministry of Communities and Returns, and other top central government authorities (2) learn



MOCR Conference

(3) identify approaches and new initiatives aimed at addressing returnees and communities’ issues more efficiently. The overall goal of the conference was to increase awareness on the MOCR’s role and community issues.

- *Workshop “The Role of the Municipal Assembly in Monitoring of Implementation of Municipal Decisions and Regulations.”* The aim of the workshop was to familiarize the municipal officials with the proactive role they could have and effective monitoring tools they could apply while carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Fourteen representatives from nine partner municipalities attended the workshop and among them were Deputy Municipal Assembly Chairpersons for Communities, head of MOCRs, Deputy Mayor for Communities, and Chairpersons for Communities Committees.

We look forward to continuing to encourage MOCR representatives to apply the skills that they developed over project year two as we engage them in our citizen engagement and economic development initiatives.

3.4 Strengthen mechanisms to promote transparency and community engagement

and Returns (Mr. Aleksandar Jablanovic).

Municipal government acts represent the legal framework in which municipalities and their entities operate. There is a constant need for municipalities across Kosovo to update and modernize municipal acts, as they have a direct impact over municipal performance and the ability of municipalities to responsibly serve the needs of their citizens. The publication of municipal government acts in official languages on municipal websites has proven to be an effective tool for maintaining transparency of Kosovo’s municipalities. Therefore, the MLGA measures the transparency of each municipality in Kosovo at the end of each year based on the percentage of published municipal acts on their website. However, municipalities often face challenges to publication of their municipal acts. In project year two, AKT promoted municipal transparency with support to improved communication between stakeholders on publication of municipal acts as well as direct support to municipal Public Information Offices to publish.

AKT Prime conducted a two-day workshop among representatives of AKT partner municipalities, the MLGA, and the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA). The workshop aimed to assist municipalities in further developing their capacity for full implementation of the laws and enhance municipal accountability and transparency. This was also an excellent opportunity for relevant authorities at the local level of governance to familiarize their counterparts at the central level about the challenges that municipalities cannot resolve without ministries’ support and assistance. Some of the recommendations and challenges that municipalities outlined during this two-day workshop include:



Transparency Workshop on Publication of Acts on Municipal Websites

- Line ministries should release guidance on how to structure and name the municipal acts in all municipalities because there are not presently unified standards.
- Municipal web portals and their structure can only be revised by line ministries. There is no adequate maintenance of the municipal web portals at the central level
- Municipalities are not able to upload large size documents due to inadequate maintenance of municipal web portals at the central level.
- A number of municipalities do not have capacity to provide translation of all municipal acts in official languages.

During the workshop, about 32 representatives of local and central government also explored possibilities for more efficient utilization of the existing Kosovo Information Technology System and better coordination and technical assistance among line ministries in the publication of municipal acts in official languages on municipal websites. Moreover, the MLGA, MPA and AKT Prime assisted those AKT-partner municipalities with low percentages of published acts to upload them at their websites and enhance their transparency

in a measurable way. MLGA committed to re-establish regular maintenance of municipal web portals.

Concurrent with those improvements, AKT Prime coordinated with the USAID/Kosovo Partnerships for Development (PFD) project to introduce municipalities to publishing municipal acts on the Official Gazette. The Official Gazette provides a less troublesome and more dependable platform, and municipalities are readily able to access legislation of other municipalities – to see what they are doing and ease burden for compliance with the Law on the Use of Languages. Legislation currently with Parliament would make municipal posting to Official Gazette a requirement. Municipalities follow the same business process for uploading as that they already follow for the Law on Expropriation. AKT Prime coordinated with PFD and mobilized partner municipalities to participate in the effort.

AKT also initiated a grant activity to improve autonomous, horizontal communication between majority and minority communities and local government and minority communities in 12 AKT partner municipalities. Major activities include (a) forming joint working groups consisting of municipal officials, members of village councils, and community representatives, (b) enabling working group members to improve responsible engagement with municipal officials on behalf of community priorities, including articulating priorities in a productive manner and in a format for municipal consideration, and (c) monitoring municipal decision-making, commitments, and implementation of priorities. More information about this activity are included under Objective 1 above.

Finally, AKT Prime met with Public Information Officers (PIOs) and municipal leadership in Klinë/Klina and Obiliq/Obilić to launch the development of municipal bulletins. AKT Prime and the PIOs discussed the effort, timeline, and project support and held an initial workshop that reviewed professional written communications, examples of municipal communications elsewhere, bulletin elements and messaging, and next steps for creation of bi-annual bulletins for these two municipalities.

3.5 Strengthen municipal capacity to manage government-to-government (G2G) awards

In project year two, AKT focused on enabling two municipalities selected by USAID to prepare for and manage G2G awards, while also working across partner municipalities to improve their ability to manage public funds and projects.

USAID launched a G2G program in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality and requested AKT staff support for the successful implementation of this program. AKT staff provided support to the Mayor's Office regarding technical preparations for the project and as result, the municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane finalized a project proposal/application form for the construction of a kindergarten in the Dardania neighborhood and submitted it to USAID/Kosovo for funding. Approved, AKT Prime staff and AKT LS Engineers together with USAID/Kosovo met regularly with the Mayor of Gjilan/Gnjilane and his staff to assemble the G2G project. AKT Prime facilitated preparation of the Environmental Report (ER) with Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Measures (EMMP) for the project. The ER was approved by the USAID Bureau Environmental Officer and the EMMP was attached to the Municipal Environmental Permit for the G2G project. AKT Prime assisted the municipality to develop a tender dossier. After a few rounds of comments from AKT Prime and revisions, the public tender was released, and after clarifications on the bill of quantities the tender was

re-announced. AKT Prime supported the municipality to conduct a site visit with potential bidders and assemble an evaluation committee, which selected a qualified bidder.

Late in project year two, USAID gave AKT the go-ahead to proceed with support to Pejë/Peć to receive and manage a G2G award. AKT staff met with the Mayor and his staff in Pejë/Peć to introduce USAID's G2G Program and inform them about USAID's decision to include the municipality in this programming.

Across AKT's partner municipalities, AKT is supporting improved public funds management, municipal procurement, project management, and transparency. AKT conducted a workshop on public funds and project management – trends, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The workshop brought together 14 project and procurement managers, including those working in the municipalities in the north, as well as senior officials of the MLGA's Department of Regional Cooperation and Development. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss criteria and conditions of allocation of public funds by MLGA and other ministries to local governments for the purpose of local economic development, creation of jobs and development of human resources. The MLGA authorities clarified what is expected from a municipal Procurement and Project Office once public funds are allocated to municipality. On the other hand, municipal authorities used the opportunity to familiarize MLGA with regular challenges and issues that they face and explored possibilities for better coordination with MLGA in order to overcome these challenges. The overall conclusion was that applicable legislation with respect to public procurement, project management, and construction has a number of gaps as it does not envision clear guidelines for local governments on selection criteria for contractors, vendors, or public service operators who implement capital projects in the municipalities (those with the lowest offer always win, inexpensive bids are usually refused by central Regulatory Commission for Public Procurement due to nonexistence of clear selection criteria, etc.).

Project Intermediate Result 4: Build the capacity of host country organizations by leveraging local, cross-ethnic leadership to implement program objectives



AKT LS and Prime conduct a joint workshop on preparing the AKT LS Year 2 Work Plan

At the end of the first year of AKT LS implementation, AKT Prime focused on assisting the LS team as they took stock of achievements against their work plan and next steps for activities shifting into Year 2 and work planning. AKT Prime met with the AKT LS COP to discuss each activity to date, prepare an activity-by-activity analysis, and provide suggestions on capturing opportunities to advance a number of activities before the end of Year 1.

AKT Prime also provided AKT LS with a confirmed list of LS deliverables and deadlines per the Cooperative Agreement and supported updates to the SharePoint site calendar to keep both teams aware. AKT Prime also facilitated and participated in a two-day work planning workshop wherein AKT LS staff aligned Cooperative Agreement results, outcomes, and outputs with activities and expected outputs from their year one and then projected the activities and expected outputs for year two. AKT Prime technical and management staff supported AKT LS with suggestions and feedback at a presentation of the draft work plan on workshop day two and later provided written suggestions to the LS draft work plan for LS consideration prior to submission to USAID.

AKT Prime also provided AKT LS with a confirmed list of LS deliverables and

In support of coordination and heightened awareness of AKT activities across both projects, AKT Prime continued to enhance the online collaboration platform based on LS needs and provided training to new AKT LS staff on its utilization. The site remains a readily accessible source of information for both projects on AKT activities to promote coordination and advanced alert for upcoming technical, operational, and management needs. In addition, leadership and technical staff across all components and from both AKT Prime and LS projects held regular (weekly, monthly, and ad hoc) coordination meetings throughout the year.

4.1 Enhance technical capacity and align the local consortium's work plan, sub-awards, and operational capacity with overall AKT objectives

AKT Prime provided technical capacity building to AKT LS through formal training and on-the-job support, joint implementation, and coordination. Highlights are described below.

AKT Prime Objective 3 staff continued to provide AKT LS with formal technical capacity trainings in the area of municipal capacity building/objective three, as follows:

- *Performance Management Systems*



Workshop on performance management systems for municipal services and developing SIAPS methodology conducted by AKT Prime for AKT LS staff

and SIAP Development. AKT Prime held a two-day workshop with AKT LS. AKT LS' Component 3 Lead and Program Coordinators attended. The workshop was facilitated by AKT Prime's Component 3 Team Leader and covered performance management systems for municipal services and developing the service improvement action plans methodology (SIAPs). The workshop included practical examples that colleagues from AKT LS found to be very helpful.

- *Municipal Investment Planning and Municipal Budgeting.* AKT Prime's Objective 3 team delivered a two-day workshop to AKT LS' Objective 3 team, including Team Leader and Program Coordinators, on municipal capital investment planning and the municipal budgeting process in Kosovo. The AKT LS team was introduced to the process of the budget planning calendar, types of own source revenues, implementation of the budget and best practices that Kosovo's municipalities apply while planning, and prioritization and implementation of municipal capital investments.
- *Kosovo Municipal Legal Framework.* As part of the capacity building plan for AKT LS Objective 3, AKT Prime organized the last two-day workshop on the local governance system in Kosovo. The workshop was facilitated by Objective 3 staff on AKT Prime and participants included the AKT LS Objective 3 lead and AKT LS program coordinators. The workshop covered the legal framework affecting organization and functions of local governments in Kosovo; legal status, organization, administration and competencies; municipal legal acts; inter-municipal and cross-border cooperation; the relationship between central and local governments; and participation of citizens in the decision-making process.

With regard to technical capacity, AKT Prime organized several joint activities between the two mechanisms across technical areas, providing technical mentoring and support to AKT LS as needed. Some specific examples include:

- AKT Prime's Objective 1 and 4 Team Leaders and AKT LS Coordinators conducted several meetings with communities and partner municipality representatives to discuss issues related to proposed infrastructure projects.
- The Prime team also shared with LS counterparts its modified approach to identifying community priorities in the northern municipalities, namely by identifying community needs that are priorities of the Mayor and keeping the Mayor engaged throughout the process of community stakeholder engagement.
- AKT Prime shared community-identified priorities with LS for their consideration. In particular, the Objective 1 teams shared ideas and strategies and even conducted joint site visits for identifying projects in Istog/Istok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Štrpce/Shtërpce, Klinë/Klina, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and northern Kosovo.
- AKT Prime staff provided as-needed consultation on Objective 1 methodology, public meetings and community mobilization, and project selection and trouble-shooting.
- AKT Prime provided templates and suggestions on environmental reviews, procedures, and forms.
- AKT Prime Objective 2 staff coordinated with the AKT LS Objective 2 staff on preparation for the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce Fair and provided advice on approach and coordination with KCC staff.
- In Objective 2, AKT Prime staff worked diligently to support AKT LS in the successful

delivery of a B2B event in Gračanica/Gračanicë. Similar to the manner in which Objective 3 has been operating, AKT Prime led the organization of the event with the AKT LS.

- Objective 2 lead in a supportive role, so that AKT LS learned from the experience and will be able to successfully duplicate it in the future.
- AKT Prime reviewed the AKT LS RFA for agribusiness grants in order to complement and avoid duplication with a similar AKT Prime initiative.
- AKT LS' Component 3 Lead was invited by AKT Prime to participate in several meetings with different stakeholders at the local and central level of the government.
- AKT Prime jointly reviewed with AKT LS their planned Pristina Institute for Political Studies (PIPS) workshop modules for municipalities and provided technical input.
- AKT Prime provided guidance on the Performance Management System for municipal services to AKT LS, resulting in drafted competition criteria on municipal service performance.
- AKT Prime continued to facilitate coordination meetings with USAID's northern advisors, through the end of AKT Prime year two – at which time AKT LS asked to take the lead on scheduling.
- The two teams worked together to plan and deliver a workshop on inter-municipal cooperation. AKT LS Objective 3 staff took the lead in implementing the workshop, which gathered together 12 municipal legal officers and EU integration offices. The AKT Prime team presented on European best practices and the benefits of inter-municipal cooperation to the improved provision of public services.
- The AKT Prime Objective 3 team worked with AKT LS Objective 3 staff to deliver the “SIAPs: Review of Progress, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps” roundtable.
- AKT Prime Objective 4 Lead and Objective 3 staff met with AKT LS Objective 3 lead and AKT LS regional coordinator from AKTIV to discuss CDPs, feedback from USAID, and coordinating the CDPs through a phased approach.
- The AKT Prime COP, Objective 4 Team Lead, and Objective 3 Team Lead met with AKT LS COP and MLGA to discuss support provided to date by AKT Prime to MLGA's socio- economic planning efforts and how AKT LS could continue the roll-out of the planning exercise required by MLGA to AKT partner municipalities, starting with Gjilan/Gnjilane, which has already formed a working group.
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Government and municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane was signed to finance the G2G kindergarten construction project. AKT Prime worked with AKT LS to prepare a chart with roles and responsibilities of both projects for monitoring different phases of the G2G project. The AKT Prime Objective 4 Lead facilitated agreement whereby AKT Prime will take a leadership role (because of the previous experience on the G2G project implemented in Istog/Istok municipality), while the engineering team of AKT LS will support the AKT Prime program engineer. The roles and responsibilities chart was prepared and submitted to USAID by AKT Prime's Objective 4 Lead. The AKT Prime Objective 3 and 4 Team Leads attended the tender opening and evaluation phase as observers. The Evaluation Committee decided to retender, and both staff provided support to clarification of the bill of quantities.

AKT engaged short-term specialist Mr. Vano Tavadze to facilitate the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) with Community Development Fund (CDF), the prime implementing partner to USAID on the Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution (AKT LS) project. According to the AKT Prime contract and in keeping with the annual work plan, AKT Prime performs the OCA annually. This is the second OCA for CDF; the first was completed in February 2015 by USAID.



AKT Prime Objective 4 and STTA conducting the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) with CDF staff

The OCA is a self-assessment that helps nonprofit organizations identify capacity strengths and challenges and establish capacity building goals to create a more sustainable organization. It is primarily a diagnostic and learning tool that should provide a framework for measuring growth in organizational capacity over time. It analyzes and assigns scores to seven interrelated organizational areas (called domains in the OCA tool), each with more detailed sub-sections referencing mission, policies, procedures, and capacities needed to best assure and maintain organizational development. The OCA tool was selected because USAID/Kosovo is already using it as a direct award requirement and the guiding questions for local award recipients to self-assess how to progress to strong capacity can be easily modified to match how the organization itself would define success (by adding guiding questions each organizational development category).

Prior to launching the OCA, Mr. Tavadze and AKT reviewed existing documents and reports and conducted interviews with all of CDF's key staff members. The self-assessment sessions were conducted over two days, with all key managers and staff of the organization, including those from non-USAID funded programs, reflected on the organization's performance.

The overall OCA score for CDF in 2016 is 3.47. The CDF Executive Director and staff came together to review the results and OCA report with Mr. Tavadze. The Executive Director accepted the report and presented the results to the Board.

CDF's OCA score has decreased from 2015, when the USAID-facilitated OCA scored 3.72. External factors that may have affected the results include different facilitators; an improved understanding and experience with the tool; and timing, as CDF was in start-up for AKT LS (their first USAID prime agreement) in February 2015 and they may not have been able to dedicate time to critically self-assess nor had the opportunity during AKT LS implementation to focus on improving performance across 47 organizational development areas. Results in 2016 suggest that in addition to managing an increased portfolio and adapting to new donor requirements, CDF, which maintains a core staff of four individuals plus project staff, was able to maintain many of its performance standards to their 2015 levels, including:

- Governance: two of five domains
- Administration: five of five domains
- Human Resources Management: five of seven domains

- Financial Management: eight of nine domains
- Organizational Management: two of nine domains
- Program Management: six of six domains
- Project Performance Management: three of five domains

As a result of the in-depth analysis of CDF’s operations and challenges, Mr. Tavadze worked with CDF to develop a performance solutions package to address the identified performance gaps as well as anticipate respective resourcing requirements. The performance solutions package recommends nine interventions that form the performance improvement action plan. The nine interventions are in the below table. CDF has prioritized them and AKT Prime looks forward to supporting CDF with its implementation in its year 3 work plan (while in tandem providing support to CDF and sub- awardee implementation of the AKT LS project).

#	Domain	Performance Improvement Action	Priority Level L/M/H
1	Governance, organizational management	Facilitate participatory strategic planning process with communications strategy incorporated	H
2	Governance, organizational management	Align organizational structure to identified strategic goals	H
3	Governance	Reconsider the Board’s role in strategic management and fundraising	H
4	Governance, Human Resource Management	Refine human resource management policies and procedures, introduce succession planning system	H
5	Administration, Project Performance Management, Financial Management	Align CDF’s operation policies and manuals to international quality management system standards	M
6	Organizational Management	Improve knowledge management and sharing across the organization	M
7	Organizational Management	Institutionalize structured change management process in CDF	M
8	Organizational Management	Improve the public relations function and internal communications	H
9	Financial Management	Support CDF’s financial Office to ease the transition to QuickBooks accounting system	H

The previous OCA (and this OCA) identified change management as an area in need of strengthening. Therefore, AKT included within the scope of work for Mr. Tavadze a framework charter for change management to assist CDF in implementing the recommendations over the coming year in a methodical and sustainable way.

AKT will support CDF to facilitate OCAs with its sub-awardees Center for Peace and Tolerance (CPT), Kosovo Relief and Development (KRD), and ACTIV NGO. AKT’s Organizational Specialist and CDF’s Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist worked alongside Mr. Tavadze throughout the CDF OCA process in order to replicate the exercise with the three sub-awardees.

4.2 Enhancing operational and management capacity

In the area of grants management and compliance, AKT Prime provided peer reviews to solicitations upon request from AKT LS, support to the grantee selection process, and tools and guidance for improvement. Highlighted activities include the following:

- *Technical Evaluation Committees.* AKT Prime staff served on evaluation committees to evaluate 69 applications for AKT LS' CSO grants and over 500 applications for business grants. AKT Prime assisted AKT LS Component 2 staff in conducting field visits to some potential business grantees in partner municipalities during LS' first business grant call.
- *Peer Review of Grants Management Processes.* AKT Prime provided its Grants Specialist for a few days to help review due diligence associated with several CSO grants. The Specialist provided hands-on assistance as well as written recommendations to the LS COP for next steps.
- *Improved Tracking and Forecasting.* AKT Prime also worked with AKT LS MIS Specialist, grants, and finance and accounting staff to put together a tool for tracking spending and forecasting of grants and non-grants within the AKT LS Contractual line item (per the Cooperative Agreement).
- *Recruitment.* AKT Prime participated in the selection of a new LS Grants Manager.
- *Short-term Expatriate Consultation on Grants Management.* In grants and compliance, Prime's Objective 4 Team Lead provided CDF with a scope of work for a Grants Specialist to provide support and training to AKT LS with the overarching objective of improving program staff ability to successfully implement a \$5m grants program over two years. While the duration of the Cooperative Agreement is three years, AKT LS is in a situation where it must compress three years of implementation into a two-year timeline, which will only be possible through strong leadership, streamlined systems, and a cohesive team effort. AKT Prime engaged a Specialist, who provided technical support that included training and coaching on the use of the program's grants manual; designed tools and processes to support functional and efficient grants administration and oversight to support the technical objectives of the AKT LS program; and reviewed the status of grants programs to date and goals and provided recommendations on grants with regard to HR capacity, compliance, and budget projections.

AKT Prime provided additional support to AKT LS operations and management to enable CDF and its consortium to successfully administer sub-awards and the LS project. While AKT Prime fielded ad hoc compliance questions and delivered ad hoc operational consultation, Prime also delivered the following:

- In the area of governance, AKT Prime provided examples of authorities' matrices and delegations for CDF consideration as they look to maintain quality control, while enabling delegation of responsibilities beyond the Executive Director.
- On donor compliance, AKT Prime provided Chemonics' close-out manual, references, tools and templates to inform CDF's compliant implementation and eventual close-out.
- AKT Prime provided ad hoc advisory services on interpretations of 22 CFR 226 and Cooperative Agreement terms and conditions and budget.

Human resource (HR) management was identified as a priority for improvement by CDF's Executive Director. AKT Prime delivered Chemonics' policy manual and templates, field office policy manual examples, as well as excerpts from the US Government's own Foreign

Affairs Handbook to inform the elements of CDF's human resource policies and procedures including Human Resource functions, performance evaluations, professional development, and remuneration. AKT Prime identified U.S. and Kosovar HR specialists to support CDF to establish a single HR policy manual with annexes for implementation of activities compliant with Kosovo law, USAID regulations, and other potential donor requirements. The policy manual must also reflect CDF's own mission, vision, and values. While all was in place to implement the assignment this year, the selected expatriate did not board the plane and remains unreachable. AKT Prime has already identified a pool of local, qualified candidates and, per the results of the OCA and prioritization of the CDF Strategic Plan by the Board, an individual will be selected by CDF and the assignment will take place in June or July 2016.

Meanwhile, AKT Prime recommended the addition of at least three full-time staff members to the AKT LS team: a cross-cutting Program Officer to assist the COP with oversight, quality control, ensuring overall progress, and compliance; a Grants Manager; and an M&E Specialist. To help promote comfort on the affordability of the new positions, AKT Prime put together a Personnel spreadsheet with all positions, proposed salaries, levels of effort, and tenure with the positions and provided direction to AKT LS on how they can manipulate the tool to adjust positions, LOE, and salary assumptions for new positions. Accordingly, AKT Prime confirmed the affordability of the proposed positions within LS' current Cooperative Agreement line items. In expectation of potential interviews by AKT LS for the Program Officer position, which would assist the LS COP with monitoring of activity levels to work plan and compliance, AKT Prime provided LS with sample questions for candidates.

4.3 Creating a forum for sub-awardees to network to share information and highlight integration successes to wider audiences

AKT Prime established an online collaborative project management and information-sharing platform to (a) promote activity, outcome, and indicator accountable focus and discussions among the technical teams at AKT Prime and AKT LS; (b) promote openness, coordination and information sharing between AKT Prime and AKT LS; and (c) allow USAID real-time insight into project progress and activities. AKT LS and Prime component leads (including CDF and its subcontractor staff from KRD, ACTIV, and CPT), COP, DCOP, communications specialists, and M&E specialists contribute to the site, while all other staff and USAID have usernames and passwords for read-only access. AKT Prime populated the site with initial Prime and LS information, which has been subsequently maintained by both projects and includes the following elements:

- Newsfeed on activities, meetings, events and accomplishments
- Document library with templates, tools, reports, municipal profiles, newsletters, grants and subcontract trackers, and technical documents
- Calendar of AKT Prime and LS events
- Work plans, with status updates
- M&E plans
- Infrastructure-related project updates

AKT Prime consistently promoted information sharing with CDF, CPT, KRD, and ACTIV (as well as USAID) with publication of AKT information on the AKT SharePoint site. In all, 453 newsfeed posts in year two kept implementing partners on both project informed with

timely updates on activities across components. AKT Prime shared 148 new documents, including tools, stakeholder documents, and reports and other communications products with CDF and its consortium. In addition, AKT Prime provided regular updates to its progress on its annual work plan, updated lists of business beneficiaries, and status of new projects, grants and subcontracts.

AKT Prime and AKT LS leadership hold a minimum of weekly meetings and also ad hoc coordination meetings to coordinate at a higher level across activities. Supported with information shared on the collaboration website, AKT Prime and LS technical, grants, and communications staff also meet regularly to exchange ideas and collaborate on ongoing and planned activities. As part of communication between the two mechanisms, the projects exchange weekly reports, quarterly reports and any other relevant information that might assist with the implementation of AKT program activities. AKT Prime organizes joint quarter kick-off meetings with project and technical leadership and grants.

AKT Prime encouraged LS to post its activities and achievements on the “Improving Intercultural Communication” website. The website was commissioned by AKT Prime as part of its media initiative grants. Established by Entermedia, it is one part of a broader media campaign for promoting improved interethnic and intercultural communication with the public. AKT Prime introduced LS to its point of contact at Entermedia and provided the website so that they could send information and updates directly for posting. Stories that highlight AKT LS achievements under their Objective 1 and 2 activities have been featured.

AKT Prime and LS also work together to jointly represent the AKT program to stakeholders. In addition to joint community, civil society, and municipality engagement mentioned above:

- In February, the projects worked diligently together to compose and deliver a joint presentation to USAID and implementing partners on the AKT program. The chiefs of party for both projects introduced the program, reviewed their shared goal and objectives, and provided attendees with highlights of both projects’ accomplishments to date.
- Both AKT projects coordinated on the agenda and presentation to the USAID Assistant Administrator Tom Melia. Both chiefs of party met to coordinate on participant selection, the agenda, and talking points. AKT Prime provided advice and editing services for the written material for the event. AKT Prime and LS communications specialists prepared joint materials for USAID.
- AKT Prime led the preparation of a list of ongoing and implemented projects in order to have a joint list of project sites for inauguration. From the submitted list, USAID selected and inaugurated projects in two AKT partner municipalities: Obiliq/Obilić and Gračanica/Graçanicë, so far.
- The Prime team also initiated a new newsletter tailored for municipal leadership in northern Kosovo, in reaction to ongoing concerns about transparency of all donor activities. The AKT Prime and LS joint newsletter includes an overview of activities completed in the previous month and anticipated activities for the present and upcoming months. The newsletter has been warmly received.

4.4 Increasing ability to handle USAID reporting requirements and procedures

As described above, AKT Prime provided LS with templates and samples for environmental

review requests for use by CDF and its partners as part of its infrastructure and grants activities. Prime also provided peer guidance and suggestions for fulfilling subsequent reporting requirements.

The two projects' M&E Specialists worked together to gather baseline data for the citizen satisfaction survey in July 2015, which was scheduled because of a gap in MLGA reporting. Also, LS did proceed with recruiting an M&E Assistant and AKT Prime was pleased to serve on the interview committee. Upon receipt of direction from USAID that both AKT projects needed to undertake PMP revisions, AKT Prime's M&E Specialist worked diligently with AKT LS' M&E Assistant to review and align common indicator names and definitions according to planned revisions to the USAID PMP.

In capacity building for communications, AKT Prime continued to coordinate with and provide on-the-job coaching to the AKT LS Communications Specialist, including USAID templates and communications products and events management. AKT staff regularly exchange technical reports via the online collaboration site and as time permits, AKT LS staff request and Prime provides feedback and suggestions to quarterly and annual reports.

4.5 Strengthening financial management capacity

AKT Prime had several meetings with CDF's management and finance department and discussed USAID financial reporting requirements, CDF cooperative agreement financial section requirements, reporting frequency, advance request process and indirect cost reporting. Relevant reporting templates and supporting documents were sent to CDF for adaptation. In addition, as described above, AKT Prime developed and delivered several Excel –based tools for improved financial management and forecasting for grants, non-grants, and personnel. Additionally, AKT Prime provided reviews and suggestions to LS on its burn rate projections memos to USAID, as requested.

AKT Prime provided AKT LS with a Finance and Budget Specialist to provide finance and budget forecasting and reporting support, a budget monitor tool, and training to AKT LS staff. As a result of the assignment, AKT LS is empowered to: a) monitor and manage staff, as well as manage and monitor activity implementation to achieve spending milestones; b) report on expenditures and projections with increasing accuracy; c) recognize challenges from a budgetary perspective and foresee potential problems in spending to Cooperative Agreement line items in enough time to inform decision-making. Among the recommendations from the Specialist was to transition their accounting system to Quick Books, which LS has since initiated.

AKT Prime provided the CDF Director and AKT LS COP with a scope of work and CV for an expert to prepare CDF for USAID auditing, review the financial management and operations portions of the CDF manuals, and assist with appropriate application of indirect rates and indirect rate management for sustainability. AKT Prime alerted CDF and the LS COP to the inclusion of Local Solutions programs among those for auditing according to the FY2016 OIG annual plan. The assignment is scheduled for June 2016, after CDF's planned annual audit.

4.6 Increased ability to establish professional linkages with a variety of stakeholders

AKT Prime and AKT LS work together to engage common stakeholders. As noted throughout

this quarterly report, AKT Prime and LS often hold meetings with municipal authorities and their advisors, central government officials, community stakeholders, and other projects together as a means of mitigating confusion and promoting coordination with each other and with the stakeholder. In particular, AKT Prime facilitates and obtains meetings on behalf of both AKT projects with stakeholders that are difficult to reach or when AKT Prime has an established relationship, but the activity is particularly aligned with the LS work plan (such as the meeting on municipal socio-economic plans with MLGA or community priorities). AKT Prime provides LS with daily updates on the meetings that Prime has had each day and brief notes to those meetings via the SharePoint site newsfeed. Generally as meetings are scheduled with any stakeholder, AKT Prime adds the meeting to the SharePoint calendar to alert LS to each meeting and provide opportunity for participation. SharePoint continues to be an accessible and full repository for LS to access data on all of Prime’s stakeholders – names, contact information, and the nature of Prime’s activities, as well as reports.

Consequently, the two AKT programs have met jointly with stakeholders across the project portfolio, including community representatives, municipal authorities, and other donors and projects. Examples:

- Staff from both AKT projects met with the Mayor of Pejë/Peć and the Mayor of Klinë/Klina to discuss community and municipality priorities and next steps.
- Staff and leadership of both projects met with the Mayor of Leposavic together to provide the Mayor and Chief of Staff with updates on project activities.
- AKT LS and AKT Prime COPs joined Partnership for Development staff for a coordination meeting on fees associated with permitting and proper procedures for infrastructure projects, information transparency, and collaboration on objective 3 activities related to tax.
- AKT Prime and LS COPs met with USAID programs Partnerships for Development, AGRO, and Property Rights to discuss collaboration – specifically AKT’s role as facilitating knowledge transfer on program initiatives/reforms and priorities with its partner municipalities.
- AKT Prime and LS COPs met with NDI leadership to discuss youth leadership activities in northern Kosovo and opportunities for AKT to provide support.
- Both projects’ leadership met with the Contract Law Enforcement program and Crimson Finance Fund to get them involved in AKTs’ work with businesses.
- Both COPs and Objective 3 leadership met bi-weekly with USAID’s Northern Advisors for coordination of activities in the north.
- Both chiefs of party and relevant technical staff met jointly with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Klinë/Klina, the Mayor of Gračanica/Graçanicë, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of



Bi-weekly meeting between AKT US and AKT LS component leads

Štrpce/Shtërpce to discuss ongoing program activities in these municipalities.

- AKT Prime arranged a coordination meeting with the Decentralization and Municipal Support (DEMOS), where LS and DEMOS shared their plans for Law on Debt Forgiveness and coordination of those efforts.

Program Support and Incentives Fund

AKT utilizes the PSIF for (1) small grants to local organizations; (2) subcontracts for small infrastructure projects; (3) grants to businesses; and (4) as a response mechanism for project priorities and windows of opportunity. Please find below an update on our utilization of the PSIF below.

Business Grants

AKT currently has 16 business grants under implementation, as follows:

Grantee	Sector and Purpose	Location	Equipment Procured	Status Description	Start Date	End Date
Agrosera Toplika	Agricultural products and processing. Expansion grant	Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn	Tractor	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	11/25/2016
A-STIL	Wood processing. Expansion grant.	Pejë/ Peć	CNC Graver	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Dini	Agricultural producer. Expansion grant.	Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë	Greenhouse, pipes, folia, irrigation	Greenhouse delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Food Pack	Packaging. Expansion grant.	Zvečan/ Zvečan	Machine for printing labeling onto cardboard packages	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	11/25/2016
Lazic Stil	Wood processing. Expansion grant.	Gračanica/ Graçanicë	Formatizer for cutting wood, tools, compressor	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Lulishtja Agonisi	Horticulture. Expansion grant.	Pejë/ Peć	Greenhouse - 2 acre	Greenhouse delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Natyra -M	Bee-keeping. Expansion grant.	Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë	35 beehives, tools for harvesting, and extraction	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Nderi-R	Agricultural producer. Expansion grant.	Pejë/ Peć	Greenhouse, pipes, folia, irrigation	Greenhouse delivered	10/20/2015	10/25/2016
Pak Proces	Machinery Expansion grant.	Klokot/ Kllokot	CNC Plazma Cutter	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016

Grantee	Sector and Purpose	Location	Equipment Procured	Status Description	Start Date	End Date
Sani (AquaBreza)	Bottled water. Expansion grant.	Štrpce/ Shtërpçë	Machine for bottling 10l water bottles	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
SIJAK	Agricultural products and processing. Expansion grant.	Parteš/ Partesh	Machine and tools for making ajvar	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Sito Print Desing	Printing house. Expansion grant.	Zvečan/ Zveçan	Digital printing machine, finisher, and knife	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Tapetarija Stil	Furniture upholstery. Expansion grant.	Zvečan/ Zveçan	Sewing machine and overlock	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Valoni	Wood furniture production. Expansion grant.	Istog/ Istok	Drill and machine for banding wood products	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	10/25/2016
Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni	Guest house, café and shop. Expansion grant.	Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë	Boiler and furnishings	Equipment delivered	10/25/2015	11/25/2016
Zogu/Agroelita	Agricultural products. Expansion grant.	Istog/ Istok	1,000 turkeys	PO issued	10/25/2015	10/25/2016

Civil Society Organization Grants

AKT Prime currently has four CSO grants that are in the planning phase. An additional 3 CSO grants are under implementation, as follows:

Grantee	Activity	Location
Entermedia	Improving intercultural communication	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Lepsavić/ Lepsaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peç; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtri/ Vuçitri; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
Kontakt Plus	Human touch story	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Lepsavić/ Lepsaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë;

Grantee	Activity	Location
		Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitër; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
RTC	Enabling productive engagement via community-municipality working groups	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitër

15 CSO grants have been completed, as follows:

Grantee	Activity	Location
ASD Group L.L.C	Strengthening Communities Role in Municipalities (SCRIM), capacity building for MOCR and CC	Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Zvečan/ Zveçan; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Obiliq/ Obilić; Pejë/ Peć; Vushtrri/ Vuçitër
Business Center Zvečan	Women and Youth Support Program for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Northern Kosovo	Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
Business Support Center Shtërpçë	Enhancing cooperation and sales among communities	Klokot/ Kllokot; Parteš/ Partesh; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë
CDKD	Together in Action for the Benefit of All	Klokot/ Kllokot; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Parteš/ Partesh; Ranilug/ Ranillug
Communications for Social Development (CSD)	Introduction of the Language Commissioner's Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in 12 partner municipalities	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitër
Community Development Institute (CoDe)	Strengthening interaction among communities through sport and culture	Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë
Future Without Fear-Center for People Affected by Conflict (FWF)	Two-sided postcard	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitër; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
Initiative for Agricultural	Strengthening Capacity and Collaboration of	Leposavić/ Leposaviq; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Zubin Potok/

Grantee	Activity	Location
Development of Kosovo (IADK)	Local Farmers from Northern and Southern Kosovo	Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
MDA Foundation (MDAF)	Increasing Employability of Young Kosovars	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Partesh/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn
Mundesia	North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building	Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
Network of Peace Movement (NOPM)	Enhancing capacity of Communities Committees and Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCR) to advocate for non-majority communities' needs	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Partesh/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
Regional Technology Center (RTC)	Development of Municipal Capacity Development Plans (CDPs)	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Partesh/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
SABOR	Business Promotion Program for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo	Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan
SARA Chess Club	Organizing of Multiethnic Chess Tournament-Brezovica Open	Štrpce/ Shtërpçë
Srpsko Slovo(SS)	Good News (Dobrevesti) - Life stories that bring people closer	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Leposavić/ Leposaviq; North Mitrovica/ Mitrovica e Veriut; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Partesh/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn; Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok; Zvečan/ Zveçan

Non-Grants

Capacity Development Plan Procurements

As described above in Objective 3, AKT Prime is revisiting opportunities for CDP support. Currently three of the six CDP procurements that AKT plans to undertake are under competition, as follows:

Municipality	Procurement
Pejë/ Peć	E-kiosk
Štrpce/Shtërpçë	E-kiosk
Vushtri/Vuçitri	E-kiosk

Quick Impact Projects

Updated status descriptions of quick impact projects are detailed under Objective 1 above.

SIAP Projects

Updated status descriptions of SIAP projects are detailed under Objective 3 above.

Small-Scale Infrastructure Projects

Updated status descriptions of small-scale infrastructure (and alternative for the north) projects are detailed under Objective 1 above.

Subcontracts

One small subcontract was completed in project year two with a printing company in support of multi-ethnic business growth. Two subcontracts are currently under implementation (below) and an additional nine subcontracts are in the planning and competition phases.

Subcontractor	Activity	Location
EuroFruti	Market linkages in raspberries	Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë
HiTech	Improvement of property tax collection via on-the-job training in financial calculations and property registration	Gjilan/ Gnjilane; Gračanica/ Graçanicë; Istog/ Istok; Kline/ Klina; Klokot/ Kllokot; Novo Brdo/ Novobërdë; Obiliq/ Obilić; Parteš/ Partesh; Pejë/ Peć; Ranilug/ Ranillug; Štrpce/ Shtërpçë; Vushtri/ Vuçitri

Annex B – Success Stories



SUCCESS STORY

Let the Children Play Together!

USAID supports purchase of children's playground equipment in multiethnic villages Ponesh/Poneš and Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm (Gjilan/Gnjilane), and helps communities interact through play



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together Program]

Encouraging joint activities through imaginative play in Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm

"This playground was essential to us, because it brings Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian children together in play," explains Fadil Musliu, director of the school "Vatra e diturisë" in Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm

Publication date: April 2015

Children can spend hours swinging, climbing, running, and interacting with each other while pretending to be superheroes, pirates, cowboys, transformers, or cosmonauts. Gathering in playgrounds, children explore and invent worlds made to fit their needs. This type of play not only allows children to roam freely in a safe environment, but these games are also of great importance to their development and wellbeing. Play helps young children interact and develop social skills, imagination, creativity, and a sense of self and belonging that will be essential in their adult lives. They learn how to lead, make decisions, and get along with their peers; through this they build confidence in their own abilities.

Given the far reaching benefits of playgrounds, communities without these facilities feel a tangible loss for their youngest members. For this reason, the multiethnic communities of Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm and Ponesh/Poneš (Gjilan/Gnjilane) approached the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program to ask for help purchasing and installing playground equipment in each village. To help childhood development in both communities and encourage a stronger bond between minority and majority communities, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program installed playgrounds with seesaws, swings, and slides in the school yards of both villages.

"This playground was essential to us, because it brings Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian children together in play," explains Fadil Musliu, director of the "Vatra e diturisë" school in Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm where 350 children attend classes. "The new playground is wonderful. This is important for us because we have a good time here and it's wonderful for all children," explains Festina Kurteshi, a thirteen-year old pupil and president of the Children's Municipal Assembly in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Stefan Trajković, a fourteen-year old pupil from the "Sveti Sava" school in Poneš/Ponesh says the new playground helped children from both communities socialize with each other. "This project means a lot. Now, we hang out and play with each other," explains Stefan.

The total grant received from the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program to purchase playground equipment is worth \$2,615 for Gornji Livoč/Livoç i Epërm and \$3,000 for Ponesh/Poneš.



SUCCESS STORY

Creating a Better Learning Environment for Children

USAID donates new desks and chairs to the primary school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme and helps create a better and healthier learning environment for children



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together Program]

Students using new desks and chairs donated to the "Dositej Obradović" school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme

"The old furniture was so damaged and shabby that we could barely use it. Projects like this are of great importance for the schools, especially for quality teaching," explains the primary school "Dositej Obradović" director, Maja Cvetković

Publication date: April 2015

Unpleasant classroom environment with old, ragged desks and chairs can significantly impact children's behavior, social interaction, and motivation to learn. In addition, children who use ergonomic desks and chairs are more focused and show more attention.

Even though the satellite primary school "Dositej Obradović" in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) was recently renovated, most of the classrooms were using old furniture. The children were at risk of hurting themselves from rough edges of the desks, and they were seated in non-friendly chairs thus impacting their long-term development. To improve the learning environment and provide adequate seating for children, the community approached USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) to help the school replace the old furniture with new desks and chairs.

"The old furniture was so damaged and shabby that we could barely use it, but the school did not have enough funds to replace it, so this was a great opportunity to provide a better learning environment for pupils," explains the school director, Maja Cvetković. Through the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program, the school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme received 60 new desks and 100 new chairs. "Projects like these are of great importance for the schools, especially for the quality teaching. To learn, children need to feel safe and supported. They are very happy now," explains Cvetković.

A ten-year old, straight-A student, Luka, says the classrooms look much better now. "We don't have to watch out for the sharp-edged desks which were hurting our wrists. Also, new furniture allows us to write without fear that our clothes will be torn up. I feel more focused now," explains Luka who is also the class president. "I enjoy attending school now," proudly explains eleven-year old straight-A student, Katarina, who also enjoys Serbian language classes.

The total value of the grant received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together Program to purchase new desks and chairs for the school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme is worth \$3,159.



SUCCESS STORY

Empowering the Role of Municipal Officers for Communities and Return

USAID supports “The Effective Representation of Communities’ Interests in Local and Central Government in Kosovo” conference and empowers Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns to achieve their mission



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together Program]

Representatives of MOCRs attend “The effective representation of communities’ interests in local and central government in Kosovo” conference held in Pristina on June 16, 2015

“Meetings and conferences such as this are very constructive because they give us an opportunity to learn about the best practices of our colleagues in other municipalities,” explains MOCR representative from North Mitrovica/ë, Suada Hajdarpašić

Publication date: June 2015

At the local government level, the Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCRs) should be a driving force in protecting and promoting the rights of all communities in their municipalities. But these offices face many problems, such as insufficient capacity and lack of an allocated budget for capital investments which are affecting their ability to be responsive to community needs.

To help achieve their mission and strengthen the role of Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns (MOCR) to address community needs and issues more effectively and to further promote relations between them and the Ministry of Communities and Returns, on June 16, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together organized “The Effective Representation of Communities’ Interests in Local and Central Government in Kosovo” conference in Pristina.

“At its heart, this is a discussion between local and national level government and that kind of dynamic is at the very core of democratic process”, USAID Kosovo Mission Director James Hope said in the conference opening remarks. He pointed out that creating sustainable return, promotion of dialogue and enabling reconciliation between communities throughout Kosovo cannot be done without the efforts and energy of municipal officers for communities and returns. “To be successful however, it is critical that municipal leaders recognize and empower the role of these officers by providing them necessary financial and capacity building support to help them do their jobs.”

The conference speakers included the Minister for Communities and Return, Dalibor Jevtić, Chairperson of the Committee on Rights, Interests of Communities and Returns in the Assembly of Kosovo, Jasmina Živković, and Zoran Mojsilović, Advisor to the Minister for Local Government Administration. “In the past, we were able to communicate and cooperate with municipal officers through regular coordination meetings during which they were able to give suggestions to help reach our common goals. But there is a need to improve such cooperation and that is precisely the way I look at this conference,” says Minister Jevtić thanking USAID for organizing the gathering.

Representatives of MOCRs in municipalities throughout Kosovo participated in this event. “Meetings and conferences such as this are very constructive because they give us an opportunity to learn about best practices of our colleagues in other municipalities,” explains Suada Hajdarpašić, MOCR representative from North Mitrovica/ë. “This is first time that I attended a Kosovo wide MOCR conference which allowed us to hear about the work of MOCRs in the municipalities in northern Kosovo,” explains Hajredin Alija, head of the MOCR in Prizren which recently, with the support of USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, hosted representatives of MOCRs in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gračanica/Graçanicë and Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

Through its Advancing Kosovo Together program, USAID supports MOCR staff at the municipal level by providing forums for exchanges of experiences and best practices and building their internal capacities in areas such as budget preparation, lobbying and advocacy, strategic planning, project management, transparency and outreach.



SUCCESS STORY

Strengthening Cooperation between Businesses throughout Kosovo

USAID facilitates the business agreement between farmers from North Kosovo and one of the biggest agricultural producers in the South, strengthening business collaboration throughout Kosovo



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Agricultural producers from northern Kosovo signing the agreements with Istog/Istok-based “Agroprodukt” establishing their future business cooperation

“Even though I run a start-up business, my expectations are high because this agreement gives me confidence in my success,” explains Dejan Božović, a farmer from Zubin Potok

Publication date: June 2015

Economic growth and cooperation can flourish best in an atmosphere of social stability and openness and vice versa. To foster social reconciliation through business cooperation USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, in cooperation with Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), facilitated business agreements between two medicinal aromatic herbs growers from Zubin Potok and one of the biggest Kosovo agricultural producers, Istog/Istok-based “Agroprodukt”, establishing their future business cooperation. Through this collaboration, “Agroprodukt” has committed to purchasing all yields of oregano and black hollyhock from these two producers, thus guaranteeing them the price stability and stable domestic market share.

“There is a great demand for these horticultural products,” explains Halid Avdijaj, the owner of “Agroprodukt”, a business which runs around 40 agricultural product buying centers throughout Kosovo and exports medicinal aromatic herbs to the EU market. “My company has also received support through USAID programs, namely from the Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) and New Opportunities in Agriculture (NOA) projects, which helped us increase our capacity and now we try to help other businesses,” says Avdijaj.

Both of these northern Kosovo-based producers were already managing family farms producing raspberries, strawberries, plums and apples, when they received support to establish medicinal aromatic herbs farms through USAID Advancing Kosovo Together “Strengthening Capacity and Collaboration of Local Farmers from Northern and Southern Kosovo” project implemented in cooperation with IADK. With this assistance, they received irrigation pipes and black plastic folia as well as training on soil preparation, seeding, planting, harvesting and drying.

“This kind of cooperation is of great importance to us because finding a market for our products is difficult in the North,” explains Milić Božović from Dobroševina village (Zubin Potok) who started to grow oregano on 10 acres of land this year. “I run a family business but I also employ two workers.” Dejan Božović from Zubin Potok grows black hollyhock on five acres on a family farm. “Even though I run a start-up business, my expectations are high because this agreement gives me confidence in my success,” explains Božović whose farm supports an entire family of six.

Through this project, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together also conducted a number of trainings on the cost of production for fruit and vegetable processing for women from Štrpce/Shtrëpcë and Leposavić/Leposaviq and training sessions on improvement of milk quality for farmers of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Štrpce/Shtrëpcë.



SUCCESS STORY

Women Entrepreneurs from Northern Kosovo Learn About New Trends in Goat Farming and Dairy Production

USAID supports “The North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative and increases employment opportunities for women entrepreneurs



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together Program]

Women from Northern Kosovo attend the first in a series of twelve training workshops on goat farming and dairy processing held in Zvečan/Zveçan on July 6

“Workshops like these are of great importance to women producers in this region because they do not have many opportunities to learn about new technologies and goat farming trends in the world,” explains Marija Marković, a food processing technology student from North Mitrovica/ë

Publication date: July 2015

In Kosovo, goat milk is regarded as a natural source of nutrients that boosts the immune system, especially when the milk is raw and organic. With the increasing popularity of natural foods in the country, demand for goat cheese and other goat-milk products is growing. Many agricultural producers in Kosovo, however, and especially women from Northern Kosovo, struggle to find opportunities to learn more about new farming and dairy processing methods.

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in collaboration with the women’s association “Mundësia”, has been addressing this gap in opportunity by organizing a series of 12 training workshops on milk processing and goat farming for women entrepreneurs interested in expanding their business in this sector. So far, feedback from participants has been positive. One of the women who attended these workshops held in Zvečan/Zveçan throughout July is 22-year old student of food processing technology, Marija Marković, from North Mitrovica/ë. She says, “When I finish my studies, I plan to join my brother in our family business because he recently started the goat farm. So, the knowledge that I acquire during my studies and these trainings, I plan to apply in our business. Workshops like these are of great importance to women producers in this region because they do not have many opportunities to learn about new technologies and goat farming trends in the world.”

Ljubinka Vukmirović, a goat farmer from Srbovac/Sërboc (Zvečan/Zveçan), who has sold goat milk and cheese in the local market for many years, also found the workshops useful. She says, “I had an opportunity to learn about new methods during these trainings and since I am planning to expand my farm, these workshops mean a lot to me.” Meanwhile, 26-year old Sanja Vukosavljević from Grabovac/Graboc (Zvečan/Zveçan), who is married to a goat farmer and wants to acquire knowledge on new trends in this sector to help increase their family income, says, “These trainings will help me become more involved in our family business. I strongly believe that agricultural business is our future, especially production of healthy organic food.”

USAID’s training workshops are part of the “North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative to increase employment opportunities and household incomes of women entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products with a focus on the ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers.



SUCCESS STORY

Promoting Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

USAID supports the “Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sports and Culture” initiative promoting respect for ethnic and cultural diversity



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together Program]

A girl participating in the multiethnic tennis tournament held in Gračanica/Graçanicë on July 22, 2015

“Before this tournament, I never had an opportunity to play tennis with children of other ethnicities. So this is important to me,” said twelve-year-old Binesa Kora from Prizren, a participant in the multiethnic tennis tournament held in Gračanica/Graçanicë.

Publication date: August 2015

Promoting tolerance, accepting ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and integrating ethnic minorities are all important for building a prosperous and stable society. To encourage this process, and help raise the awareness of importance of interethnic cooperation, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in partnership with Gračanica/Graçanicë-based non-governmental organization, Community Development Institute (CoDe), implemented the four-month initiative, “Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sports and Culture.”

As part of this initiative, AKT and CoDe sponsored eight tennis lessons under the title, “You Cannot Play Tennis by Yourself – Join Us!” in the Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, and Istog/k municipalities. More than 260 children, ages 12 and younger, of different ethnicities participated.

“Before this tournament, I never had an opportunity to play tennis with children of other ethnicities. So this is important to me,” said 12-year-old Binesa Kora from Prizren who participated in the multiethnic tennis tournament in Gračanica/Graçanicë. “I have been playing tennis for two months now and I would like to win today. I met children from other municipalities and I am happy about it,” proudly explained eight-year-old Marija Crvenković from Gračanica/Graçanicë. Amir Sadiković, a fifth grade student from Pejë/Peć, has been playing tennis for two years: “This tournament is important because it brought children from across Kosovo together.”

Another part of this initiative was “The Beauty of Diversity” street photograph exhibition in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, Istog/k, Ranilug/Ranillug and Štrpce/Shtrëpcë, which was part of a social media photograph contest. The winning photographs were exhibited during “The Beauty of Diversity” conference in Gračanica/Graçanicë on August 14, 2015, which celebrated the importance of cultural heritage preservation in Kosovo. Jozefina Kolić, winner of the contest, described one of her photographs, a dove of peace, as one that “means a lot to me because it shows our children and they are our future. We have responsibility to preserve our heritage so we could pass it on them.”



SUCCESS STORY

Making Our Streets Safer

USAID makes streets safer in multiethnic community of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm by installing LED street lights



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Youngest residents of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) can walk the streets safely with the newly installed energy-efficient LED street lighting.

“Implementation of this project was of grave importance to us because the streets were dark, so our priority was to install public lights to make the village safer,” explains Aleksandar Antić, a 25-year old community forum member from Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm

Publication date: August 2015

For a long time, schools along the main road of the Eastern Kosovo multiethnic village of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm in the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality lacked public lighting. Over 320 schoolchildren attending the village’s elementary school, and over 140 attending the village’s secondary school were upset and afraid to walk down the dark, unlit street. In December 2014, during a multiethnic community forum meeting organized by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, residents prioritized the need for public lighting to make their streets safer. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë also committed to funding 20 percent of the project’s implementation costs.

Since July 2015, seven kilometers of the village’s main road have been covered by new energy-efficient LED street lighting. Aleksandar Antić, a 25-year old Community Forum member, has been involved in this project since its beginning. “Implementation of this project was of grave importance to us because the streets were dark so our priority was to install public lights to make the village safer,” explains Antić, emphasizing that around 150 young people live in Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm. “We are very active and engaged in the community matters because we want to improve our living conditions. For example, more than 10 young people, including myself, were actively involved in the implementation of this project.”

Nebojša Arsić, Director of Public Services Department in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, says that after decentralization in 2009, this municipality was expanded, creating an area of over 200 square kilometers – one of the biggest in Kosovo, and one with the lowest population density rates. “We are facing many challenges, for example some of the villages have neither water supply system nor sewage, but our budget is insufficient to address all these problems, so USAID support is of great importance to us. And in partnership with USAID AKT program we managed to install this latest LED technology in Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm,” explains Arsić, pointing out that the municipality is paying the electric bill for the public lights in the village.

The total value of the grant received from USAID through Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is \$32,725. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë invested \$8,180 into this project.



SUCCESS STORY

Developing Business Linkages throughout Kosovo

USAID brings women and youth agricultural producers from North to South Kosovo, helping establish business linkages and improve agriculture in North Kosovo



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Women agricultural producers from North Kosovo admire the strawberry yield during their visit to the “Biobuzmi” raspberry and strawberry plantations in Ferizaj/Uroševac

“I participated in the several visits and I am overwhelmed with positive impressions. Also, I established linkages with agricultural associations from south Kosovo which is significant for the development of a small agricultural business,” explains Danijela Milić a raspberry grower from Zubin Potok

Publication date: August 2015

Business linkages are one of the best ways for entrepreneurs to enhance the competitiveness of their businesses, help their products reach wider markets, and share information in technology, management skills, and specialized knowledge. To build such connections, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, in partnership with Business Center Zvečan, organized six site visits for women and youth agricultural producers in north Kosovo to south Kosovo.

In May 2015, medicinal herbs and berry growers, as well as honey producers from the North visited the following southern agricultural processing centers: the “Scardus” raspberry fields in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, the “Biobuzmi” raspberry and strawberry plantations in Ferizaj/Uroševac, the “Frutomania” production facilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane, and the “Natyra” medicinal herbs processing center in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. During these visits, northern producers learned how to improve their production and to develop market exchange of agriculture products with the south. Danijela Milić, a raspberry grower from Zubin Potok whose family grows ‘Polka’ raspberries and hazelnuts in the village of Velji Breg/Velibreg, said, “I participated in the several visits and I am overwhelmed with positive impressions. I have a start-up business, and the knowledge on growing berries and latest business management skills that I acquired during these visits is of great importance to me. Also, I established linkages with agricultural associations from south Kosovo which is significant for the development of a small agricultural business.”

In August 2015, more than ten agricultural women and youth producers visited the Berry Fair in Rečane/Reçan in Prizren, where they attended a presentation on berry growing practices. Perka Vlasić from Zvečan/Zveçan, said, “I have two greenhouses where I grow vegetables. I received one greenhouse from the USAID Kosovo Cluster and Business Support program. Also, I also have around 100 bushes of ‘Polka’ raspberries and I am eager to expand my production and access to markets. Today, I also had an opportunity to see processed berry products, such as compote and juice.” Vlasić added that this was her first visit to Prizren region in almost 30 years.

These visits are part of a six-month-long “Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo,” and will conclude with a business-to-business meeting in September 2015, during which farmers from north Kosovo will meet with small and medium-sized enterprises from south Kosovo to create new business partnerships.



SUCCESS STORY

A New Road Connects Communities in Banjskë/Banjska

USAID rehabilitates the rural road and storm water outlets in Banjskë/Banjska (Vushtrri/Vučitrn) creating better living environment for the community



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Connecting majority and minority communities through a new 370-meter long road in Banjskë/Banjska in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn

“The importance of this project for us is beyond words! This road is also crucial for connecting both, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb, communities, because it brings our houses closer,” explains Hasan Gani, owner of tractor repair shop from Banjskë/Banjska (Vushtri/Vučitrn)

Publication date: December 2015

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov

For the first time in 20 years, a road running through Kosovo’s northwestern village of Banjskë/Banjska has been repaired, enabling the village’s “mixed” community of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs to come closer together.

Banjskë/Banjska, a mixed village of 900 residents, is one of 67 villages in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. For 20 years, the poor state of its road made it difficult for residents to move around. During the rainy season and the winter months, students and travelers from Banjskë/Banjska struggled along the road’s poor conditions in order to get to school and to work. To make matters worse, the river stream along this road was constantly flooding the farmland, making it inaccessible for weeks, while damaging crops.

In the spring of 2015, the fate of the road changed. During a USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program meeting in Banjskë/Banjska, the village residents expressed their wish for a better road. In October 2015, the USAID AKT program, together with the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, which committed to funding 20 percent of the project’s implementation costs, completed its rehabilitation of the village’s road and its storm water outlets.

The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Dojčin Dančetović, who actively participated in the construction work, says that before the road’s rehabilitation, 90 percent of the road was destroyed: “During the rainy season and winter, we could barely walk down the road, and it was impossible to drive a car. The conditions were really horrible. Now, the 370-meter long road, together with two bridges and a supporting wall are rehabilitated. My neighbors are happy.” Dojčin also points out that for many elderly members of his community who need constant medical care, life is much easier now. A 74-year-old resident, Desanka Dančetović, who lives alone, says that with the new road the hospital is far more accessible to her now: “I am very happy! There will be no more floods.”

Hasan Gani, owner of the tractor repair shop in Vushtri/Vučitrn says rural roads are vital for development in Kosovo, because better roads open up commercial opportunities that make farming a more profitable livelihood for rural inhabitants, which means more work for him as well. “The importance of this project for us is beyond words! This road is also crucial for connecting both, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb, communities, because it brings our houses closer. Many families moved out of the village due to the bad living conditions. But this new road will make our life easier,” explains Gani.

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is \$49,740. The municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, which committed to long-term maintenance of the road in the future, invested \$12,435 into this project.



SUCCESS STORY

Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme Residents Can Now Sleep in Peace

USAID supports fencing the outdoor sports field in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) creating a safe environment for children from mixed communities to play



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Children playing soccer in safer environment after installation of chain-link fence for outdoor sports field in the fall of 2015

“You saved many children with this project. We are very grateful! We can sleep in peace without worrying that another child might run after the ball that rolled off the field to the street or into the river. Our children play in a safe environment now,” explains Avdi Tahihiri, leader of Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme

Almost two years ago, an event took place in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme, the outcome of which would have been deadly if it had not been for a passerby watching kids playing soccer in a newly-built outdoor sports field. He particularly enjoyed seeing a two year old trying to hit a soccer ball that was almost as big as the child. Eventually, the child managed to hit the ball, which rolled off the field, and the youngster ran over to scoop it up. That would not be so dangerous, if it was not for the river Lepanac/Lepenci which runs close to this sports field. In a blink of an eye, Avdi Tahiri realized with horror that the youngster chasing after the ball slipped and fell into the river. Without hesitation, Avdi leapt into the water to rescue helpless child, who was, thanks to him, brought back to safety.

This event struck the residents of mixed village Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme. Worried families approached officials in the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë to help them install a chain-link fence, but local administration did not have sufficient funds for this project. Worried residents did not take no for an answer and sought assistance from donors who would help provide the municipality with additional funds. Several months later, in November 2015, in a joint effort of the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë and the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, the chain-link fence for this outdoor sports field, where more than 20 young children engage in sports each day, was finally installed.

“You saved many children with this project. We are very grateful! We can sleep in peace without worrying that another child might run after the ball that rolled off the field to the street or into the river. Our children play in a safe environment now,” explains Avdi, visibly shaken after recounting the moments when he managed to save the child. He continues, “Projects like this unite our village. We worked together toward a common goal.” Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtëme, an agricultural village where most residents grow raspberries, has around 130 Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb households, and this sports field connects children from both communities. “The sports field looks great now because our soccer ball won’t roll off the field to the street or into the river,” explains eight-year old Robert. His soccer teammate Blend simply says: “We are very happy!”

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is approximately \$10,000. The municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë invested more than \$2,500 into this project.

Publication date: December 2015



SUCCESS STORY

Brightening the Smiles of Children and Families in Bostane/Bostan

USAID supports establishment of playground and park in Bostane/Bostan (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) creating a safe environment for children from mixed communities to play



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Children enjoying new playground, which was built in the mixed village of Bostane/Bostan (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) over fall of 2015

“Yesterday, we had a joint initiative – I gathered the children from the school and we cleaned the park and playground. I am trying to teach them that this place belongs to them now and that they are responsible for its wellbeing,” explains Father Steva, the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë priest

When Father Steva Mitrić was appointed as the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë priest a year ago, the first thing he noticed is that there was no playground for children in this municipality with a population of more than 11,000. Since the Orthodox Church in Kosovo owns considerable land in this diverse municipality located in central Kosovo, and given widespread support for the under the newly appointed priest’s initiative, the Church decided to allocate land for building the playground and park in Bostane/Bostan, one of 26 mixed villages in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.

After having solved the problem of where to establish the playground, Father Steva, who is also the Raska-Prizren diocese coordinator for religious education, started looking for donors who would help him with the implementation of this project. Luckily, all the pieces came together when the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, jointly with the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, agreed to financially support this initiative. The construction work started in November 2015, and was finalized in the same month. “This playground brightens the landscape now, and it’s putting smiles on children’s and families’ faces. Now, our children can also play in the evening hours without worrying about their safety, because the park is well-lit,” explains Father Steva who has two young sons.

In the nearby primary school “Miladin Popović”, 58 children are receiving instruction. This ethnically mixed school is a second home to Kosovo Serbs and Roma children who now have another home to share – a new playground with the park. “Yesterday, we had a joint initiative – I gathered the children from the school and we cleaned the park and playground. I am trying to teach them that this place belongs to them now and that they are responsible for its wellbeing,” proudly explains Father Steva.

Six-year old Ismail Jashari and Luka Ivanović attend the pre-school classes in the nearby school, but they use every free moment to play together in the playground: “We are very happy here! The playground is so beautiful. My favorite toy is a slide,” shyly explains Ismail, while Luka prefers seesaw. “It brightens my day to see my students playing and laughing together and really enjoying their childhood,” explains preschool teacher Jovanka Filić, who continues: “Children learn through play, and without it, we cannot properly prepare them [on] how to overcome all the challenges that life brings.”

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is approximately \$16,000. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë invested more than \$4,000 into this project.

Publication date: December 2015



SUCCESS STORY

New Heating System Improves Learning Environment in Elementary School

USAID supports the installation of a new heating system in an elementary school in Radevo/Radevë (Gračanica/Graçanicë) and improves learning environment for students and teachers.



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

Students attend classes in a significantly improved learning environment with new heating system and no health concerns.

“In the past, only one classroom was heated and when the children would go out on their lunch break, they had to wear scarfs, hats, and gloves,” explains Suzana Mehmeti, a teacher in Radevo/Radevë elementary school.

For the first time for one elementary school in the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë, classrooms no longer have coal and wood-burning stoves that emit smoke and cause lung problems for its students.

In July 2015, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program helped the village of Radevo/Radevë in Gračanica/Graçanicë install a new heating system in “Vuk Karadžić,” a 300 square-meter “satellite” elementary school attended by about 30 Kosovo Serb, Albanian, and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) students. As a result of this new heating installation, health concerns were alleviated, class attendance increased, and the overall quality of the learning environment improved.

“The new heating is very important to both teachers and children. The air is much cleaner than it used to be when we had to use stoves. Everything is easier now. You’ve eased the learning process since the school is heated as a whole and temperatures are equal in all parts of it. In the past only one classroom was heated and when the children would go out on their lunch break, they had to wear scarves, hats, and gloves” explains Suzana Mehmeti, a teacher in Radevo/Radevë elementary school.

Luka Jovanović, a first grade student in this school says, “It is better and warmer with the new radiators. Everything is so much nicer now. We act in the classroom, we sing, and we play together. Now we can stay and learn much longer in the classrooms than we used to. We even celebrated St. Sava in the classroom.”

The new heating system which was a joint initiative of USAID AKT and the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë brought together entire community and municipal officials to address this priority problem. In doing so, the initiative enabled the Gračanica/Graçanicë municipality to help students attend classes and learn under safer conditions.

The total value of the contribution from USAID through the AKT program is approximately \$15,000; the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë contributed 20 percent into this project.

Publication date: February 2016



SUCCESS STORY

Keeping Children Safe

USAID supports the establishment of a pedestrian sidewalk along the main street for 1,250 residents in Donja Budriga/ Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) and helps increase their safety.



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

School children safely walking down the newly built 950 meter long pedestrian sidewalk in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme.

“This pedestrian sidewalk means a lot to children and us, especially because it has direct impact on their safety. In addition, the project is implemented in a very professional manner,” explains Zoran Đorđević, a resident of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme.

In recent years, the high volume of traffic through the village of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) has endangered the lives of its residents, particularly school children who use this road to go to the Dositej Obradović school. Parents were concerned about the speed of cars that drive on the main road that connects Gjilan/Gnjilane with Ferizaj/Uroševac and the safety of the nearly 100 children who walk along it daily and at night when visibility is much lower, without a sidewalk.

After identifying the problem as a priority through joint discussions with the local community and the municipality of Parteš/Partesh, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program helped the municipality to establish the 950 meter long pedestrian sidewalk along the main street in in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme.

“It is great that the pedestrian sidewalk was built. This pedestrian sidewalk means a lot to children and us, especially because it has direct impact on their safety. In addition, the project is implemented in a very professional manner. It looks great and I am more than happy about it”, explains Zoran Đorđević, one of the residents of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme. Miloš Anđelković, a teenager who lives in this village, says that “this project is of a great importance for the village since this road connects to the main regional road and is not useful only to the children but also adults.”

This is not the first initiative that AKT has worked with this community and municipality to implement. In spring 2015, USAID AKT supported an improved learning environment for children at Dositej Obradović with the replacement of old furniture with 60 new desks and 100 new chairs.

The new sidewalk was a joint initiative that brought together the community and municipal officials to address a need and in doing so, it enabled the Parteš/Partesh municipality to provide an improved service to its citizens. The total value of the contribution from USAID through the AKT program is approximately \$50,000; the municipality of Parteš/Partesh contributed 20% into this project.

Publication date: February 2016



SUCCESS STORY

Goraždevac/Gorazhdec Receives New Energy Efficient LED Street Lighting

USAID supports installation of energy efficient public lighting system in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec (Pejë/Peć) and increases safety of its residents



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

The main road in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec (Pejë/Peć) in evening hours, with the newly installed energy-efficient LED street lighting

“This is the biggest project that was implemented in this village in the last 16 years entirely focusing on the needs of its residents. Now, the whole village is lit so the safety has been increased,” explains Drenko Todorović from Goraždevac/Gorazhdec

In the past, residents of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec in the Pejë/Peć municipality lacked public lighting. One hundred students who attend the second shift at the only local school until 6:30pm were afraid to walk down the pitch-black village streets out of fear of trucks, cars, or stray dogs. Hence, during a multiethnic community forum meeting organized on October 22, 2014 by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, Goraždevac/Gorazhdec prioritized the need for public lighting to make their streets safer for its 950 residents.

As a result, from August until October 2015, when the project was finalized, new energy-efficient LED street lighting was installed to cover almost five kilometers of the main road of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec. Drenko Todorović, a Community Forum member from this village has been involved in this project since its beginning: “This is the biggest project that was implemented in this village in the last 16 years focusing entirely on the needs of its residents. Now, the whole village is lit so the safety has been increased. We have many students who attend the second shift at school and now they are not upset to walk down the main road, while parents worry less about the safety of their children.”

Lighting the main road of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec is also significant because this road is used by the members of all ethnic communities, even though this village is predominantly Kosovo Serb. The head of the Office for Communities for the Pejë/Peć Region, Slobodan Petrović, says, “This project also contributed greatly to the psychological security of the residents, to their feeling of safety and it also improved the quality of their everyday life.” Petrović furthermore pointed out that roads connect people. When members of other communities saw the newly installed energy efficient street lighting in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec, they made an appeal to his office for implementation of similar street lighting projects in Pejë/Peć.

USAID, through the AKT program, contributed a total of \$36,100 to this project, while the municipality of Pejë/Peć invested \$8,889, or 20 percent of the project’s implementation costs. In addition, through a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) for Public Lighting, USAID through AKT program installed energy-efficient LED street lighting in Klinë/Klina, Obiliq/Obilić, and Gračanica/Graçanicë. SIAP is a management tool that allows local governments to provide more efficient municipal services while focusing on needs of citizens.

Publication date: March 2016

Annex C – Newsletters



**ADVANCING
KOSOVO
TOGETHER**



ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) is a three-year program designed to facilitate constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction, primarily between the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb populations. The program aims to accomplish this by improving communication between Kosovo Albanian and minority communities, and the GoK and minority communities, using small-scale infrastructure projects and other community-based initiatives, improving economic opportunities in target municipalities through training and small business grants, and increasing the capacity of target municipalities to respond to the needs of all their citizens with training and technical assistance. AKT partners directly with 16 municipalities: Gračanica/Graçanicë, Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Obiliq/Obiliç, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peç, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, North Mitrovica/ë, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan. The program serves over 600,000 Kosovo residents, including 146,000 citizens from minority communities.



“ USAID AKT team in the field discussing projects with community members in Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm (Gjilan/Gnjilane)

USAID Signs MoUs with Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gračanica/Graçanicë and Vushtrri/Vučitrn

USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope continued visits to USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) partner municipalities during April to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the mayors of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gračanica/Graçanicë, and Vushtrri/Vučitrn formalizing USAID's partnership through the program.

USAID AKT consists of two components: Advancing Kosovo Together – U.S. is implemented by Chemonics International and Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution is implemented by Community Development Fund (CDF) in partnership with AKTIV, Center for Peace and Tolerance (CPT), and Kosovo Relief Development (KRD).

In 2015, USAID will invest \$98,857 in small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Gračanica/Graçanicë municipalities and \$79,428 in Vushtrri/Vučitrn municipality through Advancing Kosovo Together – U.S.

“This program focuses on supporting the municipality and the mayor and his teams' efforts to improve citizens' services here,” the Mission Director said in a statement to the media following the signing in Gjilan/Gnjilane.





“The old inventory was so damaged and shabby that we could barely use it. Projects like this are of great importance for the schools, especially for the quality teaching.”

Creating Better Learning Environment for Children

Unpleasant classroom environment with old, ragged desks and chairs can significantly impact children’s behavior, social interaction, and motivation to learn. In addition, children who use ergonomic desks and chairs are more focused and show more attention.

Even though the satellite primary school “Dositej Obradović” in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) was recently renovated, most of the classrooms were using old furniture. The children were at risk of hurting themselves from rough edges of the desks, and they were seated in non-friendly chairs thus impacting their long-term development.

To improve the learning environment and provide adequate seating for children, the community approached USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) to help the school replace the old furniture with new desks and chairs.

“The old furniture was so damaged and shabby that we could barely use it, but

USAID donates new desks and chairs to the primary school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme and helps create better and healthier learning environment for children

the school did not have enough funds to replace it, so this was a great opportunity to provide a better learning environment for pupils,” explains the school director, Maja Cvetković.

Through the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program the school in Donja

Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme received 60 new desks and 100 new chairs. “Projects like these are of great importance for the schools, especially for the quality teaching. To learn, children need to feel safe and supported. They are very happy now,” explains Cvetković.

A ten-year old, straight-A student, Luka, says the classrooms look much better now. “We don’t have to watch out for the sharp-edged desks which were hurting our wrists. Also, new furniture allows us to write without fear that our clothes will be torn up. I feel more focused now,” explains Luka who is also the class president. “I enjoy attending school now,” proudly explains eleven-year old straight-A student, Katarina, who also enjoys Serbian language classes.

The total value of the grant received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together Program to purchase new desks and chairs for the school in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme is worth \$3,159.

Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo

On April 22, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, in cooperation with Business Center Zvečan, launched the “Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo”. This activity conducted a round table on improving the business environment in Kosovo through stimulation of agricul-

tural production and cooperation between South and North Kosovo. Ten agricultural and food processing experts from North and South Kosovo, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, GIZ, Swiss Contact, and the USAID Agriculture Growth and Rural Opportunities (AGRO) program participated in the discussion on the current situation in

the agricultural sector and potential for improving production and development of market exchange of products between North and South Kosovo. Follow-up activities will include a B2B meeting and six site visits by producers from the North to South Kosovo with the aim of establishing business linkages and improving agriculture in the North.



“This playground was essential to us, because it brings Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian children together in play!”

Let the Children Play Together!

Children can spend hours swinging, climbing, running, and interacting with each other while pretending to be superheroes, pirates, cowboys, transformers, or cosmonauts. Gathering in playgrounds, children explore and invent worlds made to fit their needs. This type of play not only allows children to roam freely in a safe environment, but these games are also of great importance to their development and wellbeing.

Play helps young children interact and develop social skills, imagination, creativity, and a sense of self and belonging that will be essential in their adult lives. They learn how to lead, make decisions, and get along with their peers; through this they build confidence in their own abilities.

Given the far reaching benefits of playgrounds, communities without these facilities feel a tangible loss for their youngest members. For this reason, the multiethnic communities of Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm and Ponesh/Poneš (Gjilan/Gnjilane) approached the USAID

USAID supports purchase of children’s playground equipment in multiethnic villages Ponesh/Poneš and Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm (Gjilan/Gnjilane), and helps communities interact through play

Advancing Kosovo Together Program to ask for help purchasing and installing playground equipment in each village.

To help childhood development in both communities and encourage a stronger bond between minority and majority communities, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program installed playgrounds with seesaws, swings, and slides in the school yards of both villages.

“This playground was essential to us, because it brings Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian children together in play,” explains Fadil Musliu, director of the “Vatra e diturisë” school in Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm where 350 children attend classes.

“The new playground is wonderful. This is important for us because we have a good time here and it’s wonderful for all children,” explains Festina Kurteshi, a thirteen-year old pupil and president of the Children’s Municipal Assembly in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Stefan Trajković, a fourteen-year old pupil from the “Sveti Sava” school in Poneš/Ponesh says the new playground helped children from both communities socialize with each other. “This project means a lot. Now, we hang out and play with each other,” explains Stefan.

The total grant received from the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Program to purchase playground equipment is worth \$2,615 for Gornji Livoč/Livoç i eperëm and \$3,000 for Ponesh/Poneš.

Obiliq/Obilić and Klinë/Klina Take a Holistic Approach to Public Lighting and Waste Management

To foster the best managerial practices among leadership and staff in partner municipalities and increase the quality and efficiency of service delivery, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) introduced the Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) Methodology to the Klinë/Klina and Obilq/Obilić

municipalities in December 2014. In April 2015, these municipalities, under USAID AKT, finalized one SIAP for Public Lighting and one for Waste Management. Through these strategic documents, municipal officials defined a clear vision and created a foundation for improving public lighting in

Obiliq/Obilić and waste management and public lighting in Klinë/Klina. In the forthcoming period, USAID AKT, in cooperation with Obiliq/Obilić and Klinë/Klina will select and fund two priority projects to enable measurable improvement of selected priority services in these municipalities.

Empowering Municipal Offices for Community and Return Continues

In order to strengthen Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCRs), and Municipal Assemblies' Committees for Communities (MACC) to address community needs and issues more effectively, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT), in cooperation with local consulting firm Advanced Solution Development (ASD) Group, designed a training curriculum to empower MOCRs and build their internal staff capacities for efficient protection and promotion of communities' rights, thus enabling equal access of all communities to public services. MOCR and MACC teams in USAID AKT partner municipalities have been trained in advocacy and effective lobbying, project management and municipal planning.

On April 17, 2015, the first workshop on budgeting process and own source revenues was conducted during which the Heads of MOCRs and representatives of MACCs in USAID AKT partner municipalities had the opportunity to learn more about the municipal budgeting processes, budget planning, allocation of municipal funds, and municipal revenues. Participants also learned

about mechanisms they can use to guide the budgeting processes in their municipalities with the goal of ensuring and allocating funds for the needs of communities. Working groups were an additional opportunity for the participants to exercise their knowledge and share experiences on budget planning for MOCRs and MACCs.

"The community representatives in municipalities need constant updating on budgeting processes because it serves MOCR and CC to influence in the budget planning in municipality" said Ahmet Aliu, Communities Officer from the Municipality of Strpce/Shtërpce.

“Most of us did not have needed knowledge on budgeting processes in municipality. As such we were not able to influence this process. Following this workshop we will be closer to the budget planning in our municipalities - Myrvete Pulaj, Communities Officer from the Municipality of Obiliq/Obilic.



TRAINING ON FRUIT PROCESSING FOR WOMEN CONDUCTED IN ŠTRPCE/SHTËRPCË

On Tuesday April 28, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) in cooperation with the Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK) finalized a training on the cost of production for fruit processing for women in

Štrpce/Shtërpce. Twelve women from two multiethnic women's associations - "Ikebana" from the village of Gotovuša/Gotovushë (Štrpce/Shtërpce) and "Borovnicë" from Brod (Štrpce/Shtërpce) - participated in this

ten training session. In addition, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) and IADK will conduct five training sessions on improvement of milk quality for farmers of Leposavić/Leposaviq and Zubin Potok in May.





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ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) is a three-year program designed to facilitate constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction between majority and minority communities. The program aims to accomplish this by improving communication between majority and minority communities, and the GoK and minority communities, using small-scale infrastructure projects and other community-based initiatives, improving economic opportunities in target municipalities through training and small business grants, and increasing the capacity of target municipalities to respond to the needs of all their citizens with training and technical assistance. USAID AKT partners directly with 16 municipalities: Gračanica/Gračanicë, Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Obiliq/Obilić, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peć, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, North Mitrovica/ë, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan. The program serves over 600,000 Kosovo residents, including 146,000 citizens from minority communities.



“ Herbs and fruit growers and honey producers from North Kosovo visit “Frutomania” production facilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane

Workshops on Outreach, Advocacy and Project Management Conducted

To empower Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCRs) and Municipal Assemblies’ Committees for Communities (MACCs) to address community needs and issues more effectively, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) conducted workshops on outreach activities, the project management cycle, and advocacy and project communications.

During the “Advocacy and Project Writing” workshop, 14 heads of MOCRs and MACCs in AKT partner municipalities had an opportunity to learn about designing and implementing effective advocacy campaigns aimed at protecting and promoting community rights. The “Project Management Cycle” workshop gathered 26 representatives of MOCRs in partner municipalities to discuss legislative procedures for project management at the municipal level. Both workshops were conducted in close collaboration with local CSO ASD Group.

The workshop “Outreach Activities in the Field”, conducted in close collaboration with local CSO Network for Peace Movement (NOPM), gathered the heads of MOCRs, Public Information Offices, and representatives of MACCs in Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, and Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to learn how to design and efficiently implement outreach activities in their municipalities in order to address issues that concern communities and returnees.





“During our meeting we talked about our long history of partnership and work together to make a better future here in Istog/Istok. The Advancing Kosovo Together project will be the next chapter in our partnership.”

USAID Signs MoU with the Mayors of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Istog/Istok

On May 7, Mission Director James Hope traveled to Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mayor Svetislav Ivanović outlining the commitment for partnership in the implementation of the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program.

“This program focuses on supporting the municipality and the mayor and his teams’ efforts to improve citizens’ services here,” the Mission Director said in a statement following the signing ceremony.

While in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, the Mission Director and USAID team also met with representatives from the Informal Women’s Group and Youth Council of the Municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to discuss the opportunities offered through AKT and other USAID funded programs given the potential for rural tourism and agriculture in this municipality.

Mission Director James Hope signs Memoranda of Understanding with Mayors of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Istog/Istok outlining the commitment for partnership in the implementation of the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program

On May 29, the Mission Director signed a Memoranda of Understanding with the Mayor of Istog/Istok, Haki Rugova. “The Memorandum of Understanding that we just signed is very important for the new project. During our meeting we talked about our long history of

partnership and work together to make a better future here in Istog/Istok. The Advancing Kosovo Together project will be the next chapter in our partnership. We look forward to working together”, the Mission Director said in a statement following the signing ceremony. The Mission Director thanked the municipality of Istog/Istok for its hospitality during his first visit.

USAID, through AKT-US, will invest \$98,857 for small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Istog/Istok by the end of 2015. Through Advancing Kosovo Together - Local Solution, USAID will invest up to \$100,000 in an infrastructure project, in addition to support for micro, small and medium enterprises, and civil society organizations in Istog/Istok.

Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Istog/Istok were the sixth and seventh AKT’s 16 partner municipalities to host MoU signing ceremonies.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS FROM NORTH VISIT AGRO-BUSINESSES IN SOUTH KOSOVO

On May 14, as part of the “Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo”, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, in cooperation with Business Center Zvečan, conducted a site visit with 11 agricultural producers from Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan to successful agro-businesses in Southern Kosovo.

Herb and fruit growers and honey producers from the north had an opportunity to visit “Frutomania” production facilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane and “Natyra”, a medicinal herb buying center in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, to learn about improving production and how to develop market exchange of agricultural products between North and South Kosovo.

This site visit is the first in a series of six visits to Southern Kosovo for producers from the north to establish business linkages and improve agricultural markets. This program will conclude with a B2B meeting during which farmers from Northern Kosovo will have an opportunity to learn how to adjust their production practices to meet market demands in the south.

Public Debates “My Language, My Right, My Opportunity” Conclude in Istog/Istok

On May 13, as part of the “Supporting Language Commissioner’s Efforts to Improve Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID AKT Partner Municipalities” activity, and with support from the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, the Gračanica/Gračanice-based civil society organization Communication for Social Development (CSD) organized the last in a series of 12 public debates entitled, “My Language, My Right, My Opportunity.”

Language Commissioner Office representatives, more than 20 municipal officials, CSOs, and Community Forum representatives from Istog/Istok participated in this debate. The goal of this activity was to raise the awareness of citizens and local and central representatives regarding the level of implementation of the Law on Use of Official Languages and promote the guidebook outlining the law and the mechanisms available to protect language rights.

These debates, which took place in 12 USAID AKT partner municipalities, saw the participation of Language

Commissioner Office representatives, 337 municipal officials, and community forum and CSOs’ representatives. The first two public debates in this series took place in Parteš/Partesh and Klokot/Kllokot on February 24.

In the first week of September, USAID AKT will organize a four-day workshop with the goal of creating a toolkit/manual for improving the quality of language usage in municipalities. Teams consisting of two people from each municipality, a municipal officer or director and a civil society representative, will participate in drafting this important document.

“These debates, which took place in 12 USAID AKT partner municipalities, saw the participation of Language Commissioner Office representatives, 337 municipal officials, and community forum and CSOs’ representatives.”



Milk Hygiene Packages Delivered to Farmers in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Štrpce/Shtërcë

On May 13, as part of the “Strengthening Capacity and Collaboration of Local Farmers from Northern and Southern Kosovo” activity, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, in cooperation with Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), distributed milk

hygiene packages to 20 Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb farmers in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Štrpce/Shtërcë. Each farmer received alkaline and acid for cleaning milking machines, iodine for udder disinfection, a cup for pre-milking in order to improve the milk

quality, and a cup for udder disinfection. These milk hygiene packages will help farmers, both from majority and minority communities, to improve the quality of final milk products which will result in an increase to their income.





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USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, James Hope, Minister for Communities and Return, Dalibor Jevtić, and USAID AKT Program Director, Amy Denkenberger, speak at the MOCR conference in Pristina

You Cannot Play Tennis by Yourself - Join Us!

Throughout June, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, together with a local CSO, the Gračanica/Gračanicë-based Community Development Institute (CoDe), sponsored eight tennis lessons in the Gračanica/Gračanicë, Pejë/Peç, Klinë/a, and Istog/k municipalities. Approximately 260 children, ages 12 and younger, of different ethnicities had the opportunity to interact with each other and play tennis together.

After successful completion of the lessons, which are part of the “Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sport and Culture” activity, the children will have an opportunity to participate in a tournament which will take place in Gračanica/Gračanicë on July 21. The best tennis players will have an opportunity to win prizes!

If you are a photography enthusiast but have not submitted your photos of beautiful places in Kosovo to the “The Beauty of Diversity” contest implemented by our partner CoDe, you can still vote for your favorite photo via their Facebook page, CoDeKosovo, by liking your favorite picture. The winning photographs will be exhibited in eight of 16 USAID AKT partner municipalities throughout July.





“To be successful however, it is critical that municipal leaders recognize and empower the role of these officers by providing them necessary financial and capacity building support to help them do their jobs

Empowering the Role of Municipal Officers for Communities and Return

At the local government level, the Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns (MOCRs) should be a driving force in protecting and promoting the rights of all communities in their municipalities. But these offices face many problems, such as insufficient capacity and lack of an allocated budget for capital investments which are affecting their ability to be responsive to community needs.

To help achieve their mission and strengthen the role of Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns (MOCR) to address community needs and issues more effectively and to further promote relations between them and the Ministry of Communities and Returns, on June 16, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together organized “The Effective Representation of Communities’ Interests in Local and Central Government in Kosovo” conference in Pristina.

“At its heart, this is a discussion between local and national level government and that kind of dynamic is at the very core of democratic process”, USAID Kosovo Mission Director James Hope said in the conference opening remarks. He pointed out that creating sustainable return, promotion of dialogue and enabling reconciliation between communities

USAID supports “The Effective Representation of Communities’ Interests in Local and Central Government in Kosovo” conference and empowers Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns to achieve their mission

throughout Kosovo cannot be done without the efforts and energy of municipal officers for communities and returns. “To be successful however, it is critical that municipal leaders recognize and empower the role of these officers by providing them necessary financial and capacity building support to help them do their jobs.”

The conference speakers included the Minister for Communities and Return, Dalibor Jevtić, Chairperson of the Committee on Rights, Interests of Communities and Returns in the Assembly of Kosovo, Jasmina Živković, and Zoran Mojsilović, Advisor to the Minister for Local Government Administration. “In the past, we were able to communicate and cooperate with municipal officers through regular coordination meetings during which they were able to give

suggestions to help reach our common goals. But there is a need to improve such cooperation and that is precisely the way I look at this conference,” says Minister Jevtić thanking USAID for organizing the gathering.

Representatives of MOCRs in municipalities throughout Kosovo participated in this event. “Meetings and conferences such as this are very constructive because they give us an opportunity to learn about best practices of our colleagues in other municipalities,” explains Suada Hajdarpašić, MOCR representative from North Mitrovica/ë. “This is first time that I attended a Kosovo wide MOCR conference which allowed us to hear about the work of MOCRs in the municipalities in northern Kosovo,” explains Hajredin Alija, head of the MOCR in Prizren which recently, with the support of USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, hosted representatives of MOCRs in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Gračanica/Gračanicë and Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

Through its Advancing Kosovo Together program, USAID supports MOCR staff at the municipal level by providing forums for exchanges of experiences and best practices and building their internal capacities in areas such as budget preparation, advocacy, outreach, etc.

Public Hearing Held in Plemetina/Plemetin in Obiliq/Obilić Municipality

On June 5, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together organized a public hearing with citizens and municipal representatives in Plemetina/Plemetin (Obiliq/Obilić). This hearing was an excellent opportunity for municipal

authorities to hear citizens’ concerns, and discuss how to improve effective engagement of citizens in the municipal decision making process. More than 50 members of Kosovo Albanian, Kosovo Serb, and RAE

communities, together with the Mayors of Obiliq/Obilić, Xhafer Gashi, Deputy Mayor for Communities, Slaviša Jakovljević, and representatives of local governance took part in the hearing.



“Even though I run a start-up business, my expectations are high because this agreement gives me confidence in my success

Strengthening Cooperation between Businesses throughout Kosovo

Economic growth and cooperation can flourish best in an atmosphere of social stability and openness and vice versa. To foster social reconciliation through business cooperation USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, in cooperation with Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK), facilitated business agreements between two medicinal aromatic herbs growers from Zubin Potok and one of the biggest Kosovo agricultural producers, Istog/Istok-based “Agroprodukt”, establishing their future business cooperation. Through this collaboration, “Agroprodukt” has committed to purchasing all yields of oregano and black hollyhock from these two producers, thus guaranteeing them the price stability and stable domestic market share.

“There is a great demand for these horticultural products,” explains Halid Avdijaj, the owner of “Agroprodukt”, a business which runs around 40 agricultural product buying centers throughout Kosovo and exports medicinal aromatic herbs to the EU market. “My company has also received support through USAID programs, namely from

USAID facilitates the business agreement between farmers from North Kosovo and one of the biggest agricultural producers in the South, strengthening business collaboration throughout Kosovo

the Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) and New Opportunities in Agriculture (NOA) projects, which helped us increase our capacity and now we try to help other businesses,” says Avdijaj.

Both of these northern Kosovo-based producers were already managing family farms producing raspberries, strawberries, plums and apples, when they received support to establish medicinal aromatic herbs farms through USAID Advancing Kosovo Together “Strengthening Capacity and Collaboration of Local Farmers from Northern and Southern Kosovo” project implemented in cooperation with IADK. With this assistance, they received irrigation pipes

and black plastic folia as well as training on soil preparation, seeding, planting, harvesting and drying. “This kind of cooperation is of great importance to us because finding a market for our products is difficult in the North,” explains Milić Božović from Dobroševina village (Zubin Potok) who started to grow oregano on 10 acres of land this year. “I run a family business but I also employ two workers.” Dejan Božović from Zubin Potok grows black hollyhock on five acres on a family farm. “Even though I run a start-up business, my expectations are high because this agreement gives me confidence in my success,” explains Božović whose farm supports an entire family of six.

Through this project, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together also conducted a number of trainings on the cost of production for fruit and vegetable processing for women from Štrpce/Sh-trëpcë and Leposavić/Leposaviq and training sessions on improvement of milk quality for farmers of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Štrpce/Shtrëpcë

Women Entrepreneurs from Northern Kosovo Learn about Beekeeping

On June 22, with the support of the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, the women’s association “Mundësia” organized the first in the series of theoretical beekeeping training workshops in North Mitrovica/ë. Ten women, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs, and Kosovo Turks from four northern municipalities participated. Later in the week, this multiethnic group

of women also had an opportunity to participate in four hands-on training sessions in beekeeping. This activity is part of the “North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative aimed at increasing employment opportunities and household incomes of women entrepreneurs, primarily in Northern Kosovo, by creating more favorable

conditions for selling their products. This activity has a special focus on the ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers. Through a series of trainings, women will have an opportunity to learn not only about beekeeping but also the production of sweets, fruit and vegetable processing, dairy processing, and soap production and decoration.

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Obiliq/Obilić Municipality

On June 8, 2015, in Obiliq/Obilić, USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director Chris Edwards and the Mayor of Obiliq/Obilić Xhafer Gashi signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a commitment to partnership in the implementation of the Advancing Kosovo Together program.

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program consists of two components – one implemented by Chemonics International (AKT-US) and the other implemented by Community Development Fund (CDF) in partnership with AKTIV, Center for Peace and Tolerance (CPT), and Kosovo Relief & Development (KRD) (AKT-LS).

USAID, through AKT-US, will invest \$89,142 for small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Obiliq/Obilić by the end of 2015. USAID through AKT-LS will invest an estimated \$90,700 to rehabilitate two roads in the village of Plemetina/Plemetin (Obiliq/Obilić),

in addition to support for micro, small and medium enterprises, and civil society organizations.

Currently, USAID through its Advancing Kosovo Together program, is installing a heating system and rehabilitating a primary school in the village of Crkvena Vodica/Caravodicë. Also, a primary school in the same village previously received IT equipment.

“USAID, through AKT-US, will invest \$89,142 for small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Obiliq/Obilić by the end of 2015



DISCUSSION FORUM ON OWN SOURCE REVENUES CONDUCTED IN ZVEČAN/ZVEÇAN

On June 23, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance of Kosovo, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together conducted a discussion forum on own source revenues (OSR), property tax registration, and the 2016 budget with the four northern municipalities in Zvečan/Zveçan. The forum speakers included

Petrit Popova, director of the Department of Municipal Budget at the Ministry of Finance, and Shkëlzen Morina, Director of the Property Tax Department at the Ministry of Finance. More than 30 municipal officials participated in this forum, including the Mayor of Zvečan/Zveçan, Vučina Janković, Mayor of

Leposavić/q, Dragan Jablanović, Mayor of Zubin Potok, Stevan Vulović, and North Mitrovica/ë Assembly Chairperson, Ksenija Božović. The aim of the forum was to discuss the municipal budget – trends, challenges, and opportunities, municipal mid-term budget framework, 2016-2018 budget planning,





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USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope signs MOU with Leposavić/q Mayor Dragan Jablanović

Signing MoUs with Zvečan/Zveçan and Leposavić/q Municipalities

The Mission Director signs MOUs with Zvečan/Zveçan Mayor Vučina Janković and Leposavić/q Mayor Dragan Jablanović

On July 31, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope traveled to Zvečan/Zveçan and Leposavić/q to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the mayors of each municipality, formalizing USAID's partnership through the Advancing Kosovo Together activity. "This is a program that supports the leadership you have shown in Zvečan/Zveçan to strengthen the relationship between government and citizens. And we will support your efforts to build transparency and participation in local governance in Zvečan/Zveçan," the Mission Director said in a statement to the media following the signing in Zvečan/Zveçan, pointing out that USAID and Zvečan/Zveçan have been partners for a many years. "Over the years, nearly four million USD has been invested in this community through USAID programs."

Mayor Janković of Zvečan/Zveçan said that his municipality has a great partnership with USAID. "We hope that USAID will continue supporting public institutions, private business sector and NGO sector in Zvečan/Zveçan to create a better future for all our citizens." The Mayor of Leposavić/q asserted that the overall objective of all USAID projects implemented in Leposavic is job creation. "Unemployment is the biggest problem here."





“Workshops like these are of great importance to women producers in this region because they do not have many opportunities to learn about new technologies and goat farming trends in the world

Women Entrepreneurs from Northern Kosovo Learn About New Trends in Goat Farming and Dairy Production

In Kosovo, goat milk is regarded as a natural source of nutrients that boosts the immune system, especially when the milk is raw and organic. With the increasing popularity of natural foods in the country, demand for goat cheese and other goat-milk products is growing. Many agricultural producers in Kosovo, however, and especially women from Northern Kosovo, struggle to find opportunities to learn more about new farming and dairy processing methods.

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in collaboration with the women’s association “Mundësia”, has been addressing this gap in opportunity by organizing a series of 12 training workshops on milk processing and goat farming for women entrepreneurs interested in expanding their business in this sector. So far, feedback from participants has been positive. One of the women who attended these workshops held in Zvečan/Zveçan throughout July is 22-year old student of food processing technology, Marija Marković, from North Mitrovica/ë. She

USAID supports “The North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative and increases employment opportunities for women entrepreneurs

says, “When I finish my studies, I plan to join my brother in our family business because he recently started the goat farm. So, the knowledge that I acquire during my studies and these trainings, I plan to apply in our business. Workshops like these are of great importance to women producers in this region because they do not have many opportunities to learn about new technologies and goat farming trends in the world.”

Ljubinka Vukmirović, a goat farmer from Srbovac/Sërboc (Zvečan/Zveçan), who has sold goat milk and cheese in the

local market for many years, also found the workshops useful. She says, “I had an opportunity to learn about new methods during these trainings and since I am planning to expand my farm, these workshops mean a lot to me.” Meanwhile, 26-year old Sanja Vukosavljević from Grabovac/Graboc (Zvečan/Zveçan), who is married to a goat farmer and wants to acquire knowledge on new trends in this sector to help increase their family income, says, “These trainings will help me become more involved in our family business. I strongly believe that agricultural business is our future, especially production of healthy organic food.”

USAID’s training workshops are part of the “North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative to increase employment opportunities and household incomes of women entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products with a focus on the ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers.

Workshop on Drafting Mid-Term Budget Framework Held in Zvečan/Zveçan

On July 8, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program held a workshop entitled “Drafting of Med-Term Budget Framework” in Zvečan/Zveçan. More than 10 municipal officials participated from the northern

municipalities of Zvečan/Zveçan and Zubin Potok, where they learned how to draft a mid-term municipal budget framework. Representatives of the Ministry of Finance, including Petrit Popova, director of the Department of

of Municipal Budget at the Ministry of Finance, and USAID Partnership for Development (PFD) program also took part in the workshop to help participants learn about basic legislation on the budget, budget calendar, etc.

Multiethnic Tennis Tournament Held in Gračanica/Graçanicë

On July 22, in Gračanica/Graçanicë, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, together with local CSO, Gračanica/Graçanicë-based Community Development Institute (CoDe), held a tennis tournament as part of the “Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sport and Culture” grant. At this event, 20 children ages 12 years and younger of different ethnicities living in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Prizren, participated and had the opportunity to compete and win attractive prizes.

The tennis tournament was the culmination of eight tennis lessons that AKT and CoDe sponsored in June under the title “You Cannot Play Tennis by Yourself – Join Us!” in the Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, and Istog/k municipalities. These lessons brought together approximately 260 children, ages 12 and younger, of different ethnicities, giving them the opportunity to interact with each other and play tennis together.

After successful completion of these lessons, the children had an opportunity to participate in this tournament.

On July 22, as part of the same project, “The Beauty of Diversity” street photo exhibition was opened in downtown Gračanica/Graçanicë. This exhibition is part of the eponymous photo contest which ran through August 2. All interested citizens were able to vote for a favorite photo via CoDe’s Facebook page, “CoDeKosovo,” by liking their favorite picture. The winning photographs will be exhibited during the conference under the title, “The Beauty of Diversity”, which will take place in Gračanica/Graçanicë on August 14.

“More than 20 children ages 12 years and younger of different ethnicities living in Gračanica/Graçanicë, Pejë/Peć and Prizren had the opportunity to compete and win attractive prizes



Women from North Kosovo Learn about Food Production and Sale Skills

On July 23, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, together with the women’s association “Mundësia,” finalized a three-day training workshop on production and sales skills for 15 minority and majority women from northern Kosovo. Two-day theoretical training workshops were conducted at the Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC) in North Mitrovica/ë, where women had an opportunity to learn about fruit and vegetable

preservation and homemade processing. Meanwhile, a practical training workshop and site visit were conducted in South Mitrovica/ë municipality at “Sofra,” a small family business in the village of Frashër/Svinjare. During this visit, the women had an opportunity to learn about the equipment used during food processing process, including: a duplicator with multi-function tools, food sterilizer, different mixers, cutters,

and vegetable and fruit blenders for homemade products. This activity is part of the “North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative, which aims to increase employment opportunities for women entrepreneurs, primarily in Northern Kosovo, by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products with a focus on ethnic minorities, rural, unemployed women, and single mothers.





ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER



ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) is a three-year program designed to facilitate constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction between majority and minority communities. The program aims to accomplish this by improving communication between majority and minority communities, and the GoK and minority communities, using small-scale infrastructure projects and other community-based initiatives, improving economic opportunities in target municipalities through training and small business grants, and increasing the capacity of target municipalities to respond to the needs of all their citizens with training and technical assistance. USAID AKT partners directly with 16 municipalities: Gračanica/Graçanicë, Klokot/Kllokot, Parteš/Partesh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Obiliq/Obiliç, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Klinë/Klina, Pejë/Peç, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, North Mitrovica/ë, Leposaviç/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan. The program serves over 600,000 Kosovo residents, including 146,000 citizens from minority communities.



The USAID AKT team explains how to monitor the water supply rehabilitation project to the community representative in Viçë/Viča; implementation is expected to start in September.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MAJORITY AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) seeks one or more experienced, locally registered NGO(s) to perform the following activities: 1) work with community members and local civil society organizations to (a) participate in public discussions; (b) gather, validate, and articulate community priorities; (c) form functional Joint Working Groups (JWG) composed of CSOs, community members and municipal officials; 2) flesh out community priorities in white papers intended to give actionable information for municipal decision-making; compile white papers to form a Common Municipal Development Agenda; 3) build the capacity of the JWG to maintain organization, implement initiatives as partners with the municipality, and monitor and evaluate municipal initiatives and service delivery, and 4) organize and implement a series of meetings with local government, JWGs, and communities and CSO representatives to engage in productive discussions via (a) public budget hearings and (b) public hearings in 12 AKT partner municipalities. The AKT program anticipates awarding one or more grants expected to range from 40,000-60,000 EUR.

A full application package can be requested by emailing: grants@usaidakt.org or by downloading it at: www.usaidakt.org/documents. Applications must be submitted in hard copy no later than 16:00 hours September 18, 2015, to the following address: USAID Advancing Kosovo Together, Street Mujo Ulqinaku No 8, Pejton Place, 10000 Pristina, Kosovo.



AVANCOJMË KOSOVËN
SË BASHKU

UNAPREDIMO KOSOVO
ZAJEDNO





“Implementation of this project was of grave importance to us because the streets were dark, so our priority was to install public lights to make the village safer

Making Our Streets Safer

For a long time, schools along the main road of the eastern Kosovo multiethnic village of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm in the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë municipality lacked public lighting. Over 320 schoolchildren attending the village's elementary school, and over 140 attending the village's secondary school were upset and afraid to walk down the dark, unlit street. In December 2014, during a multiethnic community forum meeting organized by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, residents prioritized the need for public lighting to make their streets safer. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë also committed to funding 20 percent of the project's implementation costs.

Since July 2015, seven kilometers of the village's main road have been covered by new energy-efficient LED street lighting. Aleksandar Antić, a 25-year old Community Forum member, has been involved in this project since its beginning. "Implementation of this project was of grave importance to us

USAID makes streets safer in multiethnic community of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm by installing LED street lights

because the streets were dark so our priority was to install public lights to make the village safer," explains Antić, emphasizing that around 150 young people live in Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm. "We are very active and engaged in the community matters because we want to improve our living conditions. For example, more than 10 young people, including myself, were actively involved in the implementation of this project."

Nebojša Arsić, Director of Public Services Department in the municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, says that after decentralization in 2009, this municipality was expanded, creating an area of over 200 square kilometers – one of the biggest in Kosovo, and one with the lowest population density rates.

"We are facing many challenges, for example some of the villages have neither water supply system nor sewage, but our budget is insufficient to address all these problems, so USAID support is of great importance to us. And in partnership with USAID AKT program we managed to install this latest LED technology in Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm," explains Arsić, pointing out that the municipality is paying the electric bill for the public lights in the village.

The total value of the grant received from USAID through Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is \$32,725. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë invested \$8,180 into this project.

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN NORTH KOSOVO

In partnership with the Association of Women "Sabor", the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program began broadcasting a series of radio programs on Radio Kontakt Plus in North Mitrovica/ë with the aim of promoting women-owned businesses in northern municipalities. Through these radio programs, women business owners are

promoting their products and sharing their experience in managing their business and in doing so inspiring other women in northern Kosovo to start their own businesses. Through the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, 15 women-owned businesses will receive support in branding and packaging of their products and

and participate in various business management trainings. These activities, which are part of the "Business Promotion Program for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo" initiative, are designed to increase participants' managerial and financial capabilities and the percentage of sales for women-owned businesses in northern Kosovo.



“ I established linkages with agricultural associations from south Kosovo which is significant for the development of a small agricultural business

Developing Business Linkages throughout Kosovo

Business linkages are one of the best ways for entrepreneurs to enhance the competitiveness of their businesses, help their products reach wider markets, and share information in technology, management skills, and specialized knowledge. To build such connections, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, in partnership with Business Center Zvečan, organized six site visits for women and youth agricultural producers in north Kosovo to south Kosovo.

In May 2015, medicinal herbs and berry growers, as well as honey producers from the North visited the following southern agricultural processing centers: the “Scardus” raspberry fields in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, the “Biobuzmi” raspberry and strawberry plantations in Ferizaj/Uroševac, the “Frutomania” production facilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane, and the “Natyra” medicinal herbs processing center in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë. During these visits, northern producers learned how to improve their production and to

USAID brings women and youth agricultural producers from North to South Kosovo, helping establish business linkages and improve agriculture in North Kosovo

develop market exchange of agriculture products with the south. Danijela Milić, a raspberry grower from Zubin Potok whose family grows ‘Polka’ raspberries and hazelnuts in the village of Velji Breg/Velibreg, said, “I participated in the several visits and I am overwhelmed with positive impressions. I have a start-up business, and the knowledge on growing berries and latest business management skills that I acquired during these visits is of great importance to me. Also, I established linkages with agricultural associations from south Kosovo which is significant for the development of a small agricultural business.”

In August 2015, more than ten agricultural women and youth producers visited the Berry Fair in Rečane/Rečan in Prizren, where they attended a presentation on berry growing practices. Perka Vlasic from Zvečan/Zvečan, said, “I have two greenhouses where I grow vegetables. I received one greenhouse from the USAID Kosovo Cluster and Business Support program. Also, I also have around 100 bushes of ‘Polka’ raspberries and I am eager to expand my production and access to markets. Today, I also had an opportunity to see processed berry products, such as compote and juice.” Vlasic added that this was her first visit to Prizren region in almost 30 years.

These visits are part of a six-month-long “Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo,” and will conclude with a business-to-business meeting in September 2015, during which farmers from north Kosovo will meet with small and medium-sized enterprises from south Kosovo to create new business partnerships.

INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG KOSOVARS

On August 4, 2015, as part of the “Increasing Employability of Young Kosovars” initiative implemented in partnership with the Management Development Associates Foundation (MDAF), ten entrepreneurs from majority and minority communities in USAID Advancing Kosovo Together

partner municipalities had the opportunity to participate in a best business ideas competition. The two winning participants were Diell Misini from Vushtrri/Vučitrn with an idea for WiFi Marketing and Ana Staletović from Štrpce/Shtërpçë with a business idea in the agricultural sector. Each won awards

of 1,000 EUR to start fund their business ventures. Both winning business ideas will be incubated at the MDAF business incubator for a period of three to six months, while five participants, whose business ideas showed potential, will receive a two month internship with MDAF.

Promoting Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Promoting tolerance, accepting ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, and integrating ethnic minorities are all important for building a prosperous and stable society. To encourage this process, and help raise the awareness of importance of interethnic cooperation, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in partnership with Gračanica/Gračanicë-based non-governmental organization, Community Development Institute (CoDe), implemented the four-month initiative, "Strengthening Interaction among Communities through Sports and Culture."

As part of this initiative, AKT and CoDe sponsored eight tennis lessons under the title, "You Cannot Play Tennis by Yourself – Join Us!" in the Gračanica/Gračanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, and Istog/k municipalities. More than 260 children, ages 12 and younger, of different ethnicities participated.

"Before this tournament, I never had an opportunity to play tennis with children of other ethnicities. So this is important to me," said 12-year-old Binesa Kora from Prizren who participated in the multiethnic tennis tournament in Gračani-

ca/Gračanicë. "I have been playing tennis for two months now and I would like to win today. I met children from other municipalities and I am happy about it," proudly explained eight-year-old Marija Crvenković from Gračanica/Gračanicë. Amir Sadiković, a fifth grade student from Pejë/Peć, has been playing tennis for two years: "This tournament is important because it brought children from across Kosovo together."

Another part of this initiative was "The Beauty of Diversity" street photograph exhibition in Gračanica/Gračanicë, Pejë/Peć, Klinë/a, Istog/k, Ranilug/Ranilug and Štrpce/Shtërpçë, which was part of a social media photograph contest. The winning photographs were exhibited during "The Beauty of Diversity" conference in Gračanica/Gračanicë on August 14, 2015, which celebrated the importance of cultural heritage preservation in Kosovo.

Jozefina Kolić, winner of the contest, described one of her photographs, a dove of peace, as one that "means a lot to me because it shows our children and they are our future. We have responsibility to preserve our heritage so we could pass it on to them."



GUIDING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

To help partner municipalities guide their capacity-building and human and institutional development initiatives, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program, in partnership with local consulting firm RTC Consulting,

prepared customized Capacity Development Plans for 16 partner municipalities. These plans envision and propose more than 200 interventions and initiatives related to capacity building in the program's partner

municipalities. The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together team will explore the possibility of supporting the 16 partner municipalities in implementation of the most important initiatives, engaging line ministries in these efforts as appropriate.





**ADVANCING
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ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

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Ambassador Delawie and Mission Director Hope met with women entrepreneurs, beneficiaries of USAID AKT

Ambassador Delawie and Mission Director Meet with Women Entrepreneurs from North Kosovo

On September 17, U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, the Honorable Greg Delawie, and USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, James Hope, met with four women entrepreneurs from the north, beneficiaries of USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT), to discuss their successes and the challenges that face their businesses.

In April, the AKT program partnered with Business Center Zvečan to launch the "Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo" to establish business linkages and improve agriculture in North Kosovo.

In the same month, USAID AKT, in partnership with the women's association "Sabor", launched the "Business Promotion for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo" initiative to help women learn about business registration, finance, tax regulation, marketing, public speaking, and communications.

In May, USAID AKT partnered with the women's association "Mundësia" to launch the "North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building" initiative to increase employment opportunities and household incomes of women entrepreneurs, primarily in North Kosovo, by creating more favorable conditions for selling their products. The program focused primarily on ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers.





“Many young people have great businesses ideas, maybe better than mine, but they lack in support and funds to implement them

Increasing Employability of Young Kosovars

Youth are the backbone of a country. If a country has a high unemployment rate and limited prospects of education or training, its youth can feel stressed and desperate. They can also be unproductive, to the detriment of broad economic development. To help Kosovar high school and university graduates develop entrepreneurial skills, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program partnered with the Management Development Associates Foundation (MDAF) in March 2015, to launch a six-month-long initiative offering training and individual coaching on business plan development.

The initiative, called Increasing Employability of Young Kosovars, provided trainings to 43 young men and women from minority and majority communities. Many of them also participated in a business idea competition which started in June this year. This competition awarded the winners the opportunity to implement their business ideas with support from the MDAF's business incubator for three to six months. On

USAID supports the Increasing Employability of Young Kosovars initiative and boosts youth's opportunities for professional development

August 27, 2015, the two winning participants were psychology major Ana Staletović from Štrpce/Shtërpçë with a business idea in the agricultural sector, and pastry shop manager Diell Misini from Vushtrri/Vučitrn with an idea for marketing services via smartphones and tablets using MicroTik Router placed in coffee shops. They both signed agreements with MDAF and received monetary awards of \$1,126 each to start fund their business ventures.

Both winners expressed appreciation for this support. Staletović explained, “My business idea is about growing raspberries. This is our family business so

I decided to improve our prospects. These initiatives are very important not only because of high youth unemployment rate in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, but also because it is very challenging to be a woman entrepreneur, so this kind of support is of great importance to me.”

Misini, meanwhile, now had no doubt he will achieve success in his business ventures: “My business partner from Croatia and I tried to implement my business idea but we didn't have enough money to finalize it. So the money that I got as an award will help us to take up where we left off. Many young people have great businesses ideas, maybe better than mine, but they lack in support and funds to implement them.”

Five other competition participants will receive a two-month internship with MDAF. One of the participants, 18-year old Stefan Stojanović from Parteš/Partesh, who recently enrolled at the American University in Kosovo (AUK), said: “I am absolutely sure that I will learn a lot in the following months and I am eager to start!”

Procedures on Forgiveness of Public Debts Workshop Held in Pristina

On September 29, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT), in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance's Property Tax Department, conducted a seminar entitled “Procedures on Forgiveness of Public Debts” in Pristina. This workshop gathered together approximately 30

municipal authorities, property tax managers, property tax data base operators, and budget and finance directors from USAID AKT partner municipalities to familiarize them with recently adopted procedures for forgiveness of public debts.

On the same day, USAID AKT also took

part in a seminar entitled “Inter-Municipal Cooperation” by conducting a presentation on utilization of inter-municipal cooperation for effective municipal service provision. This activity was funded by the Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution program.

Creating New Economic Opportunities

USAID Supports Multiethnic Business to Business Meeting (B2B) in Gračanica/Graçanicë

On September 29, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of a multiethnic Business to Business (B2B) meeting in Gračanica/Graçanicë organized by the AKT program in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo (AmCham Kosovo). "It is a unique opportunity to bring various businesses and business owners together to talk about how to cooperate together and how to create new economic opportunities," Mission Director Hope said in his opening remarks.

Together with the Mayor of Gračanica/Graçanicë, Vladeta Kostić, AmCham Kosovo Secretary General of the Board, Ardi Shita, and Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC) President, Safet Gërzhaliu, Director Hope met with more than 60 majority and minority owned participating businesses and discussed the business environment in Kosovo and how to improve it through cooperation between majority and minority owned businesses. Director Hope discussed the importance of the role that the municipality plays in creating a positive and constructive business environment for economic growth and economic opportunities: "That is the kind of vision and

"It is unique opportunity to bring various businesses and business owners together to talk about how to cooperate together and how to create new economic opportunities"

leadership that is needed from municipal leaders to promote economic growth, and that leadership has to be matched with inspiration and energy and search for the economic opportunity from the chambers of commerce and from all the business owners in this room." The USAID Contract Law Enforcement (CLE) Program also took part in this activity and held a session "Put it on Paper," while the Crimson Finance Fund conducted a session on access to finance.

This activity was funded by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution. The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program consists of two components – one implemented by Chemonics International and the other referred to as USAID Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution implemented by CDF in partnership with AKTIV, CPT and KR D.



Women Entrepreneurs from North Kosovo Receive Branding Solutions Packages

On September 4, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in partnership with women association "Sabor" delivered branding solutions packages to five women producers from North Kosovo. This activity is part of the five-month "Business Promotion for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern

Kosovo" initiative which aims to help women promote their products throughout Kosovo.

As part of this initiative, more than 35 women had the opportunity to attend a series of four training workshops during which they learned about business registration, finance, tax regulation,

marketing and sales, public speaking, and communications.

In early October, ten additional women entrepreneurs will also receive complete branding packages which will help them develop and better position their products in the competitive marketplace.



My Language, My Right, My Opportunity

Seminar on Supporting the Language Commissioner's Efforts to Improve the Use of Official Languages held in Ajvalija/Hajvalia

On September 10, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, in partnership with CSO Communication for Social Development (CSD) organized a seminar on "Supporting the Language Commissioner's Efforts to Improve the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID AKT Partner Municipalities" in Ajvalija/Hajvalia.

The aim of this three-day seminar was to bring together representatives from local authorities and civil society organizations from 12 USAID AKT partner municipalities and the Office of the Language Commissioner (OLC) to produce a Manual for Improvement of Use of Official Languages in Municipalities.

In his introductory remarks, Deputy Director of USAID/Kosovo's Democracy and Governance Office, Randall Olson, emphasized the importance of language and language rights. "I am very pleased that our program Advancing Kosovo Together is working in our partner municipalities where there are language issues that need to be tackled and there is a need for inter-cooperation and interaction between various

communities as never before," Deputy Director Olson said.

Director of administration in the municipality of Klokot/Kllokot, Hidajet Ahmeti, said this practical seminar gave him an opportunity to share his concerns and ideas with counterparts in other municipalities. "Today, the participants agreed that we all share the same problems, lack of budget and personnel. So, we are trying to come up with recommendations how to improve the use of languages by deploying our existing municipal capacity," said Ahmeti, one of 24 representatives of local authorities and civil society organizations who participated in this seminar.

This seminar is part of a nine-month long "Supporting the Language Commissioner's Efforts to Improve the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID AKT Partner Municipalities Initiative" that aims to raise awareness of citizens' and local and central institutions' representatives about the level of implementation of the Law on Use of Official Languages and how to improve its adherence.



TV Series "Good News" Premieres on September 5

Each Monday, AKT partners from the NGO Srpsko slovo, Aleksandra Miladinović and Imer Mushkolaj, look for answers to the question: "Is there any good news in Kosovo?" This TV series, which premiered on September 5, is part

of AKT's "Good News – Life Stories that Bring People Closer" media initiative which aims to help create a better environment for interaction and cooperation between majority and minority communities in Kosovo.

You can watch the show in both Albanian and Serbian each Monday on RTV Kim, TV Herc, TV Puls, and TV Mir. To watch the Good News show online, click on the link:

<https://vimeo.com/album/3559859>





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TOGETHER**

**See
the world
through
my eyes**



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**Another successfully completed project!
The rehabilitation of the road and water storm outlets in Banjskë/Banjska (Vushtrri/Vučitrn)**

See the World through My Eyes

USAID AKT launches its Improving Intercultural Communication initiative

Intercultural communication matters! Being able to deal with cultural difference peacefully means creating productive and safe environments for all communities in Kosovo.

To encourage people to respect richness of cultures and traditions from different ethnic groups living in Kosovo, AKT launched the five-month long innovative creative media campaign "See the World through My Eyes" through TV, web portals and social networks.

This innovative initiative which kicked off in September consists of social media campaign, billboards, TV features, and news stories and editorials in web portals and newspapers. You can already check out our billboards in Gračanica/Gračanicë, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Pejë/Peç, and North Mitrovica/ë.

Our aim is to raise awareness on improving intercultural communication and interethnic cooperation between all communities living in Kosovo, including majority and minority owned businesses, CSOs, women associations, youth groups and other non-formal groups.

Like us on Facebook! We'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments: www.facebook.com/ImprovingInterculturalCommunication/





“ Now, my business skills are well-rounded, I am able to distinguish between what is or isn't important and I am confident in my abilities to succeed

Strengthening and Promoting Women Businesses from North Kosovo

USAID supports the “Business Promotion for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo” initiative and helps women learn how to better promote their products

There are many reasons why branding matters for a new business – to name only a few, branding helps companies promote recognition; it also helps create trust with customers, who are more likely to purchase products from a business with a strong, clear, and consistent message, and offers innovative and creative design solutions. To help women producers from north Kosovo develop and better position their products in the competitive markets, on October 14, the USAID AKT program, in partnership with the women association “Sabor”, delivered branding solutions packages to ten women entrepreneurs.

These activities are part of the five-month “Business Promotion for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo” initiative which started in April 2015 in order to help women better

better promote their products throughout Kosovo. “Through this initiative, we received a total product wrapped in an appropriate package and marked with a newly designed logo. Our products such as, cherry and blackberry jam and ajvar, are now recognizable and ready to be placed in the market,” explains Snežana Delić from the women association “Kod,” established in 2014 in order to empower rural women while preserving and promoting local customs and traditional products.

As part of this initiative, more than 35 women also had an opportunity to attend four training workshops on business registration, finance, tax regulation, marketing and selling, public speaking and communications.

“These workshops helped me to learn how to run my start-up business. Now, my business skills are well-rounded, I am

able to distinguish between what is or isn't important and I am confident in my abilities to succeed. To put it simply, I don't feel lost anymore! So, I can't begin to describe just how important this kind of support was to me,” explains Zvezdana Timotijević, a 27-year-old owner of the Davidova zvezda (David's Star) art studio which provides services of furniture restoration using techniques such as decoupage.

In addition to the training workshops, 15 women entrepreneurs participated in a roundtable on October 14, 2015 where they exchanged business ideas and discussed their future expectations and challenges.

Also, in early September 2015, as part of the same initiative, five women entrepreneurs received branding solutions packages, such as, posters, catalogs, professional logo design, etc.

Workshop on Progress of Service Improvement Action Plans Held in Pristina

On October 23, 2015 USAID AKT conducted a workshop under the title, “Review progress and status of Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAP)”, in Pristina. This workshop gathered 30 representatives of SIAP working groups from nine AKT partner municipalities. The participants presented their SIAPs,

shared their experience and challenges and further familiarized themselves with the type of projects that USAID AKT Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solutions could finance, including procedures they need to follow while submitting project proposals to USAID for funding. During this workshop, the

participants also shared their desire to initiate exchange visits among municipalities that apply SIAP methodology in improving municipal services, and share SIAP success stories with all Kosovo's municipalities by publishing a SIAP Handbook.

Strengthening Partnerships with Municipalities

USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director, Mike de la Rosa, and Director of Democracy and Governance Office, Sarah Buchanan, visited the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) partner municipalities in October 2015 to sign the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the mayors of Pejë/Peć, Gazmend Muhaxheri, and Ranilug/Ranillug, Gradimir Mikić, formalizing USAID's partnership through the program.

USAID AKT consists of two components: Advancing Kosovo Together – U.S. (AKT-US) is implemented by Chemonics International, and Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution (AKT-LS) is implemented by the Community Development Fund (CDF) in partnership with AKTIV, Center for Peace and Tolerance (CPT), and Kosovo Relief Development (KRD).

By the end of this year, through AKT-US, USAID will invest approximately \$80,000 in Pejë/Peć for public lighting in Goraždevac/Gorazhdevcë, equipping the community center in Belo

Polje/Bellopoje, civil society grants aimed at improving implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, improving intercultural communication, strengthening interaction through sport and cultural events, and business grants. In the same municipality, through AKT-LS, USAID will invest an estimated amount of \$64,830 in rehabilitating the water supply system in the village Belo Polje/Bellopoje (Pejë/Peć), in addition to support for micro, small and medium enterprises, and civil society organizations.

By the end of this year, through AKT-US, USAID will invest approximately \$70,000 in Ranilug/Ranillug, and additionally through AKT-LS, USAID will invest an estimated amount of \$96,502 in rehabilitation of the cultural centre in Ranilug/Ranillug.

“USAID through AKT-US will invest app. \$80,000 in Pejë/Peć and \$70,000 in Ranilug/Ranillug by the end of 2015



Facilitating Interethnic Business Cooperation

On October 2, 2015 seven minority-owned businesses, beneficiaries of USAID AKT, participated in the Agricultural, Agro-industrial and Inverse Trade Fair in Pristina, organized by the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Trade and Industry and supported by the Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE) Program (financed by SDC and implemented by Swisscontact). At the fair, business owners exhibited their

products and met with clients and businesses to form partnerships. Three minority owned businesses also agreed to supply majority owned businesses with products – namely, company Šijak from Parteš/Partesh will provide ajvar (spicy pepper paste) to a restaurant in Pristina, Aqua Breza will supply water to Dani from Pristina, and company Brendi-Kos will pack Turkish delights under Intercoop branding.

Also, on October 8, in North Mitrovica/e, USAID AKT, in partnership with Business Center Zvečan (BCZ), facilitated the signage of a contract between the Leposavić/q-based buying center and Gjilan/Gnjilane-based MOEA – Frutomania which is one of the biggest fruit processing companies in Kosovo. This activity is part of the Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo.





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ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

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In a joint effort, the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë and the USAID AKT project rehabilitate the water supply system in the agricultural village of Viča/Viçë

Marking Women's Entrepreneurship Day

On November 19, 2015, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) project, in partnership with women's association Mundësia, organized the Women's Entrepreneurship Day (WED) Conference in North Mitrovica/ë in observance of this international day dedicated to women-owned businesses. The Advancing Kosovo Together Program Director, Amy Denkenberger, welcomed more than 75 women entrepreneurs and business owners, and pledged continued AKT support to women-owned businesses in northern Kosovo.

This conference included two panel discussions. The first panel, Women in Entrepreneurship: Starting, Growing and Leading New Ventures, included the Mitrovica/ë North Administration Office Principal Executive Officer, Adrijana Hodžić, Head of Kosovo Tax Administration in, North Mitrovica/ë, Katarina Ađančić from, and a lecturer at International Business College Mitrovica, Mihone Kerolli,.

The second panel, Women in Business: Networking, Negotiating and Bridging the Gender Gap, included Ms. Denkenberger, Agnesa Shipoli, female entrepreneur from South Mitrovica/ë; Olga Ilić, female entrepreneur from North Mitrovica/ë, Rrustem Abiti from Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, and Jelena Đokić, UNDP Advisor North Mitrovica/ë.





“Yesterday, we had a joint initiative – I gathered the children from the school and we cleaned the park and playground. I am trying to teach them that this place belongs to them now and that they are responsible for its wellbeing

Brightening the Smiles of Children and their Families in Bostane/Bostan

USAID supports establishment of playground and park in Bostane/Bostan (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) creating a safe environment for children from mixed communities to play

When Father Steva Mitrić was appointed as the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë priest a year ago, the first thing he noticed is that there was no playground for children in this municipality with a population of more than 11,000.

Since the Orthodox Church in Kosovo owns considerable land in this diverse municipality located in central Kosovo, and given widespread support for the under the newly appointed priest's initiative, the Church decided to allocate land for building the playground and park in Bostane/Bostan, one of 26 mixed villages in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë.

After having solved the problem of where to establish the playground, Father Steva, who is also the Raska-Prizren diocese coordinator for religious education, started looking for donors who would help him with the implementation of this project. Luckily, all the pieces came together when the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, jointly with the

municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, agreed to financially support this initiative. The construction work started in November 2015, and was finalized in the same month.

“This playground brightens the landscape now, and it's putting smiles on children's and families' faces. Now, our children can also play in the evening hours without worrying about their safety, because the park is well-lit,” explains Father Steva who has two young sons.

In the nearby primary school “Miladin Popović”, 58 children are receiving instruction. This ethnically mixed school is a second home to Kosovo Serbs and Roma children who now have another home to share – a new playground with the park. “Yesterday, we had a joint initiative – I gathered the children from the school and we cleaned the park and playground. I am trying to teach them that this place belongs to them now and that they are responsible for its

wellbeing,” proudly explains Father Steva. Six-year old Ismail Jashari and Luka Ivanović attend the pre-school classes in the nearby school, but they use every free moment to play together in the playground: “We are very happy here! The playground is so beautiful. My favorite toy is a slide,” shyly explains Ismail, while Luka prefers seesaw.

“It brightens my day to see my students playing and laughing together and really enjoying their childhood,” explains preschool teacher Jovanka Filić, who continues: “Children learn through play, and without it, we cannot properly prepare them [on] how to overcome all the challenges that life brings.”

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is approximately \$16,000. The municipality of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë invested more than \$4,000 into this project.

Access to Finance Workshop Held in Gračanica/Graçanica

On November 17, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together organized a workshop for minority-owned businesses on Access to Finance. On November 17, 2015 the USAID AKT project organized a workshop in Gračanica/Graçanicë on access to finance opportunities for minority-owned businesses. More than 25 minority-owned AKT partner

businesses from northern and southern municipalities in Kosovo attended this workshop, which included presentations by Kosovo-based banks and micro-finance institutions on their loan offers and terms and conditions for applying for small businesses.

The workshop speakers included Crimson Finance Fund director Michael

Gold, who introduced finance services to the participants, and the TEB Bank Officer for Women Entrepreneurs Sihana Nebiu.

The Kosovo-based bank and micro-finance institution representatives came from NLB Prishtina, ProCredit Bank, Finca Kosovo, KEP Trust, and Agjension i për Financim në Kosovë.



“More important than a score is the opportunity given to us today to build new friendships and to socialize with young women from Gjilan/Gnjilane

Together in Sport Tournament Held in Pristina

USAID supports athletic activities that gather together more than 100 majority and minority community members and municipal officials from AKT partner municipalities

Sport provides opportunities for people of all age groups to engage in positive relationships with other members of different communities.

Many people in remote parts of Kosovo do not have an opportunity to participate in sport tournaments, either because they come from very small communities where there are no such events, or simply because they do not have enough money to travel far distances to attend sporting events.

On November 13, 2015, to help people from AKT partner municipalities get to know each other and bring them closer through various team sports, the USAID AKT project organized in Pristina the “Together in Sport” tournament, which united more than 100 municipal officials, community members and CSO representatives.

Participants of different age groups, ethnicities and religious backgrounds

engaged in indoor soccer, basketball and a women’s volleyball tournament.

For Nevena Lazić, a 14-year-old from Donja Gušterica/Gushtericë ë Poshtme (Gračanica/Graçanicë), playing against a team from Gjilan/Gnjilane in the women’s volleyball tournament was the first time she ever played against a Kosovo Albanian team.

She said, “The opponents are very good, but we have high expectations. But more important than a score is the opportunity given to us today to build new friendships and to socialize with young women from Gjilan/Gnjilane.”

Avdi Tahiri, a Community Forum member from Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) says sport tournaments are great opportunity to connect members of majority and minority communities. “We need to have more events like this because they are vital in building relations and friendships

with people from different communities. And this I say from the bottom of my heart! If we can have more events like this, they will bring us closer. And this tournament today gives me hope that we can overcome all our obstacles,” explains Avdi.

In July 2015, the USAID AKT project organized a similar tournament at the Sport Center in Zubin Potok which gathered more than 90 municipal officials, community members and CSO representatives from Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok, North Mitrovica/ë, Leposaviq/ć, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Ranilug/Ranillug and Obiliq/ć.

“We need to have more events like this because they are vital in building relations and friendships with people from different communities. And this I say from the bottom of my heart!

Introducing Municipal Socio-Economic Development Strategy and Plan Models

On November 9 and 10, USAID AKT in partnership with Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) conducted a two-day workshop entitled “Introducing municipal socio-economic development strategy and plan models” for all municipalities in Kosovo. This workshop brought together 36

representatives of 24 Kosovo’s municipalities (among them ten AKT-partner municipalities) to discuss strategic planning regarding socio-economic development at the local level of the governance.

The MLGA representatives presented model municipal strategy for socio-

economic development while USAID AKT representatives introduced Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) Methodology as a tool that municipalities may use in the process of development of the Municipal Socio-Economic Development Strategy.

Outlining the Commitment for Partnership

The USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, James Hope, and Deputy Director of Democracy and Governance Office, Randall Olson, traveled to the USAID AKT partner municipalities in November 2015 to sign the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Mayor of North Mitroviç/ë, Goran Rakiç, and Deputy Mayor of Klinë/a, Deputy Mayor of Klinë/Klina, Enver Berisha, formalizing USAID's partnership through the program.

After the signing of Memorandum of Understanding in the USAID Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC) in North Mitroviç/ë, on November 24, Mission Director Hope thanked Mayor Rakiç on welcoming him back to the municipality and pointed out that USAID and North Mitroviç/ë have a very long legacy of partnership: "The agreement we signed today is for Advancing Kosovo Together program which will partner USAID and North Mitroviç/ë to focus on community development projects and business opportunities. The program aims to support the mayor's

and the municipality's efforts to provide good governance and good services for the citizens of the municipality."

Through its AKT project, USAID will invest up to \$200,000 in small and medium enterprises, the health center and educational facilities in North Mitroviç/ë. "This might be a small investment for USAID, but it is a huge support for the citizens of North Mitroviç/ë who will greatly appreciate it. Our hope is to continue this partnership in future. USAID is always welcomed in our municipality," Mayor Rakiç expressed his gratitude to Director Hope on behalf of citizens of North Mitroviç/ë.

The USAID AKT project consists of two components – one implemented by Chemonics International and the other referred to as USAID Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solutions, implemented by Community Development Fund (CDF) in partnership with NGO Aktiv, Center for Peace and Tolerance, and Kosovo Relief & Development.



Roundtables on Civic Participation of Women and Youth at the Municipal Level Held in Four Partner Municipalities

Throughout November 2015, the USAID AKT project conducted four roundtables on the importance of public participation in the municipal decision-making process. The first roundtable held in Istog/k on November 20th gathered more than 20 Municipal Administration, Assembly, and Community Forum representatives from Pejë/Peçë, Klinë/Klina, Istog/Istok and Zubin Potok with the aim of discussing civic participation of

women and youth at the municipal level, its challenges and how to ensure greater participation of these vulnerable groups.

On November 23rd, the second roundtable was held in Gjiilan/Gnjilane with representatives of Community Forums, Municipal Assembly and Municipal Administrations from Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Ranilug/Ranilug, Klokot/Klllokot, and Parteš/Partesh.

On November 25th, the third such activity was held in Graçanica/Graçanicë with the participants from Graçanica/Graçanicë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Severna Mitroviç/Mitroviç e Veriut, while the fourth and last in the series of these roundtables was held in Obiliq/Obiliç on November 26th with the participants from Obiliq/Obiliç, Vushtrri/Vuçitër, Zveçan/Zveçan and Leposaviç/q.





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ADVANCING KOSOVO TOGETHER (AKT)

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Enhancing Transparency and Accountability of Partner Municipalities

Municipal government acts represent the legal framework in which municipalities and their entities operate. There is a constant need for municipalities across Kosovo to update and modernize municipal acts, as they have a direct impact over municipal performance and the ability of municipalities to responsibly serve the needs of their citizens. The publication of municipal government acts in official languages on municipal websites has proven to be an effective tool for advocating for increased transparency among Kosovo's municipalities. Therefore, the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) measures the transparency of each municipality in Kosovo at the end of each year based on the percentage of published municipal acts on their website. On December 16 and 17, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program conducted a two-day workshop uniting relevant representatives of AKT partner municipalities, the MLGA and the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA). The workshop aimed to assist municipalities in further developing their capacity for full implementation of the laws and enhance municipal accountability and transparency. During the workshop, approximately 32 representatives of local and central government explored possibilities for more efficient utilization of existing Kosovo IT systems and better coordination and technical assistance among line ministries in the publication of municipal acts in official languages on municipal websites.





“ You saved many children with this project. We are very grateful! We can sleep in peace without worrying that another child might run after the ball that rolled off the field to the street or into the river”

Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme Residents Can Now Sleep in Peace

USAID supports fencing the outdoor sports field in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) creating a safe environment for children from mixed communities to play

Almost two years ago, an event took place in Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, the outcome of which would have been deadly if it had not been for a passerby watching kids playing soccer in a newly-built outdoor sports field. He particularly enjoyed seeing a two year old trying to hit a soccer ball that was almost as big as the child.

Eventually, the child managed to hit the ball, which rolled off the field, and the youngster ran over to scoop it up. That would not be so dangerous, if it was not for the river Lëpanac/Lepenci which runs close to this sports field. In a blink of an eye, Avdi Tahiri realized with horror that the youngster chasing after the ball slipped and fell into the river. Without hesitation, Avdi leapt into the water to rescue helpless child, who was, thanks to him, brought back to safety.

This event struck the residents of mixed village Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme.

Worried families approached officials in the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë to help them install a chain-link fence, but local administration did not have sufficient funds for this project. Worried residents did not take no for an answer and sought assistance from donors who would help provide the municipality with additional funds.

Several months later, in November 2015, in a joint effort of the municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë and the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, the chain-link fence for this outdoor sports field, where more than 20 young children engage in sports each day, was finally installed.

“You saved many children with this project. We are very grateful! We can sleep in peace without worrying that another child might run after the ball that rolled off the field to the street or into the river. Our children play in a safe

environment now,” explains Avdi, visibly shaken after recounting the moments when he managed to save the child. He continues, “Projects like this unite our village. We worked together toward a common goal.”

Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, an agricultural village where most residents grow raspberries, has around 130 Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb households, and this sports field connects children from both communities. “The sports field looks great now because our soccer ball won’t roll off the field to the street or into the river,” explains eight-year old Robert. His soccer teammate Blend simply says: “We are very happy!”

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is approximately \$10,000. The municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë invested more than \$2,500 into this project.

Positive Results of Improved Municipal Strategic Planning

To build the capacity for municipal strategic planning, the USAID AKT program coached Obiliq/Obilić and Klinë/Klina municipal officials in drafting a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) on Public Lighting. These strategic documents clearly define priorities and steps for improving public lighting

within next three years, focusing on citizens’ needs and expectations. USAID AKT successfully implemented two public lighting projects in Klinë/Klina and Obiliq/Obilić. The positive results are already evident: expanded public lighting on the streets of eight towns (total length of 3,355m in Klinë/Klina

and 1,200m in Obiliq/Obilić) has increased citizens’ satisfaction; improved safety and security, especially the safety of school children who attend classes in the late afternoon ; and has improved the quality of public lighting through LED technology and lowered electricity consumption.



“ Access to safe drinking-water [is] of vital importance for the survival of this village and that is why we never stopped appealing to local officials and donors for help” 

Access to Safe Drinking Water Improves

USAID supports rehabilitation of the water supply system in Viča/Vičë (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) and helps resolve health risks posed by inadequate sanitation and lack of safe drinking water

Viča/Vičë has a relatively low unemployment rate because most of the people from this mountainous region grow raspberries. Until recently, however, lack of access to safe drinking water coupled with inadequate sanitation were major problems posing significant health risks to mixed village Viča/Vičë (Štrpce/Shtërpçë) residents.

Apart from one household, the approximately 150 people living in this agricultural village suffered the complete lack of running water for six to seven months per year, while water pressure was very low during the remaining months, so residents were forced to carry domestic water in canisters from neighboring villages. The water supply system was more than 30 years old, with aging water infrastructure and related equipment needing to be repaired, replaced and reinforced.

Residents appealed to local officials in Štrpce/Shtërpçë to help rehabilitate the

outdated system, but the municipality didn't have sufficient funds to carry out this project. Both residents and municipal officials were eager for a solution, so they approached the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program to help them.

“Access to safe drinking-water [is] of vital importance for the survival of this village and that is why we never stopped appealing to local officials and donors for help,” explains Boban Stojković, the village leader and father of three children.

Finally, in a joint effort between USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program and the Štrpce/Shtërpçë municipality, the existing reservoir was repaired and isolated; old 3,400 meter-long water pipes leading to 40 households were replaced; and the existing supply of water was strengthened with additional water sources. Together with nine residents,

Boban participated in the rehabilitation of this system: “We worked for 15 days on the implementation of this project. The new system will certainly influence people to stay here. Personally, I have no plans to leave my home now.”

Until the rehabilitation of this system, the only house in Viča/Vičë that had access to safe-drinking water belonged to the family of Marina Milosavljević who says that they were forced to drill their own water well: “Then all neighbors started to come to get water from us. They really suffered! We were happy to help our friends but that wasn't the solution to our problem. Now, all citizens will be able to rest.”

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program is approximately \$15,000. The municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë invested more than \$3,800 into this project.

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs from North Kosovo

On December 4, the USAID AKT program, in partnership with the women association, Mundësia, organized the final event for the “North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building” initiative. This event, which took place at the Regional Community Resource Center (RCRC) in North Mitrovica/ë, united ten female entrepreneurs from northern Kosovo municipalities

who received branding and promotion materials, and around 60 women who received certificates for attending different courses aimed at assisting and empowering women in business. This seven-month long initiative, which was implemented in partnership with Mundësia, started in April 2015 with the aim of increasing employment opportunities and household incomes

of women entrepreneurs, primarily in North Kosovo, by creating more favorable conditions for selling products with a focus on ethnic minorities, rural and unemployed women, and single mothers. Through this series of trainings, 64 Kosovo Albanian, Serbian, Turkish and Roma women had the opportunity to learn about beekeeping, and the production of sweets and baked goods.



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USAID/Kosovo DGO Deputy Director Randall Olson (middle) and the Minister of MLGA Ljubomir Marić (on the right) at the conference on the Own Source Revenues analysis

Strengthening Small Businesses with Modern Equipment

We all know repairing old furniture and recycling is important. Unfortunately, these old traditional crafts have almost died out and very often people are forced to buy new furniture instead of repairing their old pieces. But the small town of Zvečan/Zveçan is lucky to have an upholsterer maintaining family tradition. After years of working either manually or on old machines, Žarko Lekić realized that his small family business could not survive unless he modernized the production. Hence, through the USAID AKT program, this upholstery workshop received sewing machines, which will enable Žarko to employ two full-time workers from the minority community, speed-up work processes and introduce more demanding processes that would attract large new customers, decrease delays in production enabling the retention and increase of customers, improve the quality of products and services, and increase annual sales up to 50 percent.

In addition, through AKT, and agricultural and agro-processing family business Šijak from Donja Budrika/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) received tools and equipment for making “ajvar,” traditional red pepper spread. This will help Šijak become more competitive in the market, employ three part-time employees, and increase annual sales by a projected 50 percent. Also, through AKT, Banjska/Banjskë-based (Vushtrri/Vučitrn) agricultural and agro-processing family business Agrosera-Toplica (its main agricultural product is potato) received the tractor which will help this business employ one full-time person from minority community and increase its annual sales by up to 30 percent.





“The whole goal of OSR is to allow municipalities to be independent and to be able to build the budget responsibly and implement the projects for the citizens”

Kosovo's Municipalities Analyze Revenue

USAID AKT supports the Conference on Analysis of the Own Source Revenues of Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, organized by the Ministry of Local Government Administration in Pristina

On January 15, 2016, in Pristina, the USAID/Kosovo Democracy and Governance Office Deputy Director Randall Olson and the Minister for Local Government Administration Ljubomir Marić spoke at the opening of the Conference on the Analysis of the Own Source Revenues in Municipalities in Kosovo. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) and supported by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program with the aim to present a document that provides an overview of revenue trend analysis in Kosovo municipalities for the period 2010-2014, including possibilities for their enhancement in cooperation with key stakeholders involved in the process.

Mr. Olson emphasized that USAID has spent the last 17 years trying to support the work of local municipalities and has continuously supported local governments in building their internal capacities for effective collection of Own Source Revenues in general and property taxes in particular. “Our goal is to see that the citizens of Kosovo are served and that’s the theme I want to keep

emphasizing because when government works at the local level, then the citizens will respond. We look to the local municipalities, and particularly the Mayors of each municipality, to provide strong leadership with integrity. I also want to thank the role Advancing Kosovo Together, our partner that’s been working behind the scenes to help municipalities, in a practical way, work toward financial independence. The whole goal of OSR is to allow municipalities to be independent and to be able to build the budget responsibly and implement the projects for the citizens,” said Olson.

Conference speakers also included Besnik Osmani, General Secretary of Ministry of Local Government Administration; Shkelzen Morina, a representative of the Ministry of Finance Property Tax Department; and Agron Demi, a GAP Institute for Advanced Studies representative. Individuals from the Board of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, the Ministry of Finance Property Tax Department, the Riinvest Institute, civil society organizations, other agencies, and the media participated in this conference.

Through AKT, USAID is strengthening the capacity of 16 partner local governments to assess progress of OSR collection, identify existing gaps and areas for improvements, share best practices and support them to achieve possible improvements. During the last 18 months, AKT conducted seven capacity building events for 160 representatives of the 16 partner local governments to discuss status, trends and possible improvement in collection of municipal OSR. In addition, AKT sponsored the OSR Forum that introduced Kosovo’s overall OSR policies and general principles of property tax registration and collection to the municipal leadership in the four municipalities in the north.

Currently, AKT is implementing an activity designed to increase the capacity of Municipal Property Tax Offices with the aim of improving tax collection in 12 municipalities. Through AKT, USAID also supports local governments to overcome challenges in increasing adequate awareness among their citizens on the importance of municipal revenues and their efficient collection.

Radio Kontakt Plus Starts Broadcasting These are Our Stories Radio Shows

On January 21, our partner from the north, Radio Kontakt Plus, started broadcasting the “These are Our Stories” radio shows. Through this media initiative, our partner will produce 24 radio shows showcasing positive examples of inter-community understanding,

dialogue, and cooperation, especially among middle-aged people and youth of different ethnicities in Kosovo. The aim of the radio shows is to promote good neighborly relations among the wider audience, serving as role models of open minded members of the Kosovo

society. Shows can be broadcast via Radio Kontakt Plus every working day at 11 AM, via KOSMA network and Radio Kosovo. You can also access to the shows via Radio Kontakt Plus webpage: http://www.radiokontaktplus.org/nase_price/



“The importance of this project for us is beyond words! This road is also crucial for connecting both, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb, communities, because it brings our houses closer

A New Road Connects Communities in Banjskë/Banjska

USAID rehabilitates the rural road and storm water outlets in Banjskë/Banjska (Vushtrri/Vučitrn) creating better living environment for the community

For the first time in 20 years, a road running through Kosovo’s northwestern village of Banjskë/Banjska has been repaired, enabling the village’s “mixed” community of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs to come closer together.

Banjskë/Banjska, a mixed village of 900 residents, is one of 67 villages in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn. For 20 years, the poor state of its road made it difficult for residents to move around. During the rainy season and the winter months, students and travelers from Banjskë/Banjska struggled along the road’s poor conditions in order to get to school and to work. To make matters worse, the river stream along this road was constantly flooding the farmland, making it inaccessible for weeks, while damaging crops.

In the spring of 2015, the fate of the road changed. During a USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program meeting in Banjskë/Banjska, the village residents expressed their wish for a

better road. In October 2015, the USAID AKT program, together with the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, which committed to funding 20 percent of the project’s implementation costs, completed its rehabilitation of the village’s road and its storm water outlets.

The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Dojčin Dančetović, who actively participated in the construction work, says that before the road’s rehabilitation, 90 percent of the road was destroyed: “During the rainy season and winter, we could barely walk down the road, and it was impossible to drive a car. The conditions were really horrible. Now, the 370-meter long road, together with two bridges and a supporting wall are rehabilitated. My neighbors are happy.”

Dojčin also points out that for many elderly members of his community who need constant medical care, life is much easier now. A 74-year-old resident, Desanka Dančetović, who lives alone, says that with the new road the hospital

is far more accessible to her now: “I am very happy! There will be no more floods.”

Hasan Gani, owner of the tractor repair shop in Vushtrri/Vučitrn says rural roads are vital for development in Kosovo, because better roads open up commercial opportunities that make farming a more profitable livelihood for rural inhabitants, which means more work for him as well. “The importance of this project for us is beyond words! This road is also crucial for connecting both, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb, communities, because it brings our houses closer. Many families moved out of the village due to the bad living conditions. But this new road will make our life easier,” explains Gani.

The total value of the grant contribution received from USAID through the AKT is \$49,740. The municipality, which committed to long-term maintenance of the road in the future, invested \$12,435 into this project.

TV Series “Good News” Final Episode Broadcasted

Since September 5, 2015, each Monday, AKT partners from the NGO Srpsko Slovo, Aleksandra Miladinović and Imer Mushkolaj, looked for answers to the question: “Is there any good news in Kosovo?” Through bilingual shows broadcasted via RTV Kim, TV Herc, TV

Puls, TV Mir and RTK, Kosovo’s people had an opportunity to hear about positive changes in Kosovo. This TV series, which broadcasted its last and 20th episode on February 1, is part of the AKT’s “Good News – Life Stories that Bring People Closer” media initiative

which aims to help create a better environment for interaction and cooperation between majority and minority communities in Kosovo. You can watch all 20 shows in both Albanian and Serbian, online via <https://vimeo.com/album/3559859>

Together with our partner NGO, Future without Fear, USAID AKT produces documentary on cooperation between artists from majority and minority communities in Kosovo

Two-Sided Postcard Premieres in Štrpce/Shtërpçë

On January 26, in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program in partnership with Štrpce/Shtërpçë-based NGO, Future without Fear, held a screening of the documentary "Two-Sided Postcard." This film is produced as part of the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together media initiative that aims to improve inter-ethnic communication and understanding by showcasing inspirational human interest stories.

"Two-Sided Postcard" is comprised of three stories showing interethnic cooperation between artists. The first story showcases cooperation between the Kosovo Serb Theater Geto from Gračanica/Gračanicë, Kosovo Albanian NGO Artpolis, and Qendra Multimedia from Pristina.

Geto Theater is run by the theater director Zoran Ristić who has been working with aspiring child and youth actors for many years. Artpolis is an NGO that promotes culture, arts and multiethnic co-existence through social dialogue and use of theatre as a tool for promoting diversity and social change.

Qendra Multimedia is a cultural production company, working in arts and culture since its foundation. Together with the Belgrade-based Radionica Integracije from Serbia, the center co-produced the famous play Romeo & Juliet with a mixed Kosovo Albanian and Serbian ensemble and directed by the famous and well respected Yugoslav actor Predrag Miki Manojlović. The center, which is run by Jeton Neziraj (shown on the right in the scene from the documentary), also cooperates with artists from Serbia, such as in the plays "War in Times of Love" and "Encyclopedia of the Alive."

The second part of the film is a warm story about multiethnic band Gipsy Groove, its talented members, and their cooperation in overcoming obstacles of political boundaries in the region. The third story showcases the importance and successes of interethnic project Rock School in North Mitrovica/ë.

The Kosovo public will have an opportunity to see this 40-minute long documentary via TV Mreža, RTK 1, RTK 2, TV Klan, etc.



Increasing Capacity of Municipal Property Tax Offices

In January 2016, USAID AKT, in close collaboration with Kosovo Property Tax Department in the Ministry of Finance, launched a training program designed to increase the capacity of Property Tax Offices in 12 AKT-partner municipalities. To improve property tax collection, USAID AKT engaged a local consulting firm, Hi-Tech, to deliver on-the-job

trainings to respective municipal officials in the Municipal Property Tax Offices to conduct and evaluate property under taxation more efficiently. Throughout January, the Hi-Tech experts trained around 25 municipal property tax officers from Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Klinë/Klina, Istog/Istok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Obiliq/Obilić and

and Pejë/Peć. Training sessions focused on manual calculation of interest payments for previous tax years and usage of the property tax system for analysis, reporting, auditing, action, and planning. These trainings will continue in February in Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Gračanica/Gračanicë, Ranilug/Ranillug and Klokot/Kllokot.





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USAID AKT businesses partners participating in a two-day workshop on Branding, Integrated Communications, Business Legal Structures and Attracting Investments

Chess Tournament Promotes Multiethnic Cooperation

Sport is often viewed as a universal language that can bring people together, create a sense of common identity, develop friendships, and reestablish relationships between communities. To promote multiethnic cooperation through sport, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together project (AKT), in partnership with the Leposavić/Leposaviq Chess Center "Rvatska," organized a multiethnic chess tournament on February 20, 2016 in the village of Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit (Leposavić/q). Almir Muminović, a junior chess player who participated in this tournament, says: "The chess tournament is very nice. Chess is my favorite game and I would recommend it to everyone, because it develops your intelligence." Fahrudin Muminović, a senior chess player adds: "I participated in this tournament because it is very important to socialize with various nations and religions. "Around 30 competitors and more than 20 observers, Bosniaks and Kosovo Serbs, from the villages of Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit, Rvatska/Rëvatskë, Lešak/Leshak (Leposavić/q), and Novi Pazar (Serbia) gathered together to enjoy this tournament and socialize. Chess Center representatives and volunteers organized the tournament, while AKT supported this event by providing furniture and equipment, such as desks, chairs, chess boards, printer and chess analysis board. "I would like to use this opportunity and express gratitude to USAID on the donation for chess center and financially supporting the chess tournament which gathered a vast number of players," explains Zaim Muminović, president of chess center Rvatska, Leposavić/Leposaviq





“ This pedestrian sidewalk means a lot to children and us, especially because it has direct impact on their safety. In addition, the project is implemented in a very professional manner

Keeping Children Safe

USAID supports the establishment of a pedestrian sidewalk along the main street for 1,250 residents in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) and helps increase their safety

In recent years, the high volume of traffic through the village of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme in the municipality of Parteš/Partesh has endangered the lives of its residents, particularly school children who use this road to go to the “Dositej Obradović” school.

Parents were concerned about the speed of cars that drive on the main road that connects Gjilan/Gnjilane with Ferizaj/Uroševac and the safety of the nearly 100 children who walk along it daily and at night when visibility is much lower, without a sidewalk.

After identifying the problem as a priority through joint discussions with the local community and the municipality of Parteš/Partesh, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program helped the municipality to establish the 950 meter long pedestrian sidewalk along the main street in Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme.

“It is great that the pedestrian sidewalk was built. This pedestrian sidewalk means a lot to children and us, especially because it has direct impact on their safety. In addition, the project is implemented in a very professional manner. It looks great and I am more than happy about it”, explains Zoran Đorđević, one of the residents of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme.

Miloš Anđelković, a teenager who lives in this village, says that “this project is of a great importance for the village since this road connects to the main regional road and is not useful only to the children but also adults.”

This is not the first initiative that AKT has worked with this community and municipality to implement. In spring 2015, USAID AKT supported an improved learning environment for children at Dositej Obradović with the replacement of old furniture with 60 new desks and 100 new chairs.

The new sidewalk was a joint initiative that brought together the community and municipal officials to address a need and in doing so, it enabled the Parteš/Partesh municipality to provide an improved service to its citizens.

The total value of the contribution from USAID through the AKT program is approximately \$50,000; the municipality of Parteš/Partesh contributed 20% into this project.

“ This project is of a great importance for the village since this road connects to the main regional road and is not useful only to the children but also adults

Gračanica/Gračanicë Gets New Energy Efficient Street Lighting

The municipality of Gračanica/Gračanicë, with USAID AKT support, implemented a L.E.D. street lighting project in a few town streets to reduce electricity consumption bills up to 50%. This was done through a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) for Public Lighting.

The SIAP includes specific action steps that are based on performance data and realistic budget proposals. The total value of the contribution from USAID through the AKT program is more than \$50,000; Gračanica/Gračanicë municipality contributed 25% into this project.





“ It is better and warmer with the new radiators. Everything is so much nicer now. We act in the classroom, we sing, and we play together. Now we can stay and learn much longer in the classrooms than we used to!

New Heating System Improves Learning Environment in Elementary School

USAID supports the installation of a new heating system in an elementary school in Radevo/Radevë (Gračanica/Graçanicë) and improves learning environment for students and teachers.

For the first time for one elementary school in the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë, classrooms no longer have coal and wood-burning stoves that emit smoke and cause lung problems for its students.

In July 2015, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program helped the village of Radevo/Radevë in Gračanica/Graçanicë install a new heating system in “Vuk Karadžić,” a 300 square-meter “satellite” elementary school attended by about 30 Kosovo Serb, Albanian, and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) students.

As a result of this new heating installation, health concerns were alleviated, class attendance increased, and the overall quality of the learning environment improved. “The new heating is very important to both teachers and children. The air is much cleaner than it used to be when we had

to use stoves. Everything is easier now. You’ve eased the learning process since the school is heated as a whole and temperatures are equal in all parts of it. In the past only one classroom was heated and when the children would go out on their lunch break, they had to wear scarves, hats, and gloves” explains Suzana Mehmeti, a teacher in Radevo/Radevë elementary school.

Luka Jovanović, a first grade student in this school says, “It is better and warmer with the new radiators. Everything is so much nicer now. We act in the classroom, we sing, and we play together. Now we can stay and learn much longer in the classrooms than we used to. We even celebrated St. Sava in the classroom.”

The new heating system which was a joint initiative of USAID AKT and the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë brought together entire community and

municipal officials to address this priority problem. In doing so, the initiative enabled the Gračanica/Graçanicë municipality to help students attend classes and learn under safer conditions.

The total value of the contribution from USAID through the AKT program is approximately \$15,000; the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë contributed 20 percent into this project.

“ The air is much cleaner than it used to be when we had to use stoves. You’ve eased the learning process since the school is heated as a whole and temperatures are equal in all parts of it

Service Improvement Action Plans Finalized in Four More Partner Municipalities

Municipal officials in the four municipalities of Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveçan, Parteš/Partesh and Štrpce/Shtërpçë finalized in February 2016 the Service Improvement Action Plans (SIAP) for Energy Efficiency, in partnership with the USAID AKT project.

Also within the month of February, four more partner municipalities started to work on SIAPs, namely Gjilan/Gnjilane on SIAP for Preschool Education, Istog/Istok on SIAP for Public Lighting, Pejë/Peç on SIAP for E-Payment Service, and Vushtrri/Vučitrn on SIAP for Traffic

Mobility. The SIAP envisions three major objectives: (1) Modern and energy efficient public lighting, (2) 100% coverage of the municipal territory with public lighting and (3) Increased satisfaction of citizens with the service provision.

Branding and Marketing Seminar with Partner Businesses Held in Pristina

In February 23-24, 2016, USAID AKT organized a seminar in Pristina on branding and marketing for nine minority-owned and ten majority-owned partner businesses. During this two-day seminar, these 19 businesses learned about branding and business identity, business legal structures, social media usage, and approaching and meeting with potential investors.

"Today's training is very helpful because it gives us an understanding on how to further promote our business and apply proper procedures, and so far we've been very satisfied," explains Nderim Rexhaj, owner of Nderi-R, agricultural business from Peja/Peć.

This seminar is first in the series of trainings and seminars which will be delivered to AKT's partner businesses aiming to strengthen their entrepreneurship skills and improve business environment in Kosovo. "The more trainings we have the more we know, because they give us an opportunity to learn how to manage and improve our business, how to create a brand and produce a better product, and how to

export it," explains Radomir Živković, owner of the family business Eko Šijak from Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme (Parteš/Partesh) which produces homemade Ajvar, a traditional Balkan red-pepper relish.

These February seminars are a continuation of AKT's work in 2014 and 2015, in collaboration with the Business Support Centre Kosovo (BSCK), that have facilitated entrepreneurship in vulnerable groups. These courses included four five-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship for Minority Communities training courses; a three-week advanced business training course; and a five-day business plan practical training courses.

USAID AKT also implemented several initiatives, such as, "Women and Youth Support Initiative for Agricultural Entrepreneurship in North Kosovo" (with Business Center Zvečan), "North Kosovo Women Entrepreneurs Capacity Building" (with women association Mundësia) and "Business Promotion for Female Entrepreneurs in Northern Kosovo" initiative (with women association Sabor).



Smile! You are on Candid Camera!

In February 2016, AKT's partner Entermédia produced the social experiment video on how people of different ethnic backgrounds react to each other when they find themselves in unexpected social situations, such as being recorded on candid camera.

This video is part of the USAID AKT innovative creative media campaign "See the World through My Eyes"

launched in September 2015. This initiative consists of social media campaign, billboards, TV features, and news stories and editorials in web portals and newspapers. Watch AKT's video via YouTube link:

https://youtu.be/_7ce8MnymlY. Or like us on Facebook, and watch the video! We'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments:

www.facebook.com/ImprovingInterculturalCommunication/

AKT's aim is to raise awareness on improving intercultural communication and interethnic cooperation between all communities living in Kosovo, including majority and minority owned businesses, CSOs, women associations, youth groups and other non-formal groups.





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Students of primary school Vuk Karadžić in Radevo/Radevë (Gračanica/Gračanicë) and AKT Prime Program Director during the USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director visit.

USAID Assistant Administrator Visits Kosovo

Gračanica/Gračanicë, March 3, 2016 - USAID's Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia Thomas Melia and USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope met with USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) grantees Raško Milenković, owner of Sani (AquaBreza), and Ivan Nikolić, Executive Director of the NGO Communication for Social Development (CSD) to learn more about the achievements that USAID has supported and the challenges they face, specifically about the inclusion and integration of Kosovo's non-majority populations. Sani is a Štrpce/Shtërpcë-based private business with a water factory that fills and bottles natural mountain spring water under the brand name AquaBreza, with customers in majority and non-majority areas throughout Kosovo. USAID AKT provided Sani with a machine for automatic bottling of 10-liter water bottles, as well as business consulting services - both of which will enable Sani to decrease its production costs by 30 percent, hire three additional employees, and increase sales by at least 20 percent. CSD is a Gračanica/Gračanicë-based NGO that has worked with AKT to raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of municipal governments in the implementation of the Law on Use of Languages among municipal employees and civil society, and provide municipal governments with a toolkit to assist them in improving their compliance with the Law. USAID AKT Prime Director Amy Denkenberger and USAID AKT Local Solution Director Artan Avdiu also participated in this meeting.





“These are the projects that reflect the priorities of the citizens of the municipality including the school that we just inaugurated right now. And this is a true partnership, because it is USAID funding combined with municipality funding to do a good job together.”

USAID/Kosovo Mission Director visits the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić to meet its mayor and beneficiaries of USAID projects

Obiliq/Obilić, March 16, 2016 – USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope visited the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić to meet with Mayor Xhafer Gashi. Together they inaugurated the central heating project at the Fazli Grajcevc/Dositej Obradović school in the village of Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice and visited public lighting and road construction projects in the villages of Plemetina/Plemetin and Priluzhe/Prilluzhë.

USAID AKT Prime and the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić worked in partnership to install a new central heating system throughout the Fazli Grajcevc/Dositej Obradović primary school, improving the learning and teaching environment for 110 students and teachers (60 Kosovo Albanians and 50 Kosovo Serbs) in Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice. This project was identified as a joint priority by majority and non-majority community members in Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice and it was completed in August 2015. In total, USAID AKT invested \$30,059 into this project, while Obiliq/Obilić invested 20 percent. The school was also supplied with IT equipment, enriching the quality of learning as teachers' lessons are enabled with digital learning

materials, students become more engaged, and students gain valuable computer skills. In his opening remarks, Mission Director Hope said this visit was a great opportunity to look at how the partnership between USAID and Obiliq/Obilić over the last year improved basic services for the citizens of Obiliq/Obilić: “These are the projects that reflect the priorities of the citizens of the municipality including the school that we just inaugurated right now. And this is a true partnership, because it is USAID funding combined with municipality funding to do a good job together. Advancing Kosovo Together is meant to support Mayors in Kosovo who show leadership and vision for improving their communities, especially municipalities that are seeking to promote integration within their municipality to ensure citizens from all communities have access, rights and benefit from municipal services.”

Mayor Gashi said that municipality completed a number of projects in cooperation with USAID last year: “We are grateful because USAID contributed with over 20 percent of the capital investment here in our municipality, and all of these projects were chosen by the

citizens' of this municipality.” Mission Director Hope and Mayor Gashi also visited two newly-paved roads in Plemetina/Plemetin village and a new public lighting system installed on the road from Plemetina/Plemetin to Priluzhe/Prilluzhë village. Both projects were implemented through the Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution Program.

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program consists of two components: (1) USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT Prime) implemented by Chemonics International and (2) USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution (AKT LS) implemented by Community Development Fund (CDF) in partnership with AKTIV, Center for Peace and Tolerance (CPT) and Kosovo Relief & Development (KRD). USAID AKT Prime will invest \$90,504 for small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Obiliq/Obilić by the end of 2016. USAID AKT LS has invested \$177,525.80 in paving the two roads in the village of Plemetina/Plemetin (Obiliq/Obilić), modernized and extended public lighting in eleven streets, and supported micro, small and medium enterprises in this municipality.

Seminar on Food Safety and Food Standards Held in Pristina

Prishtina/Priština, March 16, 2016 – AKT Prime brought together 14 partner minority businesses and seven majority businesses to participate in a seminar on food safety and food standards required by Kosovo legislation.

This seminar was facilitated by the Director of Public Health Department of Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) Flamur Kadriu in order to help businesses improve food hygiene and adhere to required food standards before placing

products in markets. Businesses were very participatory and showed great interest in food standards and safety, asking a number of specific questions relevant to their businesses.



“This is the biggest project that was implemented in this village in the last 16 years entirely focusing on the needs of its residents. Now, the whole village is lit so the safety has been increased

Goraždevac/Gorazhdec Receives New Energy Efficient LED Street Lighting

USAID supports installation of energy efficient public lighting system in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec (Pejë/Peć) and increases safety of its residents

In the past, residents of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec in the Pejë/Peć municipality lacked public lighting. One hundred students who attend the second shift at the only local school until 6:30pm were afraid to walk down the pitch-black village streets out of fear of trucks, cars, or stray dogs. Hence, during a community forum meeting organized on October 22, 2014 by USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program, Goraždevac/Gorazhdec prioritized the need for public lighting to make their streets safer for its 950 residents.

As a result, from August until October 2015, when the project was finalized, new energy-efficient LED street lighting was installed to cover almost five kilometers of the main road of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec. Drenko Todorović, a Community Forum member from this village has been involved in this project since its beginning: “This is the

biggest project that was implemented in this village in the last 16 years focusing entirely on the needs of its residents. Now, the whole village is lit so the safety has been increased. We have many students who attend the second shift at school and now they are not upset to walk down the main road, while parents worry less about the safety of their children.”

Lighting the main road of Goraždevac/Gorazhdec is also significant because this road is used by the members of all ethnic communities, even though this village is predominantly Kosovo Serb. The head of the Office for Communities for the Pejë/Peć Region, Slobodan Petrović, says, “This project also contributed greatly to the psychological security of the residents, to their feeling of safety and it also improved the quality of their everyday life.” Petrović furthermore pointed out that roads

connect people. When members of other communities saw the newly installed energy efficient street lighting in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec, they made an appeal to his office for implementation of similar street lighting projects in Pejë/Peć.

USAID, through the AKT program, contributed a total of \$36,100 to this project, while the municipality of Pejë/Peć invested \$8,889, or 20 percent of the project’s implementation costs. In addition, through a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) for Public Lighting, USAID through AKT program installed energy-efficient LED street lighting in Klinë/Klina, Obiliq/Obilić, and Gračanica/Gračanicë. SIAP is a management tool that allows local governments to provide more efficient municipal services while focusing on needs of citizens.

A Series of Public Hearings Conducted in Partner Municipalities

In February and March 2016, USAID AKT Prime together with its partner municipalities in Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Novo Brdo/Novobërde, Gračanica/Gračanicë, and Klokot/Kllokot organized a series of public discussions with municipal officials and community members in the villages of Viča/Viçë

Donja Budriga/Budrikë e poshtme, Donje Bitinje/Biti e poshtme, Koretište/Koretishtë, Kusce/Kufcë, Radevo/Radevë, and Vrbovac/Vërboc. During these discussions, municipal officials presented details on projects implemented in 2015 and capital investment plans for 2016, while citizens

presented and discussed their priorities. This series of public discussions is a continuation of AKT support to communities and municipalities to establish direct communication. AKT plans to continue organizing public hearings in support of citizens’ involvement in decision-making processes.

USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director Visits the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë to Meet its Mayor and Beneficiaries of USAID projects

Gračanica/Graçanicë, March 25, 2016 – USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director Mike de la Rosa met with the Mayor of Gračanica/Graçanicë Vladeta Kostić to discuss three projects implemented by USAID AKT Prime in partnership with the municipality.

Mr. de la Rosa and Mayor Kostic toured one segment of the nearly 6 kilometers of new street lighting in the municipality and inaugurated the new central heating system installed in the Vuk Karadžić primary school in Radevo/Radeve.

During the inauguration of the Radevo/Radeve school project, Mr. de la Rosa expressed his gratitude to Mayor Kostić for the partnership: “We at USAID have worked through a number of projects to assist Kosovo to improve its educational opportunities. And, most importantly, the ability to get a good education is the key to interethnic cooperation and interaction between majority and minority communities alike, not only here in Gračanica/Graçanicë, but all throughout Kosovo.”

Mayor Kostić pointed out that the cooperation between USAID AKT and the municipality was positive and dynamic during the last year: “We managed to finalize these projects together, but out of the three, the most significant project is the installation of central heating in this school, because thanks to USAID students have a much better learning environment now.”

Mr. de la Rosa and Mayor Kostić also visited a playground and soccer pitch for kids and a parking lot in the village of Laplje Selo/Llapllasellë, a project implemented through USAID Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution (AKT LS).

USAID AKT Prime will invest \$105,782 for small infrastructure projects, civil society grants, and business grants in Gračanica/Graçanicë by the end of 2016. USAID AKT-LS has invested \$255,920 in constructing the playground and parking lot in the village of Laplje Selo/Llapllasellë, supporting CSOs, and supporting micro, small and medium enterprises in this municipality.



Women in Municipal Positions from AKT's 16 Partner Municipalities Received Centered Leadership Training

In March, USAID AKT Prime held four regional trainings on Centered Leadership for 74 women in mid-level public sector positions across AKT's partner municipalities. These trainings were held in the municipalities of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Prishtina/Priština, Zvečan/Zveçan, and Pejë/Peç. Centered Leadership is a model of leadership that

focuses on ways women can build their skills to become more self-confident and effective leaders. This model comprises five interrelated dimensions: meaning, managing energy, positive framing, connecting, and engaging. Participants, who were nominated by their supervisors to participate in this training, will be supported to exercise their new

skills in their current positions and will be considered for advancement. AKT Prime is supported graduates of this program to establish a new network for sharing experiences, tips, and tools as they apply their skills and pursue their professional development goals.





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AKT Prime program supported businesses and associations with exhibition space at the International General Fair 2016, visited by H.E. President of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi.

AKT Prime Partner Businesses and Associations Promote Their Products at Prishtina Fair 2016

Prishtina/Priština, April 20, 2016 - AKT Prime program, in collaboration with the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC), supported six partner businesses, the new Multiethnic Network of Women Entrepreneurs (represented by ten member businesses), and Šarska Pčela (a beekeepers association representing 30 members from northern and southern municipalities) to participate and exhibit their products and services at the International General Fair, which took place in the exhibition center in the village of Shkabaj/Orlović from April 20 until April 23, 2016. Businesses and associations were provided assistance in preparation of promotion materials to ensure visibility at the Fair. Participants established 141 business contacts and will be following up. During the first day of the Fair, the AKT Prime’s participants were visited by H.E. President of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi and USAID Kosovo Democracy and Governance Office Director Sara Buchanan. AKT Prime-supported participants included the following businesses: Brendi, Farma Trboljevac, Food Pack, Miloš i Marta, Pac Process, PPT Sani Aquabreza, Uzgoj pemate živine, Inspiracija, Ilić torte i kolači, Sofra, Saray simit, Ĕmbëlsia, Slatki snovi, Gratë ndërmarrëse të Studimes, Agrosera toplika, and Trashëgimia.





“Asphalting the road in Dragolec/Dragoljevac (Istog/Istok) which will improve the movement of its residents and the village economic productivity.”

No More Potholes, Mud or Wet Shoes

USAID supports rehabilitation of the road in Dragolec/Dragoljevac and boosts the village economic productivity and residents' living conditions.

Dragolec/Dragoljevac is a village in Istog/Istok municipality populated mainly by Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, including returnee families. In recent years, the municipality has worked to improve the living conditions of Dragolec/Dragoljevac residents. As part of this effort, the municipality has invested in covering a local road with gravel on several occasions, but a lack of funds prevented them from laying asphalt. The gravel road was just the temporarily solution. During the rainy season, the situation would worsen as potholes and mud limited the movement of residents. In September 2015, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT Prime) program facilitated a meeting between the

village representatives, the Istog/Istok Mayor, and municipal officials during which the Dragolec/Dragoljevac residents identified rehabilitation of the road as their main priority. In October 2015, in cooperation with the municipality of Istog/Istok, USAID Advancing Kosovo Together started the rehabilitation of the village road. In March 2016, 1,100 meter long and four meter wide road was asphalted, which immediately boosted the social life and economic connectivity of 122 residents of Dragolec/Dragoljevac and almost 400 residents living in neighboring villages.

“Rehabilitation of the village road means a lot to our community, especially to returnees. It has improved the everyday life of the residents. There is no more mud and

potholes, and our children arrive at school without mud stains and wearing dry shoes,” explains Dalibor Sedlarević, a resident from Dragolec/Dragoljevac. “The road has also improved the overall traffic security and relations with our Albanian neighbors, because it passes not only through our neighborhood, but also through that of the Kosovo Albanian, Bosnian, and Roma’s. I would like to take this opportunity and thank USAID and everyone who participated in this project,” explains Sedlarević.

USAID, through Advancing Kosovo Together program, contributed a total of \$45,454 to this project, while the municipality of Istog/Istok invested \$22,111 in the rehabilitation of the village road.

Leposavić/Leposaviq and Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovicë e Veriut Launch Service Improvement Action Planning

Leposavić/Leposaviq, April 21, 2016 – AKT Prime program conducted a workshop in Leposavić/Leposaviq on the introduction of Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) methodology with the representatives of Leposavić/Leposaviq and Severna Mitrovica

/Mitrovicë e Veriut municipalities. During the workshop, participants learned how to conduct situation analysis, determine performance indicators, collect data, identify objectives, draft plans, monitor and report consistent with the SIAP

methodology. The municipality of Leposavić/Leposaviq selected primary health as their priority, while Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovicë e Veriut selected university education as their priority.



“ A newly installed boiler – a renewable and cost effective way to fully heat the cultural center and municipal administration building in Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok.

Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan Realized in Zubin Potok

USAID supports Zubin Potok's energy efficiency goals with installation of a new heating boiler, which provides a more sustainable heating solution.

USAID Advancing Kosovo Together program supported the municipality of Zubin Potok to draft a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) on energy efficiency over the course of 2015. A representative working group established by the Mayor and composed of municipal representatives, external experts, citizens, and CSO representatives composed the SIAP, which provides a clear picture of the current state of energy efficiency across municipal services and envisions a number of projects to reduce energy consumption in the public sector in the next three years. The SIAP was approved by the Mayor of Zubin Potok in early February 2016. The municipal building and adjoining cultural center are visited by about

12,000 people each year. Municipal Assembly sessions, cultural events like art exhibitions and concerts, and public and youth meetings are held regularly there. The buildings were served by a single heating system. Old and lacking capacity to serve the entirety of both buildings, the heating system reached only 70 percent of the facility during the winter and its operation was expensive. As a result, the number of events at the cultural center decreased in winter time and the Assembly, which met at the assembly hall on the top floor of the municipal building, met less frequently or without prolonged productive discussions because of the cold. The municipal building and cultural center were identified by the Municipality of Zubin Potok as a priority project within

the new SIAP. Accordingly, USAID AKT supported the municipality to increase citizen engagement and the working of the Assembly with the installation of a new boiler there. The new boiler heats the entirety of the adjoining buildings. It uses pellets instead of wood and enables the municipality to meet standards of energy output and efficiency. Moreover, air pollution emissions and volatile organic compounds in this municipality, focused on rural tourism, are now lower thanks to implementation of this SIAP project.

USAID, through the AKT program, contributed a total of \$15,129 to this project, while the municipality of Zubin Potok invested \$2,598 of the project's implementation costs.

Labor Force Study Initiated in Partner Municipalities

In April 2016, USAID AKT Prime began implementing a labor force study in its partner municipalities, including Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/Istok, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Parteš/Partesh, Štrpce/Shtërpçë, Klinë/Klina, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut, Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin

Potok/Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveqan, Pejë/Peć, Obiliq/Obilić, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, Klokot/Killokot, and Ranilug/Ranillug. The study asks municipal officials (including gender officers, chiefs of personnel, municipal offices for communities and returns, officials from majority and non-majority

communities in senior and junior positions) about their experiences and perceptions of hindrances that women and non-majority individuals face to obtaining public sector employment and advancing in the public sector. The study will be completed in May 2016.

Supporting Rural Tourism in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë

Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni is a family-owned, three-bedroom guesthouse with a lovely garden located in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, just 500 meters from the castle. At 1,200 meters above sea level, tourists come to this area of Kosovo to visit the castle and enjoy the curative climate, free from noise and air pollution. Seeing the successes of nearby guesthouses, the owner Nerimane Novoberdaliu decided to turn her family's private house into a guesthouse. USAID Advancing Kosovo Together provided Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni a small business grant of new furnishings and appliances to assist Ms. Novoberdaliu in attracting more tourists. Further, USAID AKT has provided business consulting to Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni on branding, marketing, accounting, and financial management to help the business identify and reach its target markets. As a result of USAID AKT support and Ms. Novobërdaliu's targeted marketing, Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni

recently reached an agreement with the firm responsible for the restoration of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë castle, whereby construction staff will occupy the guesthouse completely for a period of four years starting from May 2016. With that steady income, Ms. Novobërdaliu intends to build three cabins to accommodate new tourists as her business grows. "Having numerous tourists interested in staying at Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni, I started thinking about business expansion, but did not have the financial means to refurbish the existing rooms on my own. I am really grateful to USAID for their help not just grant-wise, but also for the trainings provided to us on how to run our business," explains Ms. Novobërdaliu, the owner of the business. USAID, through the AKT Prime program, contributed a total of \$4,696 to this project, while the business grantee invested \$3,050 or approximately 40 percent of the initiative.



Facilitating Agribusiness Linkages in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë

Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, April 22, 2016 - AKT Prime program conducted a two-day awareness and promotion campaign in four municipal locations in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to encourage farmers to apply to AKT's Facilitating Agribusiness Linkages initiative. The initiative will link majority and minority raspberry farmers in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë to EuroFruti, a majority-owned collector and processor of forest fruits.

EuroFruti will enter into five-year contracts with farmers for the purchase of their entire yields of raspberries at fair market prices. This initiative is led by the municipality and EuroFruti, with AKT support. During the two days, both majority and minority communities were informed of the initiative and procedures for application through promotional material and meetings. As a result, a total of 16 majority

and 11 minority farmers from Novo Brdo/Novobërdë applied. A review and evaluation committee composed of EuroFruti, the municipality, and AKT selected 23 farmers for field visits to confirm that they have the means for their own contribution and fulfill all required criteria. At least 15 farmers will be selected to participate in this project, each contributing with up to 50 percent of the total cost.



Annex D – PIR 1 Activities

Gjilan/Gnjilane

Livoq/Livoč Playground	
Location: Livoq/Livoč, Gjilan/Gnjilane	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT supported installation of a new playground to increase outdoor activities for children in the village and providing a safe playground area for children of different ethnicities to play together. The playground is located in the yard of a primary school where pupils from both communities attend classes.	
Identification: This project was identified 23 community members (23 male; 20 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 1 K-Turk; 7 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with four municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: March 12, 2015 – August 8, 2015	
Led by: Idriz Ramadani and Uros Arsic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 410 direct beneficiaries (380 K-Albanian, 30 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. DAQA	Performance (1-10): 5
Cost: \$2,615 (AKT)	
<p>“The new playground is wonderful. This is important for us because we have a good time here and it’s wonderful for all children,” explains Festina Kurteshi, a thirteen-year old pupil and president of the Children’s Municipal Assembly in Gjilan/Gnjilane.</p>	

Ponesh/Poneš Sveti Sava Playground	
Location: Ponesh/Poneš, Gjilan/ Gnjilane	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT supported installation of new playground equipment to increase outdoor activities for children in the village and providing a safe playground area for children of different ethnicities to play together. The playground is located in the yard of a primary school where pupils from both communities attend classes.	
Identification: This project was identified by 61 community members (37 male, 24 female; 47 K-Albanian, 14 K-Serb; 7 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (5 male, 1 female; 3 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with four municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: March 12, 2015 – August 8, 2015	
Led by: Naser Shala and Sladjan Paunovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 80 direct beneficiaries (40 K-Albanian, 40 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. DAQA	Performance (1-10): 5
Cost: \$3,000 (AKT)	
Stefan Trajković, a fourteen-year old pupil from the “Sveti Sava” school in Poneš/Ponesh says the new playground helped children from both communities socialize with each other. “This project means a lot. Now, we hang out and play with each other,” explains Stefan.	

Gračanica/Gračanicë

Radevo/Radevë Primary School Central Heating System	
Location: Radevo/Radevë , Gračanica/Gračanicë	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure	
Description: AKT Prime installed a new central heating system (300 m ²) in the primary school in the village of Radevo/Radevë, enabling school children to attend classes and learn under normal conditions, unaffected by cold weather during the winter time. Previously, school classrooms were heated by coal and firewood stoves, which emitted smoke, affecting health conditions, the learning environment, and student attendance.	
Identification: This project was identified by 13 community members (12 male, 1 female; 1 K-Albanian, 12 K-Serb; 1 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 1 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: June 3, 2015 – July 3, 2015	
Led by: Milorad Lzaic and Arben Qerkini (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 40 direct beneficiaries (15 K-Albanian, 25 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Termovision Shpk in consortium with N.N. Global-ING	Performance (1-10): 8. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$14,868. AKT: \$12,080 (80%). Municipality \$2,788 (20%)	
Luka Jovanović, a first grade student in this school says, “It is better and warmer with the new radiators. Everything is so much nicer now. We act in the classroom, we sing, and we play together. Now we can stay and learn much longer in the classrooms than we used to. We even celebrated St. Sava in the classroom.” Three other priorities were identified by this community: construction of a community center, renovation of the village well and plaza, and renovation of the village park.	

Istog/Istok

Dobrush/Dobruša School IT Equipment	
Location: Dobrush/Dobruša, Istog/ Istok	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to enhance curriculum content and learning opportunities using improved technology in the classrooms at the “Fan S Noli” primary school in Dobrush/Dobruša. AKT procured four smart boards and a projector for the school and provided training to staff on their use.	
Identification: This project was identified by 12 community members (11 male, 1 female; 12 K-Bosniak; 4 youth).	Implementation: 5 community members (4 male, 1 female; 5 K-Bosniak) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: July 2015	
Led by: Zijad Cokovic and Nedzat Dzogovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 180 direct beneficiaries (180 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Comtrade Computers and REA Commerce	Performance (1-10): 5
Cost: \$3,548	
Other priorities identified by this community included: public lighting, sidewalk construction, paving of Lubovo Road (1.5km) and a secondary road (500m), construction of a school, rehabilitation of a second irrigation channel, and construction of a sports field.	

Dragolec/Dragoljevac Road Paving	
Location: Dragolec/Dragoljevac, Istog/ Istok	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: This project included the asphaltting of 1.1km of local roads in the village of Dragolec/Dragoljevac to create better living conditions for the citizens living in the village. The previous roads were in poor condition, covered with gravel and full of potholes, limiting movement within and in and out of the village.	
Identification: This project was identified by 6 community members (6 male; 1 K-Albanian, 5 K-Serb).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: December 4, 2015 – April 27, 2016	
Led by: Dalibor Sedlarovic and Sali Hysenaj (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 122 direct beneficiaries (100 K-Albanian, 22 K-Serb) according to the community leaders. Census data from 2011 shows the number of beneficiaries at 420.	
Contractor: N.N.SH ILEAA-GR	Performance (1-10): 8. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$67,565. AKT: \$45,454 (67%). Municipality: \$22,111 (33%).	
<p>“Rehabilitation of the village road means a lot to our community, especially to returnees. It has improved the everyday life of the residents. There is no more mud and potholes, and our children arrive at school without mud stains and wearing dry shoes,” explains Dalibor Sedlarević, a resident from Dragolec/Dragoljevac. “The road has also improved the overall traffic security and relations with our Albanian neighbors, because it passes not only through our neighborhood, but also through that of the Kosovo Albanian, Bosnian, and Roma.” Other priorities identified by this community: procurement of agricultural machines, fund for cattle, construction of an irrigation system, and construction of a sewage system.</p>	

Sine/ Sinaje Community Center Equipment	
Location: Sine/Sinaje, Istog/Istok	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the functionalization of the community center with a wooden table and chairs, a stove, and a projector with screen to enrich the cultural and social activities of the returnees in this village. Community activities had dwindled due to a lack of basic inventory and equipment.	
Identification: This project was identified by 7 community members (7 male; 3 K-Albanian, 4 K-Serb).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: July 23-August 14, 2015	
Led by: Halit Avdijaj and Radmilo Asanin (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 1,150 direct beneficiaries (1,100 K-Albanian, 50 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. Valoni and Comtrade Computers and AI-Trade Shpk	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$1,948 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community included: construction of a water system, economic projects, construction of a sewage system, and relocation of a waste disposal dump.	

Klinë/Klina

Krushevë e Madhe/Veliko Kruševo Playground	
Location: Krushevë e Madhe/Veliko Kruševo, Klinë/Klina	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT supported installation of new playground equipment to increase outdoor activities for children in the village and provide a safe playground area for children of different ethnicities to play together. The playground is located near an existing football field in a central area of the village.	
Identification: This project was identified by 18 community members (18 male; 15 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 1 K-Roma; 1 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (6 male; 3 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together to implement and monitor this project.
	
Duration: July 20-August 14, 2015	
Led by: Leke Beka and Ratko Bicanin (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 190 direct beneficiaries (120 K-Albanian, 70 K-RAE)	
Contractor: N.P.T. DAQA	Performance (1-10): 6
Cost: \$3,407 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: asphaltting of village roads, construction of a milk collection station, construction of a water system, construction of a sport field, construction of irrigation channels, and construction of a sewage system.	

Klokot/Kllokot

Klokot/Kllokot Youth Center Equipment	
Location: Klokot/ Kllokot, Klokot/ Kllokot	
Project Type: Quick Impact	
Description: AKT supported the functionalization of the youth center with the procurement of audio equipment to create improved conditions for youth and cultural activities. The new equipment is used by the community for social activities and by the municipality for public hearings.	
Identification: This project was identified by 31 community members (28 male, 3 female; 5 K-Albanian, 26 K-Serb; 8 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (5 male, 1 female; 2 K-Albanian, 4 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: December 4-20, 2015	
Led by: Njazi Ibishi and Srdjan Nikolic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 1,650 direct beneficiaries (150 K-Albanian, 1,500 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.T.SH. DUKA ALFA STUDIO	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$3,488 (AKT)	
<p>“The community center is a gathering point for all communities who live within our,” Miloš Perić, the Klokot/Kllokot Youth Center Director explains. “Serbs and Albanians live together here and we will work alongside each other. We want to achieve a more integrated community,” Other priorities identified by this community: expansion of potable water system, furnishing cultural arts society, construction of fire station, construction of marketplace, rehabilitation of road, purchase of municipal minibus, and construction of a bridge.</p>	

Mogila/Mogille School IT Equipment	
Location: Mogila/Mogille, Klokot/Kllokot	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the school to enhance their curriculum with online resources and technology and offer computer skills lessons to students with the procurement of four desktop computers, UPS devices, and a multipurpose printer/copier.	
Identification: This project was identified by 36 community members (36 male; 29 K-Albanian, 7 K-Serb; 12 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (6 male; 3 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: June 15-August 15, 2015	
Led by: Srdjan Bojic and Xhevat Emini (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 249 direct beneficiaries (195 K-Albanian, 54 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Duplex Print Shpk	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$2,532 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: construction of water reservoir, construction of a road (800m), construction of sidewalks, rehabilitation of the water system, construction of a bridge, construction of an indoor sports court, rehabilitation of existing village roads, construction of a community center, and construction of a football field.	

Vrbovac/Vrbocë Pedestrian Sidewalks	
Location: Vrbovac/Vrbocë, Klokot/Klllokot	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: The traffic on this road had increased over the years, endangering the lives of local residents, who use this road to go to the local clinic and supermarket, and school children, who walk along this road to get to and from school. AKT supported the construction of a 1.1km sidewalk, retaining wall, pipes, and drainage. Implementation of this project improved the safety and security of local residents.	
Identification: This project was identified by 16 community members (16 male; 12 K-Serb).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 4 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with 1 municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: October 22-November 30, 2015	
Led by: Stanimir Mitrovic and Ljubisa Kovacevic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 545 direct beneficiaries (25 K-Albanian, 520 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.N.SH ILEAA-GR	Performance (1-10): 8. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$59,412. AKT: \$47,635 (80%). Municipality: \$11,777 (20%)	
Other priorities identified by this community: construction of a second sewage network, rehabilitation of the water system, construction of a community center, and stabilization of the river embankment.	

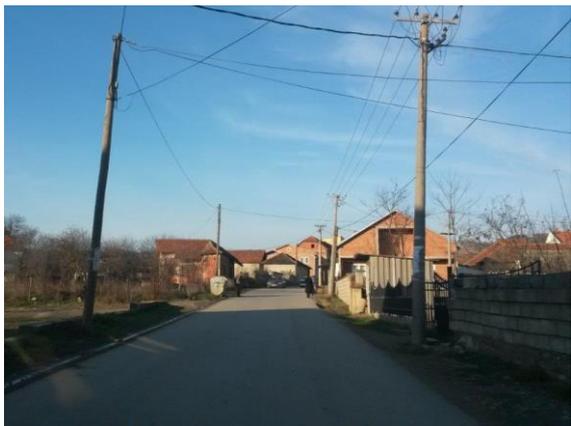
Leposavić/Leposaviq

Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit Chess Club	
Location: Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit, Leposavić/Leposaviq	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project (large)/Small-scale Infrastructure Project alternative	
Description: Sport is often viewed as a universal language that can bring people together, create a sense of common identity, develop friendships, and re-establish relationships between communities. To promote multiethnic cooperation through sport, the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together project (AKT), in partnership with the Leposavić/Leposaviq Chess Center “Rvatska,” organized a multiethnic chess tournament on February 20, 2016 in the village of Ibarsko Postenje/Postenja e Ibrit (Leposavić/Leposaviq), providing equipment and furniture to the club for the tournament and future tournaments. Equipment and furniture included clocks, tables and chairs, scoreboard, computer and printer, and stove, all to be kept and maintained in the community center.	
Identification: AKT was approached by a representative of the chess association with a concept for a multi-ethnic chess tournament. The municipality was supportive and provided a permit for using their facility for the chess club.	Implementation: The project was implemented by the chess club from Rvatska and municipality of Leposavic/Leposaviq.
	
Duration: February 2016	
Led by: Zaim Muminović (President of Rëvatskë/Rvatska Chess Club)	
Beneficiaries: 50 direct beneficiaries (30 K-Serb, 20 K-Bosniak)	
Contractor: MAJA BNB D.O.O, NTP PALMA, and Comtrade Computers	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$4,630 (AKT)	
<p>Almir Muminović, a junior chess player who participated in the tournament, said: “The chess tournament is very nice. Chess is my favorite game and I would recommend it to everyone, because it develops your intelligence.” “I would like to use this opportunity and express gratitude to USAID for the donation to the chess center and financial support to the chess tournament, which gathered a vast number of players,” explains Zaim Muminović, president of chess center Rvatska, Leposavić/Leposaviq.</p>	

Novo Brdo/Novobërdë

Koretiste/Koretishte Community Center Equipment	
Location: Koretiste/Koretishte, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: Citizens of this village are very active in organizing different events, but they faced a problem when it came to equipment. Citizens had to rent equipment, which was costly. AKT Prime supported this municipality to fulfill their priority of procuring new audio equipment to be used at community social activities and public meetings.	
Identification: This project was identified by 20 community members (20 male; 20 K-Serb; 3 youth).	Implementation: 5 community members (5 male; 5 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: March 13-18, 2016	
Led by: Slavisa Kovacevic and Zoran Trajkovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 1,100 direct beneficiaries (100 K-Albanian, 1,000 K-Serb)	
Contractor: NTSH DUKA ALFA STUDIO	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$2,205 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: construction of a community center, rehabilitation of the riverbed, asphaltting of 200m of road, construction of a football field, and construction of a sports court.	

Novo Brdo/Novobërdë Bostane Playground	
Location: Bostane, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: AKT supported the community priority of creating a park and playground space for kids and families from majority and non-majority communities to relax and have fun with each other in healthy, outdoor activities. The park is located centrally between the municipal building, a primary school, and church.	
Identification: This project was identified by 19 community members (15 male, 4 female; 15 K-Serb; 4 K-RAE).	Implementation: 7 community members (5 male, 1 female; 5 K-Serb, 2 RAE) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: October 19-November 27, 2015	
Led by: Stevo Mitric and Slavisa Martinovic	
Beneficiaries: 70 direct beneficiaries (50 K-Serb, 20 K-RAE)	
Contractor: KOSOVA ERH and KOTORI Sh.p.k	Performance (1-10): 7. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities, community representatives and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a satisfactory level and according to the project design. The company was given remarks and requests for corrections on certain occasions, but the overall performance was of good quality.
Cost: \$22,035. AKT: \$16,966 (77%). Municipality: \$5,069 (23%)	
<p>“This playground brightens the landscape now and it’s putting smiles on children's and families' faces. Now, our children can also play in the evening hours without worrying about their safety, because the park is well-lit,” explains Father Steva. Six-year old Ismail Jashari and Luka Ivanović attend the pre-school classes in the nearby school, but they use every free moment to play together in the playground: “We are very happy here! The playground is so beautiful.” “It brightens my day to see my students playing and laughing together and really enjoying their childhood,” explains preschool teacher Jovanka Filić, who continues: “Children learn through play, and without it, we cannot properly prepare them [for] how to overcome all the challenges that life brings.” Other priorities identified by this community: installation of solar street lights, road construction (1.5km), sidewalk construction, renovation of the cultural center, health center construction, and construction of an indoor sports court.</p>	

Kufcë e Epërm/ Gornje Kuvce Public Lighting	
Location: Kufcë e Epërm/ Gornje Kuvce, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: AKT supported new street lighting for 4,800m of roads in this village. Implementation of this project provided residents with a safer and much more secure environment, with increased visibility for pedestrians and drivers.	
Identification: This project was identified by 21 community members (20 male, 1 female; 7 K-Albanian, 14 K-Serb).	Implementation: 7 community members (6 male, 1 female; 3 K-Albanian, 4 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: June 2-July 14, 2016	
Led by: Predrag Djordjevic and Nexhat Veseli (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 890 direct beneficiaries (204 K-Albanian, 685 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Elcom-A Sh.p.k in consortium with N.T.Sh Monting	Performance (1-10): 7. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities, community representatives and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a satisfactory level and according to the project design. The company was given remarks and requests for corrections on certain occasions, but the overall performance was of good quality.
Cost: \$27,409. AKT: \$21,605 (79%). Municipality: \$5,804 (21%)	
“Implementation of this project was of grave importance to us because the streets were dark so our priority was to install public lights to make the village safer,” explains Antić, emphasizing that around 150 young people live in Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm. Other priorities identified by this community: construction of a sidewalk, asphaltting of primary (2km) and secondary roads, rehabilitation of the water system, construction of a sports field, stabilization of the river embankment, and waste containers.	

Obiliq/Obilić

Babin Most/Babimost School Equipment	
Location: Babin Most/Babimost, Obiliq/Obilić	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the school to enhance their overall learning environment and promote acquisition of computer skills with much-needed school equipment, including blackboards, shelving, desktop computers, a table and chairs, and a projector.	
Identification: This project was identified by 21 community members (19 male, 2 female; 21 K-Serb; 2 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 4 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: October 30-December 31, 2015	
Led by: Dragan Dancetovic and Bratislav Igic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 110 direct beneficiaries (110 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Aritech Shpk and NTP Palma	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$3,981 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: waste disposal, rehabilitation of Petrovic Road, regulation of cadastral network, construction of sewage system, construction of multi-ethnic market, sidewalk construction, connection to main water network, construction of sports court, construction of flats, addition to community center.	

Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice School IT Equipment	
Location: Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice, Obiliq/Obilić	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the school to enhance their overall learning environment and promote acquisition of computer skills with much-needed school equipment, including 5 desktop computers, desks and chairs, and a multi-function printer/copier.	
Identification: This project was identified by 16 community members (15 male, 1 female; 2 K-Albanian, 12 K-Serb, 2 K-RAE; 1 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 1 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 1 Ashkali) provided oversight and worked together with four municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: June 15-August 14, 2015	
Led by: Hysen Palokaj and Aleksandar Stojanovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 545 direct beneficiaries (25 K-Albanian, 520 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Aritech Shpk & NPT Mobileria ARDI	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$59,412. AKT: \$47,635 (80%). Municipality: \$11,777 (20%)	
Other priorities identified by this community: installation of the school heating system and upgrade of windows and sports field, renovation of the village fountain, and asphaltting of the Srdje Road (520m) and other village roads.	

Plemetine/Plementina Community Center Equipment	
Location: Plemetine/Plementina, Obiliq/Obilić	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the functionalization of the community center with desks, cabinets, office chairs, a desktop computer, video projector, and table tennis to enrich the cultural and social activities of the returnees in this village. Community activities had dwindled due to a lack of basic inventory and equipment.	
Identification: This project was identified by 31 community members (31 male; 10 K-Albanian, 6 K-Serb, 15 K-RAE; 5 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (6 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 2 K-RAE) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: June 15-August 14, 2015	
Led by: Slavisa Spasic and Avdullah Ibrahim (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 545 direct beneficiaries (25 K-Albanian, 520 K-Serb)	
Contractor: NPT Mobileria Ardi and Aritech Shpk	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$59,412. AKT: \$47,635 (80%). Municipality: \$11,777 (20%)	
Other priorities identified by this community: asphaltting road to Miloshevo/Milosevo, public lighting, construction of sidewalks, asphaltting of roads, and construction of village park.	

Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice Fazli Grajcevc/Dositej Obradov School Central Heating System and Rehabilitation	
Location: Crkvena Vodica/Caravodice, Obiliq/Obilić	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: AKT supported the installation of a central heating system (356 m, 33 radiators, and 150kW capacity boiler), new windows, and a new, common, and wheelchair accessible entry.	
Identification: This project was identified by 16 community members (15 male, 1 female; 2 K-Albanian, 12 K-Serb, 2 K-RAE; 1 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 1 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 1 Ashkali) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: June 3-July 31, 2015	
Led by: Hysen Palokaj and Aleksandar Stojanovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 110 direct beneficiaries (60 K-Albanian, 50 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Konstruktori Ing. 1969 Sh.p.k	Performance (1-10): 7. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities, community representatives and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a satisfactory level and according to the project design. The company was given remarks on certain occasions, but the overall performance was of good quality.
Cost: \$37,519. AKT: \$30,059 (80%). Municipality: \$7,460 (20%)	
Other priorities identified by this community: renovation of the village fountain, and asphaltting of the Srdje Road (520m) and other village roads.	

Parteš/ Partesh

Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme School Furniture	
Location: Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme, Parteš/Partesh	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT supported improved learning conditions for students with the procurement of 60 school tables and 100 chairs.	
Identification: This project was identified by 34 community members (29 male, 5 female; 34 K-Serb; 12 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (4 male, 2 female; 6 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: March 2015	
Led by: Sladjana Milosevic and Ivan Jovanovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 105 direct beneficiaries (105 K-Serb)	
Contractor: NTP METALI	Performance (1-10): 10
Cost: \$59,412. AKT: \$47,635 (80%). Municipality: \$11,777 (20%)	
<p>“We don’t have to watch out for the sharp-edged desks which were hurting our wrists. Also, new furniture allows us to write without fear that our clothes will be torn up. I feel more focused now,” explains Luka who is also the class president. Other priorities identified by this community: construction of sidewalk, new roof for community center, stabilization of river embankment, expansion of football field, asphaltting of village streets (2.5km), construction of second water network, and renovation of the youth center.</p>	

Parteš/Partesh Dositej Obradovic School IT Equipment	
Location: Parteš/Partesh	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to enhance curriculum content and learning opportunities using improved technology in the classrooms at Dositej Obradovic school. AKT procured four smart boards for the school and provided training to staff on their use.	
Identification: This project was identified by 21 community members (19 male, 2 female; 21 K-Serb; 15 youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 1 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb, 1 K-Ashkali) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: June 15-July 24, 2015	
Led by: Verica Milosevic and Slobodan Cvetkovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 350 direct beneficiaries (350 K-Serb)	
Contractor: REA COMMERCE	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$2,977 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: asphaltting of village roads, renovation of sports court, installation of wastewater treatment filters, cover for sports court, construction of new sports court, construction of foundation for basketball court, and rehabilitation of village plaza.	

Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme Pedestrian Sidewalk	
Location: Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme, Parteš/Partesh	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure	
Description: The traffic on the main road through Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme increased over the years. After it was repaved, it became a popular regional bypass, endangering the lives of school children, who walk along this road to get to and from school, and residents. AKT supported the construction of a 1.2km sidewalk, drainage pipes, culverts, and metal poles. Implementation of this project improved the safety and security of local residents.	
Identification: This project was identified by 34 community members (29 male, 5 female; 34 K-Serb; 12 youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (4 male, 2 female; 6 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: June 1-September 23, 2015	
Led by: Sladjana Milosevic and Ivan Jovanovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 1,200 direct beneficiaries (1,250 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.N.P. WENDA	Performance (1-10): 8. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$60,479. AKT: \$48,926 (80%). Municipality: \$11,553 (20%)	
<p>“This pedestrian sidewalk means a lot to children and us, especially because it has direct impact on their safety. In addition, the project is implemented in a very professional manner. It looks great and I am more than happy about it”, explains Zoran Đorđević, one of the residents of Donja Budriga/Budrikë e Poshtme. Other priorities identified by this community: new roof for community center, stabilization of river embankment, expansion of football field, asphaltting of village streets (2.5km), construction of second water network, and renovation of the youth center.</p>	

Pejë/Peć

Belo Polje/Bellopoje Community Center Equipment	
Location: Belo Polje/Bellopoje, Pejë/ Peć	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The community center was built to enrich culture and social activities among citizens, but a lack of basic equipment meant a decrease in the center's use. AKT supported the community with the purchase of recreational equipment for the center, including table tennis rackets and balls, a chess table, dominoes boards, a darts game, and stove.	
Identification: This project was identified by 13 community members (10 male, 3 female; 10 K-Serb).	Implementation: 5 community members (5 male; 2 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb; 1 Youth) provided oversight and worked together in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: November 4, 2015-January 26, 2016	
Led by: Vinko Milkovic and Smajl Krasniqi (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 60 direct beneficiaries (30 K-Albanian, 30 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.T. Sporting and Bau Market Shpk	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$826 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: rehabilitation of the water system, asphaltting of Magjar Road, replacement of electrical poles.	

Gorazhdevce/ Gorazdevac Public Lighting	
Location: Gorazhdevce/Gorazdevac, Pejë/ Peć	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: AKT supported the municipality to replace and expand the public lighting along 4.79km in this village. Previously, the lack of light limited residents' movement after dark. Increased security incidents and traffic accidents endangered residents and school children, and deterred them from walking after sundown.	
Identification: This project was identified by 6 community members (6 male; 4 K-Serb, 1 K-Bosniak, 1 K-RAE).	Implementation: 5 community members (5 male; 4 K-Serb, 1 K-Egyptian) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: August 14-October 7, 2015	
Led by: Drenko Todorovic and Dragoljub Dakic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 950 direct beneficiaries (950 K-Serb)	
Contractor: TERMOMONTIMI Sh.P.K	Performance (1-10): 9. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$44,989. AKT: \$36,100 (80%). Municipality: \$8,889 (20%)	
Drenko Todorović, a Community Forum member from this village has been involved in this project since its beginning: "This is the biggest project that was implemented in this village in the last 16 years focusing entirely on the needs of its residents. Now, the whole village is lit so the safety has been increased. We have many students who attend the second shift at school and now they are not upset to walk down the main road, while parents worry less about the safety of their children." Other priorities identified by this community: rehabilitation of the irrigation system, construction of a sewage system, construction of a community center, asphaltting of village roads, stabilization of river embankment, and sidewalk construction.	

Ranilug/Ranillug

Donje Korminjane/Korminjane I Ulet Community Center Equipment	
Location: Donje Korminjane/Korminjane I Ulet, Ranilug/Ranillug	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT supported the community to equip the center with a kitchen board, stove, electric stove, combined fridge, water heater, and faucet.	
Identification: This project was identified by 24 community members (24 male; 24 K-Serb; 1 Youth).	Implementation: 6 community members (5 male, 1 female; 6 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with two municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: May 1-15, 2015	
Led by: Ivan Janicijevic and Srdjan Dimitrijevic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 600 direct beneficiaries (600 K-Serb)	
Contractor: NTP PALMA and AL-TRADE Shpk	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$1,690 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: construction of a sports field, sidewalk construction, asphaltting of Ogradje Road, expansion of the kindergarten building, renovation of the village plaza, and rehabilitation of a 1km village road.	

Ranilug/Ranillug School IT Equipment	
Location: Ranilug/Ranillug	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to enhance curriculum content and learning opportunities using improved technology in the classrooms at the primary and secondary school. AKT procured three smart boards and projectors and provided training to staff on their use.	
Identification: This project was identified by 28 community members (25 male, 3 female; 28 K-Serb; 6 Youth).	Implementation: 7 community members (4 male, 3 female; 7 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with three municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: November 4, 2015-January 12, 2016	
Led by: Dejan Jovanovic and Jelena Mitrovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 270 direct beneficiaries (270 K-Serb)	
Contractor: ILIR KOSOVA Sh.p.k	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$3,054 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: renovation of the community center, construction of a bridge, rehabilitation of a road (300m), asphaltting of village roads, construction of a municipal parking area, and stabilization of the riverbed.	

Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut

Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut Kindergarten Furnishings	
Location: Severna Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Veriut	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project (large)/Small-scale Infrastructure Project alternative	
Description: The kindergarten was overcrowded. The municipality, in cooperation with UNDP and Save the Children, constructed an annex in order to accommodate all of the students, however no budget remained for outfitting the space. AKT Prime supported furnishing the space with tables and chairs, wardrobes, cabinets, shelves, and toys.	
Identification: The municipality identified education as a priority. AKT, in coordination with the Mayor's Advisor, approached the Director of this kindergarten and held a meeting with the municipality, Director, and parents from the community to identify this project priority.	Implementation: The Director of this kindergarten managed implementation in coordination with the Mayor's Advisor, who assisted in monitoring.
Before: 	After: <i>Pending final placement of furnishings.</i>
Duration: February 25-April 10, 2016	
Led by: Jelena Antic (Director)	
Beneficiaries: 693 direct beneficiaries (25 K-Albanian, 520 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. Mobileria Ardi	Performance (1-10): 10
Cost: \$10,437 AKT: \$8,432 (80%). Municipality: \$2,005 (20%)	
This project will be finalized and fully functional when all construction works are completed in the building, prior to the start of the new school year.	

Štrpce/ Shtërpçë

Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme School IT Equipment	
Location: Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, Štrpce/ Shtërpçë	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the school to enhance their curriculum with online resources and technology and offer computer skills lessons to students with the procurement of five desktop computers, a projector, and a multipurpose printer/copier.	
Identification: This project was identified by 10 community members (10 male; 4 K-Albanian, 6 K-Serb; 2 Youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: November 4, 2015-January 12, 2016	
Led by: Avdi Tahiri and Milan Djordjevic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 142 direct beneficiaries (65 K-Albanian, 77 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Aritech Shpk	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$2,973 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: fencing of sports field, rehabilitation of the water system, asphaltting of roads, construction of an irrigation system, bridge expansion, and construction of a retaining wall and playground.	

Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme Sports Field Fencing	
Location: Donja Bitinja/Biti e Poshtme, Štrpce/ Shtërpçë	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: AKT Prime supported the community priority of improving the safety for children playing together by installing fencing around and rehabilitating the 540m2 sports field.	
Identification: This project was identified by 10 community members (10 male; 4 K-Albanian, 6 K-Serb; 2 Youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: October 19-November 27, 2015	
Led by: Avdi Tahiri and Milan Djordjevic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 400 direct beneficiaries (160 K-Albanian, 240 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.N.P. WENDA	Performance (1-10): 7. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities, community representatives and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a satisfactory level and according to the project design. The company was given remarks on certain occasions, but the overall performance was of good quality.
Cost: \$15,642. AKT: \$11,819 (76%). Municipality: \$3,823 (24%).	
<p>“You saved many children with this project. We are very grateful! We can sleep in peace without worrying that another child might run after the ball that rolled off the field to the street or into the river. Our children play in a safe environment now,” explained Avdi, visibly shaken after recounting the moment when he managed to save the child from the river that runs alongside the sports field. He continued, “Projects like this unite our village. We worked together toward a common goal.” Other priorities identified by this community: rehabilitation of the water system, asphaltting of roads, construction of an irrigation system, bridge expansion, and construction of a retaining wall and playground.</p>	

Viča/Viqe Playground	
Location: Viča/ Viqe, Štrpce/ Shtërpçë	
Description: AKT supported the community priority of creating a park and playground space for kids and families from majority and non-majority communities to relax and have fun with each other in healthy, outdoor activities. The park is located next to the primary school. The land on which the park was placed, was private land, purchased by the village residents and transferred to the municipalities for the creation of a park.	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Identification: This project was identified by 11 community members (11 male; 6 K-Albanian, 5 K-Serb; 2 Youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb; 1 Youth) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: March 2015	
Led by: Boban Stojkovic and Bajram Bajrami (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 56 direct beneficiaries (36 K-Albanian, 20 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. DAQA	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$3,329 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: rehabilitation of the water system, fencing of the sports field, widening of the village bridge, construction of the community center, construction of a sports court.	

Viča/Viqe Rehabilitation of Water Supply System	
Location: Viča/Viqe, Štrpce/ Shtërpçë	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to establish a functional, potable water system in the village. The previous system was established 35 years ago. The community was experiencing huge water losses from leaking water pipes, with the result that houses in this village received only 6,000-7,000 liters of water per day (as opposed to the average household capacity requirement of 32,000 liters per day). AKT worked closely with the municipality, design company, and community to determine and implement a solution. The project included rehabilitation and isolation of an existing water tank, installation of new 3040m of pipes, and installation of two manholes for a valve control and pressure regulators.	
Identification: This project was identified by 11 community members (11 male; 6 K-Albanian, 5 K-Serb; 2 Youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb; 1 Youth) provided oversight and worked together with one municipal official, who was involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: August 25-November 27, 2015	
Led by: Boban Stojkovic and Bajram Bajrami (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 500 direct beneficiaries (300 K-Albanian, 200 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.N. ALFA-ING	Performance (1-10): 7. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities, community representatives and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a satisfactory level and according to the project design. The company was given remarks on certain occasions, but the overall performance was of good quality.
Cost: \$24,721. AKT: \$20,921 (85%). Municipality: \$3,800 (15%)	
Boban Stojković, the village leader for the project and father of three children explains: "Access to safe drinking-water [is] of vital importance for the survival of this village and that is why we never stopped appealing to local officials and donors for help." Other priorities identified by this community: rehabilitation of the water system, fencing of the sports field, widening of the village bridge, construction of the community center, construction of a sports court.	

Vushtrri/ Vuçitrn

Gojbule/Gojbulja School Sports Equipment	
Location: Gojbule/ Gojbulja, Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to enhance interaction of multi-ethnic children through outdoor activities at school with the procurement of basketball boards, a hoop, net, and balls for basketball, a net and balls for football, and playground equipment.	
Identification: This project was identified by 11 community members (11 male; 1 K-Albanian, 10 K-Serb; 2 Youth).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 1 K-Albanian, 3 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: March 12 – April 14, 2015	
Led by: Bratislav Kostic and Naser Hyseni (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 30 direct beneficiaries (6 K-Albanian, 24 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.P.T. DAQA and N.T. SPORTING	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$2,401 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: asphaltting of two village roads, rehabilitation of the water system, construction of a sewage system, and construction of a community center.	

Prilluzhe/Priluzje Health Clinic IT Equipment	
Location: Prilluzhe/Priluzje, Vushtrri/Vučitrn	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project	
Description: The purpose of this project was to improve the operations and services of the health clinic in this village with the procurement of a photocopier machine and desktop computer.	
Identification: This project was identified by 16 community members (16 male; 4 K-Albanian, 11 K-Serb, 1 K-RAE; 1 Youth).	Implementation: 7 community members (7 male; 2 K-Albanian, 4 K-Serb, 1 K-RAE) provided oversight and worked together with municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: May 2015	
Led by: Sasa Andric and Hamdi Vojvoda (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 160 direct beneficiaries (160 K-Serb)	
Contractor: Comtrade Computers and N.T Info Com	Performance (1-10): 8
Cost: \$1,646 (AKT)	
Other priorities identified by this community: construction of sidewalk, street lighting, extension of the water system, renovation of the cultural center, construction of a sewage system in the Roma section of the village, rehabilitation of a village road.	

Banjske/Banjska Storm Water Drainage and Road Rehabilitation	
Location: Banjske/Banjska, Vushtrri/Vučitrn	
Project Type: Small-scale Infrastructure Project	
Definition: The purpose of this project was to improve transit conditions and accessibility after rainfall with installation of appropriate drainage solutions and to repair the road where years of inadequate drainage and maintenance had deteriorated the road.	
Identification: This project was identified by 13 community members (13 male; 9 K-Albanian, 4 K-Serb).	Implementation: 4 community members (4 male; 2 K-Albanian, 2 K-Serb) provided oversight and worked together with 2 municipal officials, who were involved in implementation and monitoring.
Before: 	After: 
Duration: September 21-October 1, 2015	
Led by: Gani Hasani and Goran Dancetovic (Community Forum leaders)	
Beneficiaries: 600 direct beneficiaries (500 K-Albanian, 100 K-Serb)	
Contractor: N.N.P. WENDA	Performance (1-10): 8. The company worked closely with the municipal authorities and AKT civil engineer. Performance was at a high level and according to the project design. The project design was professionally prepared, which enabled the company to perform well.
Cost: \$51,574. AKT: \$38,839 (75%). Municipality \$12,435 (24%)	
<p>Hasan Gani, owner of the tractor repair shop in Vushtrri/Vučitrn says rural roads are vital for development in Kosovo, "The importance of this project for us is beyond words! This road is also crucial for connecting both, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb, communities, because it brings our houses closer. Many families moved out of the village due to the bad living conditions. But this new road will make our life easier." Other priorities identified by this community: irrigation pumps, sewage system construction, school construction, community center construction, upgrade to electrical network, rehabilitation of the water system, and waste disposal.</p>	

Zvečan/ Zvečan

Zvečan/ Zvečan Kindergarten Kitchen Equipment	
Location: Zvečan/ Zvečan	
Project Type: Quick Impact Project (large)/Small-scale Infrastructure Project alternative	
Description: The purpose of this project was to upgrade the food preparation conditions in order to improve and meet food safety standards for children and reduce risks to their health.	
Identification: This project was identified by municipal leadership 3 (all male), parents 20 (16 female, 4 male) and AKT staff.	Implementation: In the implementation of this were actively involved kindergarten management, AKT and municipal staff.
Before:	After:
	
Duration: 3 months	
Led by: Zorica Keljanovic	
Beneficiaries: 330 direct beneficiaries (330 K-Serbs)	
Contractor: N.T.P Palma	Performance (1-10): 10
Cost: \$15,409. AKT: \$12,888 (84%). Municipality \$ 2,521(16%)	
<p>The kindergarten was in danger of being closed due to hygiene violations found in the kitchen. The old kitchen was not outfitted with commercial kitchen fixtures, but rather old, wooden cabinets and surfaces, and a make-shift ventilation system. Inspectors that visited the school after the installation of the new fixtures remarked that they could not believe they were in the same space, the changes were so remarkably positive. Vesna Vuckovic, a kitchen worker, reflects: "Everything is much better starting from the aspirator, kitchen tables, surface, upper parts of the kitchen which were required for bread, and refrigerator which is a must in summertime. Working conditions are much better, both cooking and hygiene wise. I and all of my colleagues, including superiors are all satisfied and I can only say, thank you."</p>	

Annex E – PIR 2 Business Profiles

A-Stil DPZ	
Owner, location	Abdula Adzija, Peja/Peć
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>A-Stil processes and produces wooden and laminated kitchen furnishings and furniture. The business is located in Peja/Peć and was established in 2000. Currently, A-Stil's market covers the region of Peja/Peć and it has a furniture store in the city of Peja/Peć for exhibiting and selling its products. Recently, it also started to promote and sell its products in northern municipalities.</p> <p>Number of employees: 3 full-time Annual sales: €100,000</p>
Grant	CNC Graver (Rutter) Value: \$6,666 (plus \$2,600 cost share by A-Stil)
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Promotion and Business Expansion Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included support to shifting focus on bestselling products (as opposed to focus on those products with little market share). <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 2 full-time (K-Bosniak) Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €17,000</p> <p>A-Stil is using the grant to expand to new products such as wood pizza plates, kid's memory puzzles, and kids' toys.</p> <p><i>"This machine we received from USAID differentiated our business from competition. Now we are offering unique products."</i> Abdula Adzija, Owner of A-Stil</p>

Agrosera Toplica	
Owner, location	Ana Dančetović, Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Agrosera Toplica is an agricultural and agro-processing family business that has been operating since 1980 (officially registered in 2012). Located in the village of Banjska, Agrosera Toplica plants, harvests, and sells a variety of agricultural products. Its core and main agricultural product is potato. It also produces cereals (such as wheat, barley and oats), corn, cabbage, and other agricultural products. Due to high market demand, their products are mainly sold in Kosovo, and a minor percentage are sold in Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Also located in Vushtrri/Vučitrn is one of the largest chips factories in Kosovo: Vipa. Most of Agrosera's potatoes are sold to Vipa. The company maintains excellent cooperation with Vipa; they are a stable buyer and hold continuing contract arrangements. Agrosera Toplica is using its grant for potato cultivation. The business owners are experts in potato production and their production location is ideal for production and selling.</p> <p>Number of employees: 3 full-time Annual production: 105,000kg Annual sales: €18,300</p>
Grant	Tafe 42 DI engine Simpson S-325 diesel-piston tractor AKT grant: \$6,635 (plus \$1,800 cost share by Agrosera Toplica)
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Advanced Entrepreneurship Promotion and Business Expansion Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investors Operations and Supply Chain Management Food Quality Standards Business Professional Skills Training Financial Management Training Production and Selling Skills Training Participant - Women's Entrepreneurship Day (WED) Conference Access to Finance for Women-owned Business Training</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Business administration and marketing and finance consulting included support to business and financial planning, an increase in production area, and reduction in production costs. Promotion and business expansion consulting included guidance on offering a new small package size for retail sales as production increases. <i>Planned:</i> Design of a logo and design and development of labels for the potato bags</p>
Other	Trade Fairs
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 5 seasonal Increased value in sales: N/A (agriculture business)</p> <p><i>"Our old tractor broke and could not be fixed anymore. With this new tractor, we have sped-up and increased production. This year, we are producing 30% more."</i> Ana Dančetović, Owner</p>

Dini NTP	
Owner, location	Sabedin Vllasaliu, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Dini is a family business that began operating in 2010 and was formally registered in 2014. The main activity of this business is planting and growing different types of lettuces and salad greens, such as romaine, iceberg lettuce, rucola, and spinach. These products are grown though the existing 500 m² of greenhouse and an open field of 25 acres. Products are also sold in the region such as Pristina and Gjilan/Gnjilane to small retailers and green markets. There are no local competitors in the region. The main competitors are businesses that import from Albania and Macedonia.</p> <p>Number of employees: 4 full-time Annual production: 36,000 pieces Annual sales: €10,800</p>
Grant	500 m ² greenhouse with pipes and plastic folia and drip irrigation AKT grant: \$5,596 (plus \$3,500 cost share by Dini)
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management Food Quality Standards</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting Agricultural Production Specialist consulting included onsite assistance to Dini in production of its new products growing in the new greenhouse (peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes). <i>Planned:</i> Design of logo and branding materials and development of social media marketing</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: N/A (agriculture business)</p> <p>Based on high market demand, Dini is using the grant to start producing peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes.</p> <p><i>“With AKT support, I have introduced 3 new products demanded in the market. I have already made deals with buyers in my region.”</i> Sabedin Vllasaliu, Owner</p>

Food Pack PP	
Owner, location	Gordana Mladjović, Zvečan/Zvečan
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Food Pack was established and registered in 2014 and its main activity is production and design of cardboard packaging. Currently, the business produces boxes of various sizes for pizza, cookies, and cakes. Food Pack produces the cardboard boxes with raw materials purchased in Prizren. Stamping and printing are currently done in South Mitrovica/ë. The target market of the business is northern Kosovo municipalities. Prior to starting the business, Mladjović researched the market in northern Kosovo and found that there are no serious producers of cardboard boxes and there is a great demand. The only competition is a company from Serbia that exports to North Mitrovica/ë.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time Annual sales: €9,000</p>
Grant	<p>Machine for printing cardboard packaging AKT grant: \$6,222 (plus \$1,700 cost share by Food Pack)</p>
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Advanced Entrepreneurship Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management Access to Finance Opportunities Workshop Advertising of Products and Selling Skills Training Branding assistance (TA and procurement) Public Speaking Kosovo Law for Entrepreneurs</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting resulted in a new network linkage with VIPrint of Mitrovica/ë, where VIPrint will provide assistance to clients when Food Pack is unable to meet the requirements of an order. Business Administration consulting Finance and Accounting consulting included training and guidance to Food Pack to comply with tax requirements of the Kosovo Government and delivery of all forms and guidance in Serbian language for continued compliance. <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing</p>
Other	<p>Business to Business Meetings Trade Fairs, resulting in a new potential market linkage with a wine producer from southern Kosovo to produce packaging for wine bottles</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €2,500</p> <p><i>“Our business was losing clients because we could not print the logos of restaurants on our boxes. Now, those clients are returning and we are attracting new ones.”</i> Gordana Mladjović, Owner</p>

Lazić Stil PP	
Owner, location	Goran Lazić, Gračanica/Gračanice
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Lazić Stil is a small family-owned wood processing business and located in the village of Čaglavica in the municipality of Gračanica/Gračanice. The family has a long tradition in wood processing going back several generations. Officially registered in 2015, the business produces furniture, kitchen cabinets, and other wood and plywood furniture. In addition, Lazić Stil repairs and restores old furniture. It maintains excellent cooperation with Albanian businesses, including: NTP Ilirija Kosovo Polje, Dea Pristina, Elita Ferizaj/Uroševac, and others. Due to a lack of equipment, the business previously had to outsource some services to competitors to complete orders, which resulted in increased costs of production. To increase competitiveness, AKT delivered a compressor, and two machines for cutting wooden products.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time Annual sales: €5,000</p>
Grant	Formatizer for cutting plywood and other wooden plates; tools GER LS 1216 Makita; compressor 100 lit AKT grant: \$5,891 (plus \$2,530 cost share by Lazić Stil)
Training	Introduction to Entrepreneurship Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management
Technical assistance	Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included Business Administration consulting included guidance on target markets Finance and Accounting consulting included training and guidance to comply with tax requirements of the Kosovo Government and delivery of all forms and guidance in Serbian language for continued compliance.
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €2,700</p> <p><i>“Before receiving these tools, I had to travel 15 km every day to acquire services from competition. Now I reduced costs and doubled my sales.” Goran Lazić, Owner</i></p>

Lulishtja Agonisi	
Owner, location	Ardijan Sumaj, Pejë/Peć
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Lulishtja Agonisi has been operating since 2004 and was formally established in 2013. A family business, it draws from a long family tradition of cultivating a variety of seasonal flowers and flower seeds. Lulishtja Agonisi's clients include larger businesses and public institutions to decorate parks and public spaces. It has two acres of greenhouse and has a shop for selling flowers in Raushiq village in municipality of Peja/Peć. The customers come mainly from Peja/Peć and, due to the good location of the business, customers also come from Decan/Dečane and Gjakova/Djakovica. Lulishtja Agonisi cooperates very well with customers and businesses from other communities as they are engaged to decorate parks and have direct sales to other communities.</p> <p>Number of employees: 4 full-time Annual production: 35,000 pieces Annual sales: €28,000</p>
Grant	Greenhouse – size 2 acres AKT grant: \$4,596 (plus \$2,750 cost-share by Lulishtja Agonisi)
Training	Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structure, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management
Technical assistance	Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included guidance on social media marketing and support to development of a Facebook business page, support to development of a strong brand, identification of the company's market differentiation, and design of business brochures and leaflets. <i>Planned:</i> Development of a functional website.
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 2 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €16,000</p> <p><i>"The greenhouse I received from AKT directly increased my production and sales and prevented my production from bad weather conditions."</i> Ardijan Sumaj, Owner</p>

Natyra-M	
Owner, location	Ahmet Maliqi, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Natyra-M is a family business with a long tradition in beekeeping and production of honey. Formally registered in 2011, Natyra-M produces of three types of honey. Their 53 beehives are located on 20 acres of land in the fields of Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, with very good natural conditions for beekeeping. The honey is currently being sold in Novo Brdo/Novobërdë and Gjilan/Gnjilane, mainly to customers for healing diseases and others who have heard about the good quality honey produced by the business. Location, quality, and expertise and experience of the owner are the main strengths of the business.</p> <p>Number of employees: 1 full-time Annual production: 477 kg Annual sales: 4,770 €</p>
Grant	<p>35 beehives, tools for harvesting and extraction (honey extractor/spinner, steam wax extractor, honey mixer, sugar milling tool, and electric extractor) AKT grant: \$5,654 (plus \$3,080 cost share by Natyra-M)</p>
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Food Quality and Standards Operations and Supply Chain Management Applying to MAFRD Grants</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting Bee Breeding and Queen Bee Rearing consulting included a series of onsite consulting over a 28-day period to support 35 new bee colonies. Mr. Maliqi will replicate the process and knowledge he gained to rear more queen bees through the end of the year.</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: N/A (sales will begin in the next quarter)</p> <p><i>“The bee breeding and queen rearing expertise I received will triple my honey production in the next two years. I will become a market leader in the region.”</i> Ahmet Maliqi, Owner</p>

Nderi-R	
Owner, location	Nderim Rexhaj, Pejë/Peć
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Nderi-R was formally registered in 2012 with assistance of the USAID Young Entrepreneurs Program. It produces vegetables in a 500 m² greenhouse and 40 acre open field in Fshati i Ri in the municipality of Peja/Peć. The business grows tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, lettuces, broccoli, Cherokee purple, spinach and green beans. Nderi-R has contracts with supermarkets and vegetable collection points in the Pejë/Peć region. This is a family business that employs 4 family members. The greenhouse is helping the business to offer products for the market earlier than the competition in that region, and is considered among the main strengths of the business. As a result, there is high demand from current and new buyers to deliver as much as the business can produce. The owner's capacity and capability are strong assets for the company.</p> <p>Number of employees: 4 full-time Annual production: Spinach: 2000 kg, Broccoli: 1000 kg, Green salad: 4000 pieces, Cauliflower: 1500 kg, Green beans: 2300 kg Annual sales: €9,590</p>
Grant	<p>500 m² greenhouse with quality pipes, plastic folia, and natural ventilation, with five-year warranty AKT grant: \$6,617 (plus \$3,000 cost share by Nderi-R)</p>
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Law for Entrepreneurs Food Quality and Standards Operations and Supply Chain Management</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included advisory services to support the company's social media marketing and creation of a Facebook business page.</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: N/A (sales will begin in the next quarter)</p> <p>With this new greenhouse, Nderi-R is opening an all fruit and vegetable shop in Peja. <i>"I have expanded my market due to more production. I have opened a vegetable shop in Peja and the start could not be any better."</i> Nderim Rexhaj, Owner</p>

Pac Process	
Owner, location	Zoran Stanković, Klokot/Kllokot
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Pac Proce is a business that designs, produces, and services machines and tools for production lines exclusive for food and beverage. In addition, it welds, repairs, and connects different sizes and types of stainless steel pipes and connections/joints. Located in the municipality of Klokot/Kllokot, Pac Process has been active since 2004 and formally registered since 2014. It has a long tradition in processing machines for packing and labeling for plastic and glass packages, production of equipment for water treatment (filter systems), all types of conveyor belt systems. Their business products are fundamental in production and processing in factories (i.e. water and food). Pac Process maintains excellent cooperation with Albanian businesses, including Kika Water Policka; Fluidi Gnjilane/Gjilan; Hugos Topaonica and others.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time Annual sales: 15,000 €</p>
Grant	Machine CNC Plazma Cutter AKT grant: \$6,667 (plus \$2,300 cost share by Pac Process)
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management Access to Finance Opportunities Workshop</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included encouraging the business to reduce its number of low demand and high production time products and instead focus on its high demand and well-known products. Business Administration consulting Finance and Accounting consulting included support to tracking sales, records maintenance, and compliant completion of tax forms. <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing and product catalogues</p>
Other	<p>Business to Business Meetings Trade Fairs</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €5,500</p> <p><i>“The CNC cutter machine converted my production from manual to automatic.” Zoran Stanković, Owner</i></p>

Sani PPT (AquaBreza)	
Owner, location	Raško Milenković, Štrpce/Shtërpçë
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Sani is a private business with a water factory that fills and bottles natural spring water under the brand name AquaBreza. The business was officially registered in 2002 with an office located in Štrpce/Shtërpçë and a natural spring water bottling factory in Brezovica. The water spring is at 1700m altitude and located on the mountain of Šar Planina national park. Sani produces plastic bottles and bottles the water in 0.5 liter, 1.5 liter and 10 liter sizes. The water is bottled automatically, except for the 10 liter bottle size; those are filled manually. It sells water in majority and non-majority areas including Gračanica, Mitrovica, Pristina, Podujevo, and other locations. Euromax Pristina; Evropa Podujevo; Bimi-Trade Pristina; Piramida Mitrovica; Spectar Gračanica are some of the businesses that Sani has contracts with (i.e. over 35,000 bottles sold monthly.) Among the main resources of the business is the location of the source of the water, compared to the competition.</p> <p>Number of employees: 4 full-time, 2 part-time Annual sales: €100,000</p>
Grant	Machine for the bottling of 10 liter water bottles AKT grant: \$6,522 (plus \$2,200 cost share by Sani)
Training	Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting Business Administration consulting included support to refining the Aquabreza brand and leveraging the company's location as a differentiator from competition. Finance and Accounting consulting included delivering training to the company's accountant on changes and updates to tax regulations and support to compliant completion of tax documents. <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing and functional website to further promote the brand.</p>
Other	Trade Fairs Business to Business Meetings resulting in new network linkages with majority businesses that are interested in filling water bottles under their own brands.
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €29,000</p> <p><i>"The 10-liter water production machine made us competitive in the market. We are looking to expand the business through other sources of finance."</i> Raško Milenković, Owner</p>

Šijak PTP	
Owner, location	Radomir Živković, Partesh/Parteš
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Šijak is an agricultural and agro-processing family business. Operating since 1980 and officially registered in 2012, it is located in the municipality of Partesh/Parteš, in the village of Donja Budriga. Šijak produces agro seedlings, plants, harvests, processes and sells products. Its core and main agricultural product is red paprika, which partly is used for production of homemade ajvar (a domestic traditional product). Šijak also produces cucumber, cabbage, tomato, different types of hot and sweet paprika, and other agricultural products. Further, it grows seasonal garden flowers and sells them on the market. Current business capacity in the open fields and greenhouses in which it produces red pepper is 14,500kg annually. With 4,500kg of red paprika, it produces approximately 1,500 jars of homemade ajvar. The remaining 10,000kg is sold on the market. The current ground area covered by greenhouses is 15 acre and in the open fields 20 acre. Šijak's homemade ajvars are ordered in advanced from customers and they are currently receiving requests for ajvar that they cannot fill.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time, 2 part-time Annual production of red paprika: 14,500kg Homemade ajvar: 1,500 jars (4,500kg) Annual sales: €11,000</p>
Grant	Machine to spread out folia, and tools for making homemade ajvar. AKT grant: \$5,635 (plus \$1,650 cost share by Sijak)
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition</p> <p>Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments</p> <p>Food Standards and Quality</p> <p>Access to Finance Opportunities Workshop</p> <p>Branding assistance (TA and procurement)</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included (a) encouraging the company to develop social media marketing, which the business has initiated with positive results already.</p> <p>Business Administration consulting</p> <p><i>Planned:</i> Development of more high-end, competitive branding for their high-end products.</p>
Other	<p>Trade Fairs, including support to labels for ajvar jars. The company realized direct sales and established new contacts for potential deals.</p> <p>Business to Business Meetings</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 3 part-time</p> <p>Increased value in sales: N/A (agriculture business)</p> <p><i>"Our operations have improved and we have expanded as we have more means. AKT taught me how to do my business and financial plan."</i> Radomir Živković, Owner</p>

Sito-Print-Desing SZR	
Owner, location	Djordje Ilić, Zvečan/Zvečan
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Sito Print Desing is a small printing house that offers services in the field of visual communications and offers complete graphic services with modern design and modern products. It uses the old way (sito/screen printing method) of printing in black and white films, and is currently in the process of modernizing its equipment to keep up with current trends and customer demands. Sito Print Desing officially registered in 2012 and is located in Zvečan/Zvečan.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time Annual sales: €12,600</p>
Grant	<p>Machine for digital printing Konika Minolta bizhub FS C224e + finisher for Konika Minolta; cutting knife Giljotina FN 4305 AKT grant: \$4,737 (plus \$935 cost share by Sito Print Desing)</p>
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Advanced Entrepreneurship Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included introducing the owner to other, bigger printing houses in southern Kosovo, including VPrint, as a source for quality services at lower cost than those they currently acquire from Serbia. Business Administration consulting Finance and Accounting consulting included assisting the business in bookkeeping and compliant completion of tax forms. <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing.</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €4,200</p> <p><i>“The services we offered from our printing house were quite basic. Now we can print almost all types of products.” Djordje Ilić, Owner</i></p>

Tapetarija Stil SZR	
Owner, location	Žarko Lekić, Zvečan/Zvečan
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Tapetarija Stil is a small family furniture upholstery business that produces and repairs textile furniture, renovates and designs living and working spaces such as restaurants, schools, café bars, office areas with different textile material. The owner has been involved in furniture upholstery since he was 18 years old. He gained his first work experience in his father's private company and in the well-known state-owned company Goša, where he worked in railways wagon upholstery for 7 years. Mr. Lekić reopened family business in 2010 and officially registered in January 2014. Tapetarija Stil is located in municipality of Zvečan/Zvečan. Tapetarija Stil has a positive reputation in the northern municipalities based on its history of producing high quality products and commitment to quality service. The company was entrusted with the renovation of the musical academy in Mitrovica and Zvečan/Zvečan, the high school in Leposavić/Ç, the technical school in Mitrovica, the medical school Mitrovica, and many other high-profile projects.</p> <p>Number of employees: 2 full-time Annual sales: €12,000</p>
Grant	<p>Paspulirka for quilt Pfaff TW 1245-V; overlock for 5 treads differential transport AKT grant: \$1,685 (plus \$1,304 cost share by Tapetarija Stil)</p>
Training	<p>Introduction to Entrepreneurship Advanced Entrepreneurship Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management Access to Finance Opportunities Workshop Brand Identity, Market Promotion, Social Marketing, and Investment Attraction Workshop</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting Business Administration consulting Finance and Accounting consulting included guidance on bookkeeping and compliant completion of tax forms and obligations.</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 2 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €3,000</p> <p>The new machines sped-up the work process. <i>"I am fully booked until the end of the year. The two sewing machines I got from USAID expanded my offers."</i> Žarko Lekić, Owner</p>

Valoni NTP	
Owner, location	Nazmi Kamberaj, Istog/Istok
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Valoni was established in 2004 and its main activity was repair and restoration of furniture. A year later, due to demands from customers, the business started producing and installing products made from wood, plywood and medium density fiberboard (MDF), including on-site services for homes and offices. Valoni was renting a premises for 7 years, but in 2011 the business built a new premises in Gurrakoc village in the municipality of Istog/Istok. In 2014, Valoni signed a contract with EuroSwiss from Switzerland to export its products. To date, three orders have been shipped to Switzerland in the amount of 10,000 EUR. Valoni cooperates with other businesses from other municipalities and other ethnicities, including North Mitrovica/e. Due to small production capacities and large demand for higher quality products, the business needs to invest in new machines to automate the production process, be competitive in the market and comply with furniture European standards. Competition in the industry is very high; the number of businesses offering such products is high compared to the population size.</p> <p>Number of employees: 4 full-time Annual sales: €55,000</p>
Grant	<p>Wood hole drilling machine and machine for banding wooden products AKT grant: \$6,667 (plus \$1,100 cost share by Valoni)</p>
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included suggestions on refining the company's marketing strategy and re-arranging of the showroom to showcase the company's most competitive product – sleeper room furniture. Business Administration consulting <i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 2 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €10,500</p> <p><i>"As a result of machines I received, other businesses are coming here to fix different wood products. This made me an important player in furniture production."</i> Nazmi Kamberaj, Owner</p>

Villa Kalaja Oksigjeni	
Owner, location	Nerimane Novoberdaliu, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Villa Kalaja operates in the field of rural tourism and offers rooms for tourists and other people with health issues. It is frequented by local and international people throughout the year. The business is located 500 meters from the Novo Brdo/Novobërdë castle and 1200 meters above sea level at a place with a curative climate and free from noise and air pollution. The house has three rooms with bathrooms and kitchens and a garden planted with vegetables to be used by the house guests. It also possesses another small shop to sell traditional baked products such as flija and pies, and serves hot and cold drinks for the guests at the house and other tourists. Prior to receiving the grant, the number of visitors was decreasing due to the old interiors, kitchens and bathrooms.</p> <p>Number of employees: 3 full-time Annual sales: €4,000</p>
Grant	<p>Water boiler x3, toilet seat x3, fridge x3, TV x3, Dishwasher x3, shower head x3, faucets x6, shower cabin x3, stove x3, oven on wood x3, wardrobe x3, TV stands x3, laminate flooring, mattress x6 AKT grant: \$4,696 (plus \$3,087 cost share by Villa Kalaja in equipment and furnishings including: mattress x6, dining table x3, silverware sets x3, blankets, mattress covers and pillows, drapes, plastic sunblind, playground equipment for children)</p>
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investments Operations and Supply Chain Management</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting included training on customer service, promotion tools for attracting visitors, and reinvestment of income and expansion. Business Administration consulting <i>Planned:</i> Logo development</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 2 full-time Increased value in sales: (for 2 quarters) €1,000</p> <p>The company is about to sign a contract with a firm performing rehabilitation on the castle for full-time lodging for workers. <i>“Last year, our guest house was in a bad condition and we received only few visitors. After we received the grant for furnishing the house, we are fully booked for the next 5 years.”</i> Nerimane Novoberdaliu, Owner</p>

Zogu (Agroelita)	
Owner, location	Fadil Blakaj, Istog/Istok
Company profile (pre-AKT support)	<p>Zogu has been registered as a sub-activity of the current business Agroelita. Due to a shortage of turkey meat production in Kosovo, the business started raising turkey birds on their 1.5 hectare of open space, surrounded by concrete poles and wire 2m high. This family business has a long tradition in agriculture sector. Agroelita possesses 3,000 apple trees with annual production of around 90,000 kg. Besides apples, the business cultivates watermelon and spinach. The business currently employs 50 seasonal employees, while four employees/family members are engaged as regular employees.</p> <p>Number of Employees: 4 full-time Annual Production: 10,000 kg Annual sales: €20,000</p>
Grant	AKT grant: \$6,629 (plus \$7,609 cost share by Agroelita)
Training	<p>Business Plan Competition Marketing, Branding, Business Legal Structures, and Attracting Investors Operations and Supply Chain Management Food Standards and Quality</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Promotion and Business Expansion consulting including guidance to the company on growing direct sales as a better method to ensure sustainability and profit. Accordingly, the company's new Facebook page has facilitated sales to the point that nearly all sales occur through Facebook.</p> <p><i>Planned:</i> Development of social media marketing</p>
Impact to date	<p>Number of new employees: 1 full-time Increased value in sales: N/A (agriculture business)</p> <p><i>"I started small, and AKT support doubled my production. I am now moving from apples to growing turkey birds."</i> Fadil Blakaj, Owner</p>

Annex F – PIR 3 SIAP Projects

Gračanica/Gračanicë

Graçanica/Gračanicë Modernization of Public Lighting	
Location: Graçanica/Gračanicë	
Project Type: SIAP project	
Description: The goal of this project is modernization of street lighting in the municipality of Graçanica/Gračanicë in the length of 5,880 meters in the city center streets and the neighborhood streets around the city center. Public lighting in the municipality of Graçanica/Gračanicë was installed 20 years ago and today majority of it is not functional. This project has modernized the existing public lighting in city center as well as in the surrounding neighborhoods; all light bulbs were be installed on existing electricity poles.	
Identification: This project was identified by SIAP working group composed by 1 representative of CSO and 6 municipal officials (2 K-Albanian and 6 K-Serb)	Implementation: 1 representative of CSO and 6 municipal officials provided oversight and worked together in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: January 2016 – February 2016	
Led by: Vladan Trifić, Mayor's Advisor	
Beneficiaries: 3,470 direct beneficiaries (2,590 K-Serbs, 770 K-RAE, 60 K-Albanians, and 50 others)	
Contractor: N.T.Sh. Electra	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$53,864. AKT:\$35,945 (67%). Municipality: \$17,919 (33%).	
<p>"Right from the get-go, AKT Prime worked with me to resolve problems in a strategic way. Through the strategy [SIAP on public lighting] and great implementation of one of the [public lighting] initiatives in the strategy, we have provided a very good example for other donors and the municipality to follow," said Mr. Vladeta Kostic, Mayor of Graçanica/Gračanicë.</p>	

Klinë/Klina

Klinë/Klina Modernization and Expansion of Public Lighting	
Location: Klinë/Klina	
Project Type: SIAP project	
Description: The goal of this project is modernization and expansion of public lighting in several town streets in the municipality of Klinë/Klina, in the length of 3,355 meters. Implementation of this project increased safety and security, ensure free movement of citizens during the night time- specifically for the children who attend classes in late afternoon sessions, increase quality of public lighting through LED technology, lowers electricity consumption and overall municipal public lighting operating cost, and above all, will increase citizen satisfaction with services and performance of the municipality.	
Identification: This project was identified by SIAP working group composed by 2 community members, 1 CSO representatives, 1 member from public utility company and 5 municipal officials (7 K-Albanian and 2 K-Serb)	Implementation: 2 community members, 1 CSO representative, 1 member from public utility company and 5 municipal officials provided oversight and worked together in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: October 2015 – November 2015	
Led by: Gjokë Lleshaj, Director of Public Services and Emergency (Coordinator of SIAP working group)	
Beneficiaries: 1200 direct beneficiaries (1000 K-Albanian, 100 K-Serb, 90 RAE and 10 K-Bosniak)	
Contractor: Sh.P.K. Termomontimi	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$32,035. AKT: \$24,040 (75%). Municipality: \$7,995 (25%).	
"Newly installed street lighting improved the quality of life and public safety in Klinë/Klina," reflects Gjokë Lleshaj, coordinator of the SIAP working group.	

Obiliq/Obilić

Obiliq/Obilić Expansion of Public Lighting	
Location: Obiliq/Obilić	
Project Type: SIAP project	
Description: The goal of this project is modernization and expansion of public lighting in several streets in the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić, in the length of 1,200 meters. Project is result of joint efforts of SIAP group and goal of project is to increase safety and security, ensure free movement of citizens during the night time-specifically for the children who attend classes in late afternoon sessions, increase quality of public lighting through LED technology, lowers electricity consumption and overall municipal public lighting operating cost, and above all, will increase citizen satisfaction with services and performance of the municipality.	
Identification: This project was identified by SIAP working group composed by 2 community members and 12 municipal officials (11 K-Albanian and 3 K-Serb)	Implementation: 2 community members and 12 municipal officials provided oversight and worked together in implementation and monitoring.
	
Duration: October 2015 – November 2015	
Led by: Naim Miftari, Coordinator of SIAP working group	
Beneficiaries: 2,100 direct beneficiaries (1,890 K-Albanian, 84 K-Serb, K-Bosniak 10, and RAE 116)	
Contractor: Sh.P.K. Termomontimi	Performance (1-10): 9
Cost: \$ 26,399. AKT: \$20,612 (78%). Municipality: \$5,787 (22%).	

Annex G – CSD Research Findings:
My Language, My Right, My Responsibility



USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

Research findings on the existing condition of municipalities that were a part of CSD project

“Support to the Language Commissioner's Efforts for Promoting the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID-Advancing Kosovo Together Partner Municipalities”

Research Findings

Reports, recommendations, conclusions

My Language, My Right, My Possibility

2015



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Communication for Social Development (CSD), with support of the US Agency for International Development (United States Agency for International Development, USAID), through the Advancing Kosovo Together program (Advancing Kosovo Together, AKT) is implementing a project titled “Support to the Language Commissioner Efforts for Improving the Use of Official Languages in 12 USAID-Advancing Kosovo Together Partner Municipalities.” The aim of the project is to raise citizens’ awareness on the importance of their participation in expressing their needs for protection of language rights, as well as cooperation with institution representatives.

The project consists of three elements: “secret customer”; round table discussions; and manuals. For the “secret customer” activity, individuals visited municipal offices and requested services in minority languages. Secret customers visited the 12 selected municipalities on multiple occasions. As a result, CSD developed a clear picture of tendencies for respecting the Law on Languages per municipality. Second, CSD organized 12 debates or discussions in 12 selected municipalities. The topics of the roundtable discussions: the Law on Use of Languages, the Guidebook on the Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, and initial results from the “secret customer” activity. The discussions were attended by representatives of local administration, civil society, media, as well as active members of communities, youth, and women. After these discussions, CSD established Action Teams, which are comprised of representatives of local administration and civil society - one Action Team per partner municipality. This report details the results of activities to date.

With help of experts, members of the Language Commissioner's office, CSD, and AKT, the Action Teams will take part in designing manuals for improving the quality of language use in municipalities. Each manual will be a unique tool and an instrument that will be used on daily basis in all municipal departments. In order for the manuals to be targeted toward the needs of each municipality with regard to implementation of the Law on Use of Languages, CSD presents this report, which gives details per municipality on the findings from the “secret customer” and discussions.

ABOUT THE LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Regulation 07/2012 established The Office of the Language Commissioner in April 2012 within the Office of the Prime Minister with a mission to ensure the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo.

The Law on the Use of Languages requires all public institutions and service providers to ensure equal utilization of Serbian and Albanian, the two official languages of Kosovo. The Office of the Language Commissioner is entrusted with ensuring compliance with the Law on the Use of Languages. More information on the mandate of the Office of the Language Commissioner can be found on the organization's website: <http://www.poverenik-ks.org/?page=4,33>.

Establishment of the Office of the Language Commissioner

In order to improve implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, the Government of Kosovo established a working group to reform the Language Commission in 2011. The reform project was led by the Office of the Prime Minister and Office of Community Affairs. As a result of the working group's accomplishments, Regulation 07/2012 was adopted and established two support mechanisms: the Committee on Language Policy and the Network for Linguistic Policy.

The Language Commissioner advises the Government and Language Commissioner's Office on the adoption and implementation of measures which ensure equal status and use of official languages, the use of official languages in municipalities, and the protection, preservation, and promotion of communities whose mother tongue is not one of the two official languages. The Language Commissioner makes recommendations to central and municipal institutions and proposes structural, long-term, and sustainable solutions, as well as incentive policies for use of official languages throughout the Republic of Kosovo.

Office mandate

Language Commissioner's Office performs duties as outlined by the Law on the Use of Languages, including:

- Ensuring compliance with the Law in each institution under its jurisdiction;
- Taking all necessary measures within its authority, including mediation, in order to ensure compliance with the Law for every institution under its jurisdiction;
- Examining and making recommendations concerning legislation or administrative instructions in accordance with the Law and in relation to compliance and consistency of any other legal act, regulation or administrative instructions with the Law;
- Conducting investigations, either on own initiative or on the basis of an appeal submitted by any person or entity concerning omissions of any institution under the jurisdiction of the Office. This is in accordance with the Law or any other enactment relating to the status and use of official languages, as well as other languages of communities whose language is an official language of Kosovo;

- Advising the public about their rights in accordance with the Law;
- Assisting institutions under its jurisdiction in relation to their obligations arising from the Act, if necessary;
- Assisting the Government of Kosovo in implementation and independently implementing programs of public information to make the public aware of their rights under the Law.

In order to meet its obligations, the Office shall have the authority and the power to:

- Gain access to and examine institutional documents under its jurisdiction;
- Require that an institution and its employees cooperate with the Office to provide access to its premises and relevant information to the Office, including copies of partial or complete files by request with the exception of classified files or information;
- Obtain oral or written evidence from witnesses necessary for case investigation;
- Provide compensation for travel and accommodation costs for individuals who are required to appear before the Office or who need to travel in order to provide information for the purposes of the investigation;
- Impose and enforce sanctions as provided in the Administrative Instruction on determining administrative sanctions for violations on the Law on the Use of Languages;
- In cases of non-compliance or obstruction, initiate legal or disciplinary proceedings through the competent authority against a person or organization responsible for the violation.

Filing a Complaint

The Office of the Language commissioner can be reached by telephone at the following numbers: 038/200 14 448; 038/200 14 902 or by email at the following address: info-zkgj-kpj@rks-gov.net. Complaint forms can be found online at: www.poverenik-ks.org. The Office of the Language Commissioner is located at the following address: Government Building, 6th floor, 605/A Mother Theresa Square 10000 Pristina Kosovo.

ABOUT COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSD)

CSD is an NGO from Gračanica/Graçanicë and is a non-partisan, independent, non-profit, local organization founded in 2001 with its main aim of promoting and build civil society, youth development, advocating rights of people with disabilities, integrating marginalized groups, connecting local institutions with local citizens and promoting the processes of return and dialog. Direct beneficiaries are minority communities, Kosovo Serbs and Roma, youth, and people with disabilities.

CSD activities are directed toward strengthening the NGO sector by providing technical support, informing and educating citizens, as well as promoting and representing civil society in public. CSD also works on improving NGO networking and coordinating in various projects. They provide services such as public information, radio and video production, promoting dialog and reconciliation process among communities in Kosovo, informing IDPs and educating youth.

THE “SECRET CUSTOMER” ACTIVITY

METHODOLOGY

Prior to initiating the activities, CSD coached each activist on the secret customer behavior, script, and methodology.

The secret customer visited the municipal office and requested information that is available to the public in one of the two official languages. The purpose of the activity was to collect a representative sample of information on the normal practice of local governments in the 12 selected municipalities, and whether they are abiding the Law on Use of Languages. Depending on the municipality and ethnic structure, the secret customer was always from a minority community of that respective municipality.

- Example No. 1: Municipality of Parteš/Partesh, where the Serb population is 100 percent, the secret customer was from the Albanian community and spoke only Albanian.
- Example No. 2: Municipality of Pejë/Peć, where over 90 percent of the population is Albanian, the secret customer was from a Serbian community and spoke only Serbian language.

The secret customer visited the Municipal Hall of each of the 12 municipalities at least twice. On the first visit, the secret customer requested documents in his/her native language and generally observed the officials’ communication demeanor upon dealing with the request. On the second visit, the secret customer acquired the requested documents and ascertained whether the language of issuance of the documents requested was the language in which they were requested. The secret customer visited the Municipal Hall as many as four times if the answer from the institution was not satisfying and in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages.

Secret customers were asked to assess information availability and the overall culture of official municipal communication. Each performed the following:

- a. Availability of information in official languages
 - Are there notifications available in the secret customer’s native language (signposts, name plates in offices and counters)?
 - Are the announcements and decisions posted on bulletin boards bilingual?
- b. Culture of communication
 - After the secret customer refers the first contact person in municipality (doorman or person behind the info desk) in his/her mother tongue, in which language does the person receive the response?
 - If this person does not speak the secret customer's mother tongue, has he/she referred the secret customer to another official who speaks the secret customer's mother tongue?
 - If the first contact person does not know the secret customer's mother tongue and has not referred him/her to a person that does, in what way did the secret customer find the needed info desk?

- Once the secret customer reached the person that speaks the mother tongue, what was their level of quality of communication and did this person know the secret customer's mother tongue enough to be understood?
 - The secret customer makes the following requests for documents in his/her native language:
 - A Certificate of Property Tax
 - A Legalization Form
 - A public municipal job application
 - What was the reaction of the officials contacted by the secret customer, who did not speak their mother tongue?
- c. Information request via email
- The secret customer sends a request as someone who is planning on implementing a Kosovo-wide project related to a certain topic that will be defined using the information from each municipality's web page. The request is sent via email in a language that is in official use in the respective municipality, and is a minority language. In case the response is in another language, CSD will send the request once again.

In addition, CSD follows up with an official email in a language that is officially used to an email posted in the official municipal web page in all 12 municipalities, thus demanding to acquire some of Assembly's latest decisions or at least an official document. In case the response is not provided in the required language, CSD resends the request.

RESULTS OF THE "SECRET CUSTOMER" ACTIVITY PER MUNICIPALITY

GJILAN/GNJILANE MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The municipal hall address changed and there is no notifications in either language of a location change in the old building.
- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- The notifications inside of the municipality are entirely in Albanian.
- The counter inscriptions are all entirely in Albanian.

2. Culture of communication

- After the secret customer entered and asked in Serbian who to refer to regarding property issues, the doorman showed him/her where to go.
- After asking for the certificate of not owning any real estate property under his name, the secret customer got the required documents in his/her native language.
- The official who issued a certificate to the secret customer was kind, as was the staff director who signed it. (The secret customer spoke to both in his/her mother tongue.)
- In the Tax Administration office, the serial number dispenser is only programmed in Albanian language, but the doorman showed the secret customer how to use the software and acquire the serial number.
- When it was his/her turn, the clerk spoke to the secret customer in his/her mother tongue and recommended using the internet. However, since the secret customer insisted, he/she got the requested paper form, but only in Albanian.
- The secret customer completed in the form with the help of the doorman.

3. Communication via email

- The email that was sent in Serbian was replied to the following day in Serbian.

GRAČANICA/GRAČANICË MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- There is no bulletin board in the new municipal building.
- Notices and signposts on the first floor, which is most visited by the parties, are bilingual (work hours, registry office, archives counter).
- When a party from a minority community said "good morning" in their mother tongue (Albanian in this case), they did not get a response.

2. Culture of communication

- When the doorman was asked in the secret customer's mother tongue which documents are needed in order to acquire a building permit, he could not answer, so he told the secret customer to wait for 10 minutes.
- After waiting for 10 minutes, the secret customer spoke to the doorman once more, but he could not respond, so they tried to find a solution to the problem: the doorman called an interpreter, but the interpreter could not come at the moment.

- After 15 minutes of waiting, an official came up. He knew some Albanian and he told the secret customer in broken Albanian what he needed and what is the procedure for acquiring the building permit.
- The secret customer asked this same official what was required to register in the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. The official provided a proper answer in broken Albanian.
- The secret customer reported that the official was kind and that he tried to explain as best as he could, despite not knowing the customer's language proficiently.

3. Communication via email

- The secret customer sent an email in the language of municipal minority and requested a meeting with a municipal representative. A reply was received in both official languages.

ISTOG/ISTOK MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- There is a bilingual board at the entrance of the municipal building.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and announcements in both official languages, as well as calls for vacancies in the municipality (at the time of secret customer's visit there was an ongoing call).
- In the municipal lobby, there is a board with the municipal hall blueprint indicating the offices, the names of officials, and their positions in Albanian and Serbian language.
- Next to every office, there were bilingual boards with name and position of the official working in that office (Albanian and Serbian language)

2. Culture of communication

- For every contact made with each municipal employee, the customer got a reply in his/her mother tongue.
- In a case where an official did not speak Serbian, the interpreter was called in on short notice.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with the officials, that all forms are in both languages.
- The secret customer found that a majority of officials speak both official languages.

3. Communication via email

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language of the municipality was replied to in the native language of the secret customer.

KLINË/KLINA MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- Notifications in the municipality are not bilingual and the secret customer noticed that out of all notifications, only one was in the language of the municipal minority.
- A majority of the office inscriptions are in both languages, but written poorly in the minority language in that municipality.

2. Culture of communication

- After the secret customer spoke to the doorman in Serbian, the doorman replied in Albanian and used his hand to direct him to the floor where there was a Serbian-speaking official (in a rather impolite way).
- The secret customer had many difficulties finding the office he was directed to by the doorman.
- The person working in the office to which secret customer was directed was a community official. Through conversation with the official the Secret Customer realized that most members of the minority community in this municipality come to exactly this person and that with his help they finish their obligations in the Municipality.
- Secret Customer obtained information on forms being only in the majority language, as well as that the Community official helps in filling them out in most cases.

3. Communication via email

- There was no reply to the email sent in the language of the minority community of the respective municipality.

KLLOKOT/KLOKOT MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- Notifications inside the municipal building are in both languages.
- Office inscriptions are in both languages.
- There is no doorman in the building, nor is there an information desk.

2. Culture of communication

- The secret customer found the Cadastral Office on his/her own. No one spoke Albanian there, but an Albanian-speaking person was immediately called to assist.
- The secret customer received answers to all questions asked concerning documents and processes.
- The secret customer asked for a municipal job application. However, he/she was told that there was no vacancy available and that all calls are announced in both languages.
- The officials with whom the secret customer interacted were very kind and polite.

3. Communication via email

- The email sent in the minority language of the respectful municipality (where the Secret Customer referred to himself as an NGO representative and requested a meeting with municipality representatives, and the minority language is Albanian) was not replied to.

NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- At the very entrance of the municipal building, there is a board on which the word "Municipality" is in both languages.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages.

- Notice of subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, which was posted at that time on the board, was only in Albanian.
- There is a bilingual board at the entrance to the administrative part of the municipal building.
- All forms and basic information can be obtained in both languages at the information counter.

2. Culture of communication

- The doorman immediately and politely provided the secret customer with an answer in his/her mother tongue, explaining where he/she can ask for services.
- The inscriptions on all information counters are in both languages.
- The requested information was given to the customer in his/her mother tongue.
- The forms secret customer requested were bilingual. The official offered assistance in completing the forms.
- The secret customer checked the municipal website as well and found news being posted in both languages.

3. Communication via email

- The secret customer's request was replied to in a short period of time and in Serbian language.

OBILIQ/OBILIĆ MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- Office notices and signposts (that show which office is located where) are not in customary locations compared to other Municipal Halls.
- Notices posted on bulletin boards are available primarily in the language of the municipal majority. In the police station, notices on required documents for ID cards, passports, and driving licenses are posted in all languages.
- In the Department of Education and Culture, all notices on the bulletin boards were solely in Albanian; there are no Serbian versions of any notices.
- In the Cadastre and Municipality (they are separate buildings and are not in the same area), some notices on bulletin boards are in both languages, while some are only in Albanian.
- There are no bulletin boards throughout villages, so no announcements, calls for applications issued by the Municipality, or any other information relevant to citizens can be read as such. If any information needs to be obtained, a resident with a question must personally go to the municipal office in Obiliq/Obilić that deals with the issue.

2. Culture of communication

- At the entrance of the municipal building, there is a front door booth with several employees. One of the workers knows Serbian and he usually answers the questions asked in Serbian. However, at the time of a shift change, there are no workers that speak both languages.
- Secret Customer usually got around on his/her own, because the doorman gave dull explanations of the office location (there are no signposts in the Municipality in any of the languages). If a party in the Municipality does not speak Albanian and the official does not speak Serbian, they get help from Serb workers, if present.

- If a worker who does not speak Serbian is encountered in the Department of Education and Culture, a worker who speaks both languages is called, so communication is possible and all the information is obtained without a problem.
- When a request for a confirmation is being issued, the confirmation is being issued in all languages, depending on the department (eg. cadaster, certificate of tax payment), but there are departments that issue these documents only in Albanian.
- One of the major problems, especially with the cadastral books is the data duplication. One person is being registered several times because the difference in letter “ć” which, in most of the cases is misspelled as “c” or “q.”
- As for the job application, there were no job applications in the time of visit to the Municipality by the Secret Customer, but what was discovered is that the contracts are bilingual (education).
- At the counters which serve to make payments of municipal taxes, workers speak only Albanian. If it is insisted (which the Secret Customer did), the officials unwillingly, with disapproval, wrote the amount on the paper and tried to mime the amount on the paper.
- The reaction of persons that SC got in contact with are various, depending on department and individuals encountered. Help was always provided by Serb workers in the municipal building. In the Department of Education and Culture a worker that knew both languages was called out, while in the passport issuance and car registration departments there was no communication nor help with instructions and acquiring the necessary information requested by the SC. The level of communication with officials who knew Serbian was at a high level.

3. Communication via email

- The sent email (where the Secret Customer referred to himself as an NGO representative and requested a meeting with municipality representatives) was replied to in a short period of time and in Customer's native language.

PARTEŠ/PARTESH MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The municipal name board is in both languages.
- All notifications posted inside the municipal building were in the majority language, except for one, which was in the minority language.
- The office inscriptions were not in both languages and some of the offices had no inscriptions at all.

2. Culture of communication

- After the secret customer entered, the doorman replied in Serbian and directed him to the office.
- The secret customer was sent to a second office, where one of the officials spoke a little of the language of the secret customer.
- The officials with whom the secret customer interacted were helpful their minimal ability to speak the customer's language.

3. Communication via email

- The customer received no reply to his/her email.

PEJË/PEĆ MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- At the very entrance of the municipal building, there is a name board in both languages.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both official languages.
- There was an information desk from which the secret customer received the information he/she requested in his/her language.
- All counters' inscriptions are in both languages, so the secret customer got around easily.

2. Culture of communication

- For every contact, the customer got a reply in his/her mother tongue.
- When the official did not speak the secret customer's language, another person who did was called immediately.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with officials, that all forms are in both languages.
- The secret customer found that the majority of officials speak both official languages.

3. Communication via email

- The customer received no reply to his/her email.

RANILUG/RANILLUG MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The inscriptions on some of the offices are bilingual, while some are not. For example, inscriptions at the Registry Office, where most citizens come, are bilingual.
- The notifications on bulletin boards in the heart of the municipality are entirely in Serbian, but the bulletin boards in the villages are bilingual if the village population is mixed.

2. Culture of communication

- At the entrance of the municipal building, there was a security officer who did not speak the secret customer's language, but called an interpreter.
- The secret customer deduced that when he/she is headed for a department and an interpreter is not available at the time, there will always be an official to help.
- The secret customer requested a legalization form, which he/she got in his/her mother tongue. There are bilingual notifications at the entrance of the Municipal Hall related to legalization.
- The job applications are bilingual (at least for education).
- The secret customer said that while many of the officials did not know the minority language in the municipality, they were helpful toward citizens in completing their obligations.

3. Communication via email

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language was replied to in a short period of time and only in Serbian.

ŠTRPCE/SHTĚRPECĚ MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- The municipal hall entrance name board is bilingual.
- The municipality bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages.
- There is a board at the entrance to the administrative part of the municipal building which is in both languages.
- Office inscriptions in the municipal building are in both languages.
- Counter inscriptions in the municipal building are in both languages.

2. Culture of communication

- Most of the offices are staffed with officials of different ethnicities, so obtaining necessary information in one of the official languages is easy.
- The requested information was given to the customer in his/her mother tongue.
- The forms requested by the secret customer are in both languages.
- The secret customer checked the municipal website and discovered that most of the news is being published in both languages, but some news is a couple of days late in the language of the minority community of the municipality.

3. Communication via email

- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language was replied to in the native language of the secret customer.

VUSHTRRI/VUČITRN MUNICIPALITY

1. Availability of information in official languages

- There is a bilingual board at the entrance of the municipal building.
- The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and announcements only in the language of the majority community of that municipality.
- The door notification on the Office for Issuance of IDs and Passports is bilingual. However, for example, the Office for Issuing Certificates did not have the notification in the language of the municipal minority.

2. Culture of communication

- There were three people in reception at the entrance to the municipal hall; the secret customer got a response in his/her mother tongue immediately.
- The secret customer got a reply in his/her own language right away in the Office for Issuance of IDs, as well as all relevant information from very friendly staff.
- The secret customer received all necessary information immediately upon requesting it in the Office for Issuing Certificates in his/her language.
- The secret customer found, after speaking with the officials, that all forms are in both official languages.

3. Communication via email

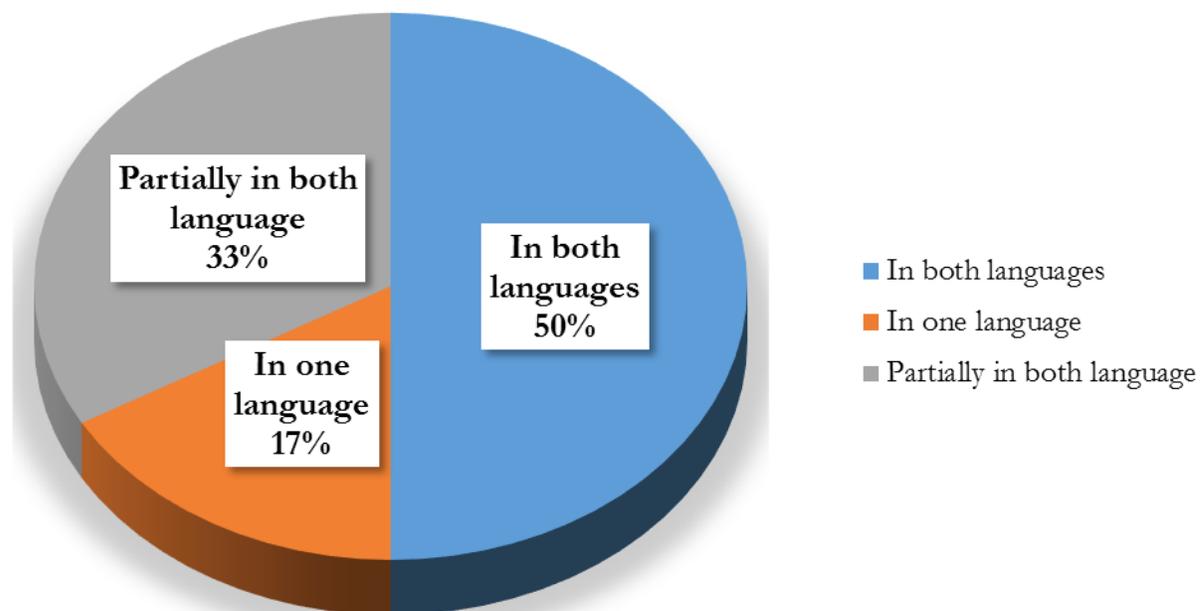
- The email sent to the municipality in a minority language of the municipality was replied to in the native language of secret customer.

SUMMARY OF “SECRET CUSTOMER” FINDINGS

1. Are there notifications available in native language of the SC (signposts, name plates in offices and counters)?

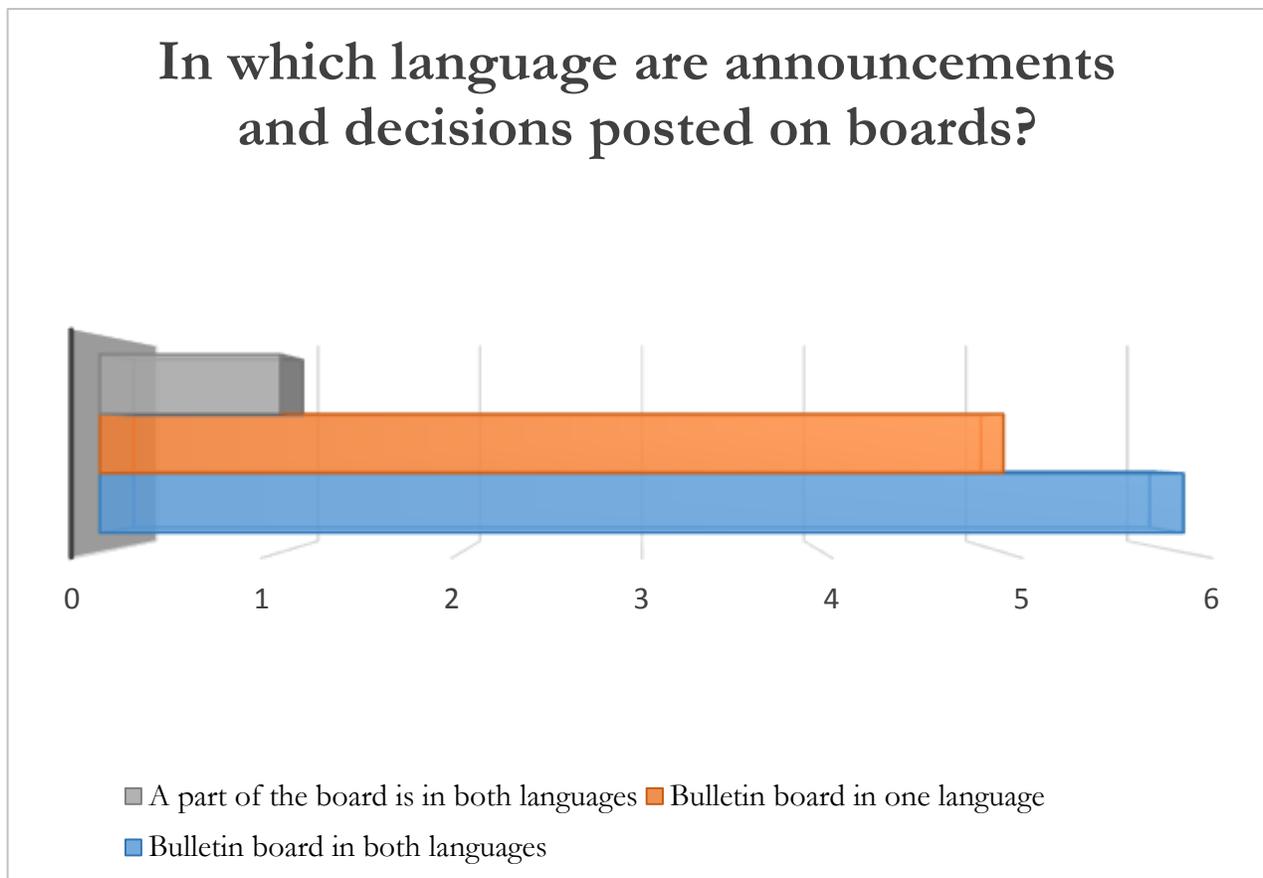
No.	Municipality	Signposts	Boards
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	No	No
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	Yes	Yes
5	Kllokot /Klokot	Yes	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	No
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	Yes
12	Vushtri/Vuçitrn	Yes	Yes

Are there announcements in the customer`s mother tongue?



2. In which language are the announcements and decisions posted on bulletin boards?

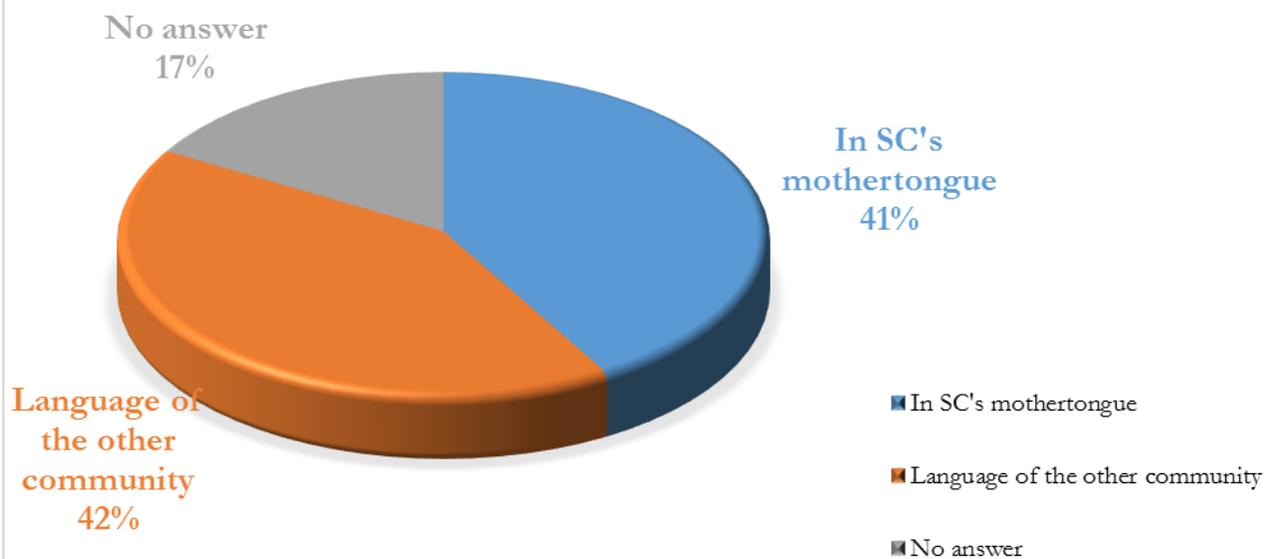
No.	Municipality	Albanian	Serbian
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes	No
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	Yes	No
5	Klllokot /Klokot	Yes	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes	No
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes	No



3. When the secret customer makes first contact with a person in the municipal building (doorman or person behind the info desk) in his/her own language, in what language does the person get the response?

No.	Municipality	In mother tongue	In language of another community
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	No	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë		
3	Istog/Istok	Yes	No
4	Klinë/Klina	No	Yes
5	Klllokot /Klokot	No	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes	No
7	Obiliq/Obilić	No	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes	No
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	No	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes	No
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes	No

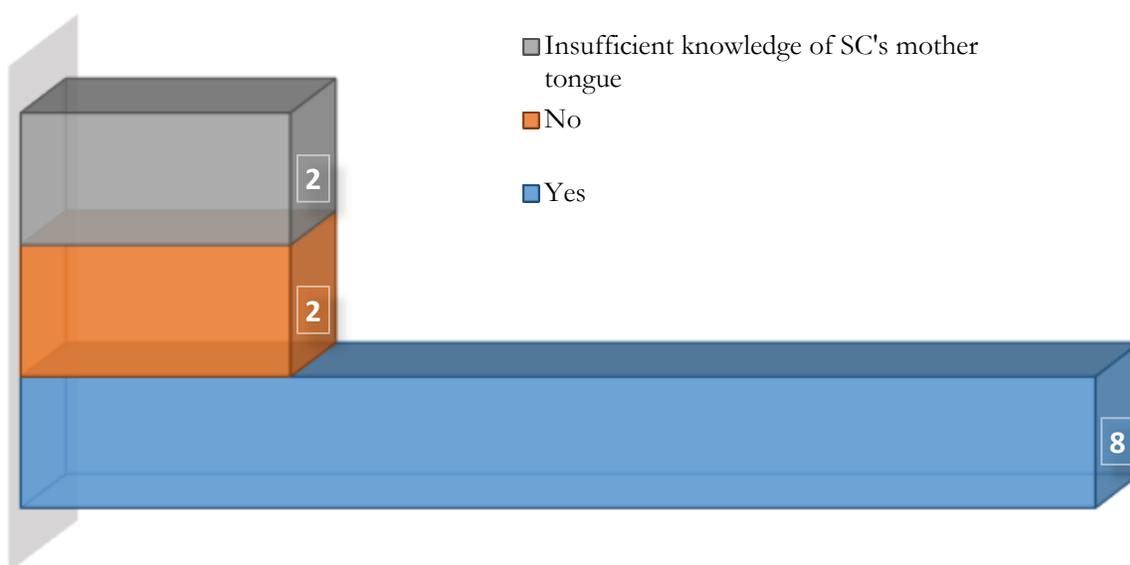
IN WHICH LANGUAGE DID THE FIRST CONTACT PERSON RESPOND IN THE MUNICIPALITY?



4. If the first contact person does not speak the secret customer's mother tongue, has the person referred the secret customer to another official who speaks the customer's mother tongue?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Insufficient knowledge of customer's language
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No
5	Kllokot/Klokot	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	No
8	Parteš/Partesh	Insufficient knowledge of customer's language
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Yes

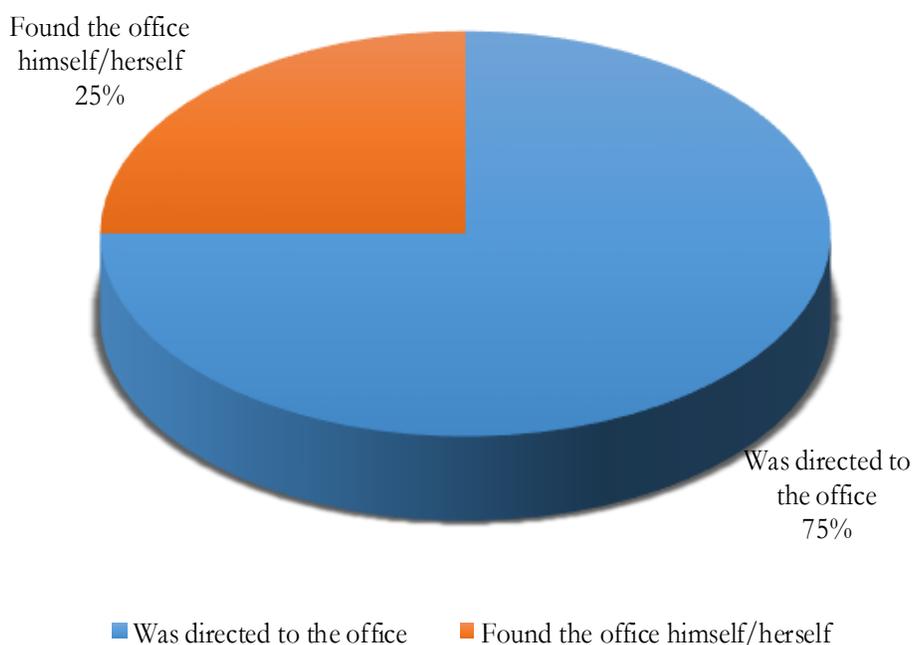
If the first contact person did not speak the customer's mother tongue, was he/she referred to someone who did?



5. How did the secret customer manage to reach the information desk or office needed?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	The Customer was directed to the office.
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	The Customer was directed to the office.
3	Istog/Istok	The Customer was directed to the office.
4	Klinë/Klina	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
5	Kllokot/Klokot	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	The Customer was directed to the office.
7	Obiliq/Obilić	He/She found the office by himself/herself.
8	Parteš/Partesh	The Customer was directed to the office.
9	Pejë/Peć	The Customer was directed to the office.
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	The Customer was directed to the office.
11	Štrpce/Shtërpcë	The Customer was directed to the office.
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	The Customer was directed to the office.

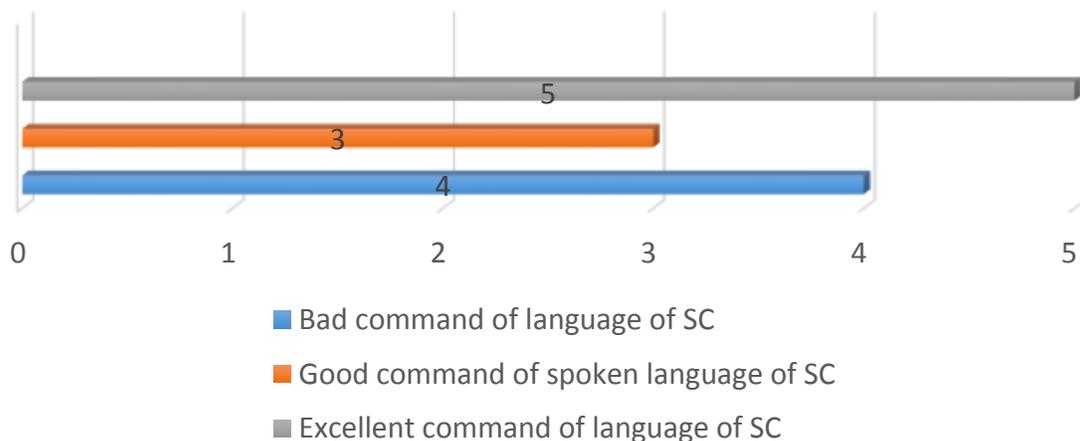
How did SC manage to reach the info desk/office needed?



6. Once the secret customer reached the person that speaks his/her mother tongue, what was the quality of communication? (Did this person know the secret customer's mother tongue well enough to be understood?)

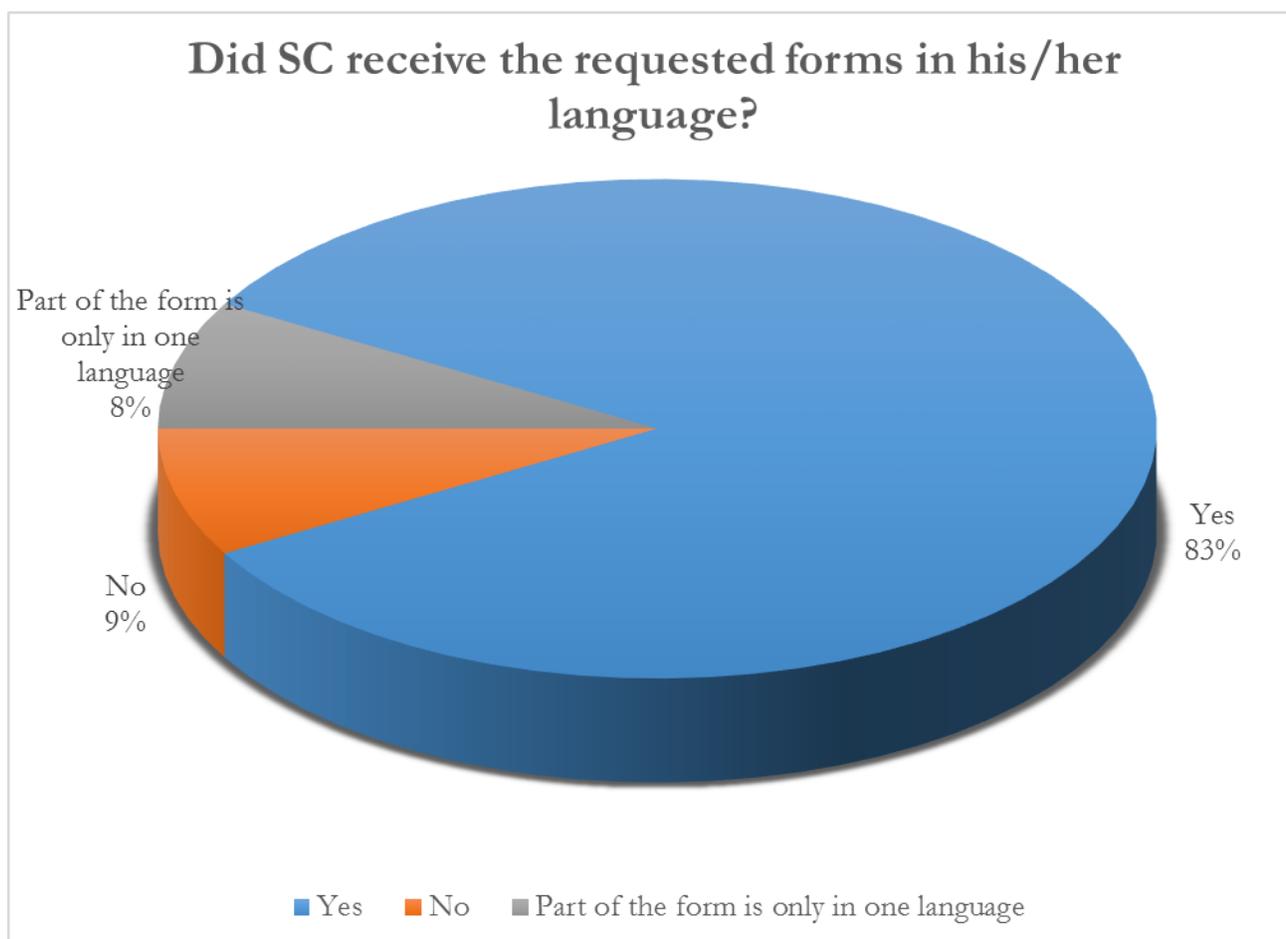
No.	Municipality	Good	Fair	Bad
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane		X	
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë			X
3	Istog/Istok		X	
4	Klinë/Klina			X
5	Kllokot/Klokot	X		
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	X		
7	Obiliq/Obilić			X
8	Parteš/Partesh			X
9	Pejë/Peć	X		
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	X		
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë		X	
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	X		

In conversation with the person who spoke language of sc, of how high quality was their communication and did this person speak language of sc good enough?



7. Have the required documents been provided to the secret customer in his/her mother tongue?

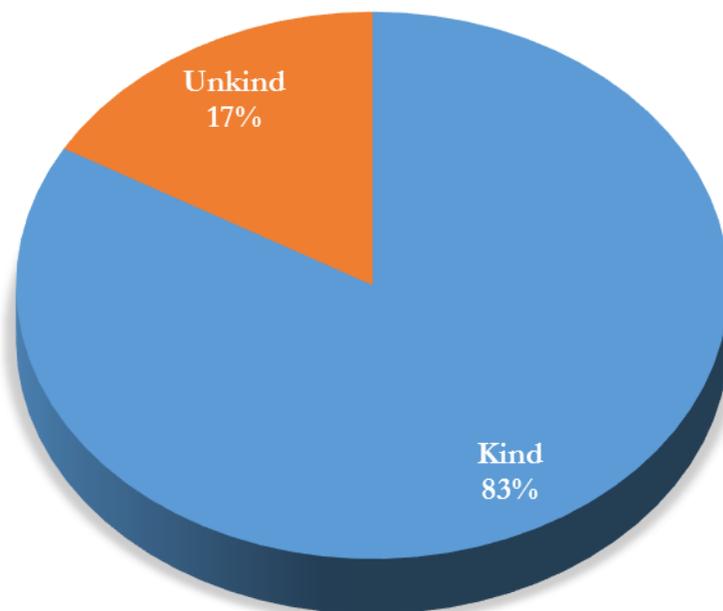
No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No
5	Klokot/Klokot	Yes
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Yes
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Part of the form is only in one language
8	Parteš/Partesh	Yes
9	Pejë/Peć	Yes
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Yes
11	Štrpce/Shtërpcë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vučitrn	Yes



8. What was the nature of the response given by officials with whom the customer interacted?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Kind
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Kind
3	Istog/Istok	Kind
4	Klinë/Klina	Unkind
5	Klllokot/Klokot	Kind
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	Kind
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Unkind
8	Parteš/Partesh	Kind
9	Pejë/Peć	Kind
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	Kind
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Kind
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Kind

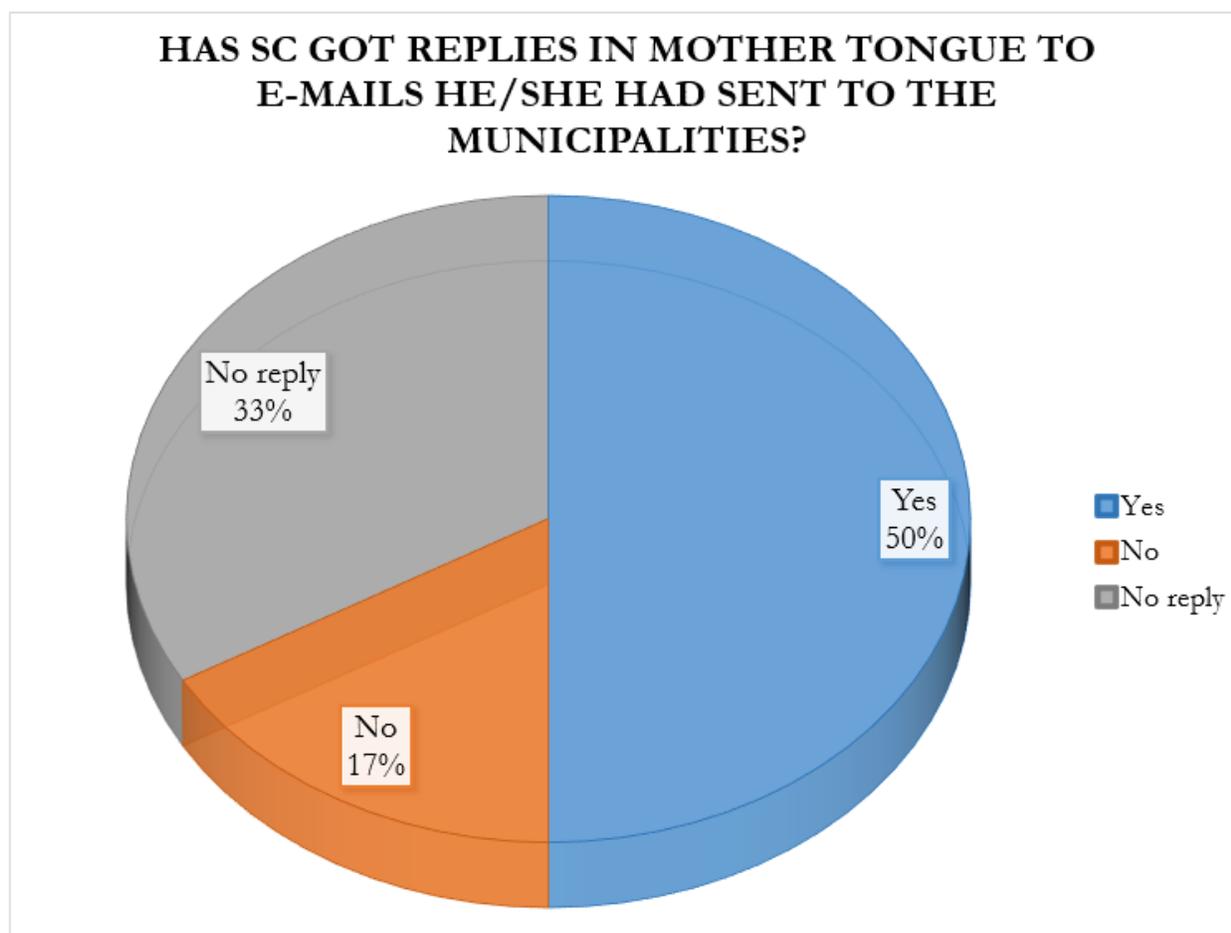
What was the treatment of people whom SC contacted?



■ Kind ■ Unkind

9. Has the secret customer received a response to the email sent to municipality in his/her mother tongue?

No.	Municipality	Answer
1	Gjilan/Gnjilane	Yes
2	Gračanica/Gračanicë	Yes
3	Istog/Istok	Yes
4	Klinë/Klina	No reply
5	Kllokot/Klokot	No reply
6	Novo Brdo/Novobërdë	No
7	Obiliq/Obilić	Yes
8	Parteš/Partesh	No reply
9	Pejë/Peć	No reply
10	Ranilug/Ranillug	No
11	Štrpce/Shtërpçë	Yes
12	Vushtrri/Vuçitrn	Yes



ABOUT THE ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY

CSD organized roundtables on the topic of “Improvement of Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Municipalities of Kosovo” in the 12 partner municipalities. They were attended by representatives of local administration, civil society, media representatives, active citizens, women and youth, representatives of the Office of the Language Commissioner, CSD, and AKT.

Each round table had a two-hour interactive discussion. By exchanging experiences, information, and personal opinions the participants got answers to numerous questions relating to the enforcement of the Law on the Use of Languages, its implementation, methods and responsibilities. In addition, all participants had a better insight in work and mandate of the Office of the Language Commissioner. The very role of the Commissioner was explained, as well as the method of filing a complaint, recent activities and intentions and the Strategy on Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo was announced. The Language Commissioner Office representatives also pointed out that during 2014 all municipalities in Kosovo were supervised. Participants of round tables had the opportunity to see a hard copy of the report in both languages. The report can also be found on the web page and contains what was said at the round table. What is evident in all municipalities is that all signposts and symbols used by parties, and which should be bilingual, are not in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages. Similar situation is also present in central institutions, said some of the participants.

What is also emphasized, as well as in every debate, is the presence of political will, but that it requires efforts and time. Moreover, the Manual for use and easier implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages was presented to the participants.

The very program supported by the USAID, *Advancing Kosovo Together*, has also been presented next to the Language Commissioner Office. In each round table the representatives of the USAID project *Advancing Kosovo Together* presented their program, so the participants had the opportunity to inform themselves about the possibilities this program offers.

RESULTS OF THE ROUNDTABLE PER MUNICIPALITY

GJILAN/GNJILANE MUNICIPALITY

The roundtable in Gjilan/Gnjilane was held on March 4, 2015. The moderator presented the findings of the “Secret Customer” activity. Overall, the situation in this municipality is not at a satisfactory level, but a person can easily find their way around with the help of individuals. Just by entering the building the person feels familiar with the environment. The office inscriptions are in both languages, even though notifications at counters and on bulletin boards are only in Albanian. The culture of communication of municipality officials is satisfactory and they offer kindness and willingness to help. Considering that this is a municipality with a highly diverse population and that there is only one translator, the findings are encouraging.

Participants in the roundtable reflected on the findings, potential root causes, and potential solutions. Municipal authorities face a challenge enforcing the Law on Use of Languages. The municipality lacks the staff and resources to enable both languages to be equally represented. While Officials who speak both languages are very helpful and assist people to find their way around, some officials do not speak both languages and there is no legal regulation requiring officials holding certain positions to speak both languages. They predict that the challenge of officials speaking only one language will become greater as youth do not speak the language since there is no school curriculum in majority Serb or Albanian schools where learning a second local language is included. There is also a problem with having one translator in the municipality, which is insufficient for the workload required for compliance with all legal aspects related to the Law on the Use of Languages. Participants explored whether the Language Commissioner's Office help in enforcing Law on Use of language more effectively. There is a great need of joint efforts of local authorities, as was pointed out. Further, participants looked to the Language Commissioner's Office and civil society organizations to improve and enhance the quality of language used, especially in direct communication with citizens.

GRAČANICA/GRAČANICË MUNICIPALITY

On March 25, 2015, the roundtable moderator presented findings of the “Secret Customer” activity. Overall, while the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë is a municipality with a Serb majority, the Albanian community population do face difficulties in communication due to the fact that municipal officials do not speak their language although they are trying to be helpful. The municipal hall has inscriptions and signposts in both languages. All forms and notifications are available in both languages from municipal services. The municipal webpage is not very functional (there is a delay in news upload of several days in Albanian), but there is an official email for applications, questions and requests. The email sent in Albanian with the request of holding a meeting was replied to in appropriate time manner in both Albanian and Serbian.

Participants in the roundtable reflected on the findings, potential root causes, and potential solutions. One of the problems roundtable participants had was adherence to the Law by central level institutions. Ministries often send documents, notifications and calls in one language. The responsibility for not enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages is on several levels should not be ignored, because institutions at the central and local levels, organizations, and individuals all share the burden. On the other hand, one of the participants spoke highly about the work of the Ministry of Health and gave it as an example of good practice of respecting the Law on the Use of Languages.

A question was raised on what is this Serbian „alphabet“ mentioned in the Law? The Commissioner explained that Latin and Cyrillic script are equal Serbian alphabets and that both can be used as such, but Latin is preferred for the sake of comprehensibility. The Commissioner also stated that it is necessary to establish a body to deal with translations and interpretation. Only then can the Law be proofread and the use of literary Serbian language possible.

The situation in the Municipality of Pristina was also mentioned during the round table because bilingualism is a matter of individual's good will there. The question that was raised on how the USAID decided which municipalities will be partners in their program *Advancing Kosovo Together* was answered.

A question was raised about adopting Romani as an official language in the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. The Municipality representative's explanation was that there were not enough resources for doing so, but it is likely that by the end of the year, in November maybe, this could be adopted by the Municipal Assembly of Gračanica/Graçanicë.

What also sounded like an interesting initiative was the reintroduction of learning languages in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum, and so will Albanians have Serbian language. Even though this might sound like science fiction and something we are going to need more than a hundred years to achieve, people understand that it is the only realistic strive and goal. Mutual understanding is the only thing that can lead to reconciliation and respect of human rights.

During the round table problems were discussed, as well as challenges and ways in which the Office of the Language Commissioner can help municipalities with their work. Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

ISTOG/ISTOK MUNICIPALITY

On May 13, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. As the Municipality of Istog/Istok has an Albanian majority population, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research results in the Municipality of Istog/Istok are satisfying and reasonable. Findings of the "Secret Customer" in the Municipality of Istog/Istok show a clear image of a Municipality respecting the Law on the Use of Languages, and indicates readiness of municipal officials to respond to the citizens' demands in any of the official languages, as it is required by law. According to the report of the "Secret Customer," the inscriptions and signs are adequate and all other services requested were received in the Customer's language and the service was at a very professional level. In addition, when the "Secret Customer" sent an email to an official email address of the municipal authorities requesting certain information, the reply came in a reasonable amount of time and in Customer's mother tongue. All research findings of the "Secret Customer" have been confirmed by all round table participants.

Several topics, including problems citizens face when it comes to use of language, were discussed. The round table also encompassed difficulties the Municipality has with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages, as well as how the Language Commissioner's Office can help.

Serb community representatives discussed the problems of language use when it comes to other institutions and businesses that have social significance, such as distribution companies, judiciary, banks, etc.

Certain municipal officials stated that they did not know the Office of the Language Commissioner existed.

It has been confirmed that there are problems with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages in this municipality, but they are minimal despite a lack of capacity and resources for enforcement. It has been concluded that the willingness of municipal officials and management to respect the laws exists, especially the Law on the Use of Languages.

KLINË/KLINA MUNICIPALITY

On April 22, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. Given that the Municipality of Klinë/Klina has an Albanian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research findings in the Municipality of Klinë/Klina are not optimal and people do not feel acknowledged or welcomed on the municipal hall premises. Most of the inscriptions inside the Municipal Hall were only in one language, and the receptionists were very rude. Therefore, the necessary information could not be obtained. Most of the information and announcements on bulletin boards are entirely and only in the Albanian language. The "Secret

Customer” also observed that there are not enough civil servants who speak both languages. This makes the situation even harder for the citizens to use their rights and tend to obligations they have with local authorities.

Topics including problems citizens face when the Law on the Use of Languages is not being respected were also discussed. The round table also discussed difficulties the Municipality has with enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages as a topic, as well as how the Language Commissioner’s Office can help and contribute.

Representatives of the Serbian community expressed their concerns for the respect of their rights and obligations of local administration. They claim issues arise from the disrespect of Law on the Use of Languages by the local administration and other public institutions. Representatives of the Language Commissioner’s Office answered questions as to the limits and responsibilities of their Office.

The Commissioner's Office will do everything in its power to improve the quality of the use of official languages in this and other municipalities. The office expressed concern and surprise about the problems citizens are facing. The Language Commissioner’s Office was not familiar with either of the problems discussed at the round table, even though citizens have the opportunity to file complaints to the Office.

Through round table discussions, the Commissioner's Office tried to explain the jurisdiction they have and efforts they undertake to promote language use. They also expressed concerns on several occasions because the reports they received from this municipality were satisfying, so they did not know the full weight of the situation.

Participants requested that the Commissioner's Office raise questions on the inequity of rights due to language barriers, referring to a large number of deficiencies they have in everyday communication with municipal authorities. The Commissioner's Office where it was strongly urged to use all available resources in order to make local authorities respect the Law on the Use of Languages. In this way, communication between Serbs and municipal representatives will be facilitated so they have access to their rights.

Issues with the recommendations by the Commissioner was mentioned, as well as efforts for these recommendations to be taken into account by relevant institutions. The Commissioner's Office was requested to provide the participants with recommendations adopted and implemented by some institutions so far. They also asked what happens if these recommendations are not respected, and does the Office have other mechanisms at its disposal.

Problems with other institutions and competent authorities, such as police and judiciary have also been mentioned. Very often citizens receive court calls only Albanian, and if they do not respond, they are made subject to sanctions, despite the institution not fulfilling its legal obligation regarding the Law on the Use of Languages.

The Language Commissioner answered all questions and addressed citizen suggestions, explaining the procedure for filing a complaint, as well as the procedure for proving that rights have been violated.

KLLOKOT/KLOKOT MUNICIPALITY

On February 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer.” As Municipality of Parteš/Partesh has a Serbian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Albanian. Her experience demonstrates that members of the Albanian community feel welcomed when they enter the Municipal Hall building. Inscriptions and signposts are bilingual, staff and officials are helpful. Municipal offices can provide all forms and announcements in both languages. The web site is not very functional and there is no official email to which requests or

questions can be sent. In conclusion, considering the resources and possibilities, municipal leaders are indeed trying to enforce the Law on Use of Languages to the best of their ability. Participants pointed out that the budget is small and inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle.

One problem raised is that the Municipality receives documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit key information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in only one language. Traffic signs and road markings are also an issue. Software that municipal officials receive from the central level is only in Albanian. It was also noted that not knowing both languages discouraged the minority population from using healthcare services (“We are lucky if a staff member is senior, in which case they know both languages!”).

The round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

NOVO BRDO/NOVOBËRDË MUNICIPALITY

On March 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer.” In this instance, the Secret Customer was Albanian. The research conducted by CSD was done just prior to the round table and concluded that members of any ethnicity feel completely welcomed when they enter the Municipal Hall. At the entrance to the Municipal Hall, there is a bulletin board in two languages, so each party has access to information. The municipal bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages. However, notices of subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management which were posted at that time on the board were only in Albanian. Helpfulness of all employees was confirmed. There is a bilingual board at the entrance to the administrative part of the Municipal Hall. All forms and basic information can be obtained in both languages at the information desk. The inscriptions on all information counters are in both languages. The Customer also checked the municipality website and found that all news and updates are in both languages and that it is very easy to find requested information.

The municipality information system, as well as website and translations have been significantly improved compared to the previous period and the municipality currently has two translators employed. They are extremely overwhelmed by administration and translation work (departments are mixed, so internal documents are translated as well).

A problem indicated by a representative of the local administration is that they receive documents from the central level in only one language. Ministries inadvertently omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language.

The Commissioner explained why sanctions are not implemented and why individuals are not punished. He asserts, based on his experience, that the Law on the Use of Languages has not been violated deliberately, and that all parties are ready to respect recommendations and cooperate. Citizens tend to complain only in public meetings, and the number of those who complain on violation of their rights is small. For example, it is a little known fact that, when registering a vehicle in Gjilan/Gnjilane, the driver's license can only be acquired in Albanian. Serbian names have been transcribed into Albanian, which hurts the identity of an individual, and all this allegedly because of the lack of a server.

A question was raised with regard to whether the Serbian alphabet is mentioned in the Law. The Commissioner explained that Latin and Cyrillic script are equal Serbian alphabets and that both can be used as such, but Latin is preferred for the sake of comprehensibility. The Commissioner also stated that it is necessary to establish a body to deal with translations and interpretation. Only then can the Law be proofread and the use of literary Serbian language possible.

Another interesting initiative was the reintroduction of language learning in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum and Albanians will have Serbian language.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

OBILIQ/OBILIĆ MUNICIPALITY

On March 18, 2015, the moderator presented research results of the "Secret Customer." As the Municipality of Obiliq/Obilić is majority Albanian, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. The research conducted by CSD was done just prior to the round table. The "Secret Customer" was obliged to visit the Municipality several times, and each time he experienced different treatment, speaking of a culture of communication with the doormen. Treatment of the "Secret Customer" depended upon the personal commitment of an individual to communication with the public. In the same way, access to documents and communication in Serbian depend upon the will of an individual or municipality departments in which the customer asks for information.

A similar situation occurs with availability of information. Notifications on bulletin boards are in most cases only in one language or do not exist at all. Namely, whether announcements are in both languages largely depends on individual departments and the will of individuals working in them. In general, most of the information and announcements are only in one language.

Round table participants stated that the research presented by the "Secret Customer" resonates and that the problem does not lie in the will of the authorities to solve this problem and enforce the Law on the Use of Languages completely. It is, rather, in a lack of resources.

Representatives of the local administration spoke about the inability to completely implement and enforce the Law on the Use of Languages because of the lack of staff and resources. Individuals, particularly youth, do not speak another language.

The round table was carried out in a friendly and constructive atmosphere where everyone respectfully expressed their concerns on this topic regardless of which community they came from. During the round table, issues were discussed, as well as challenges and ways in which the Language Commissioner's office can help municipalities with their work. There was also discussion on how to improve work of the Language Commissioner's office together as well as enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

PARTEŠ/PARTESH MUNICIPALITY

On February 25, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer." As the Municipality of Parteš/Partesh has a Serbian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Albanian. His experience demonstrates that the members of Albanian community do not receive services requested in their native language. Inscriptions and road signs are not bilingual. Staff and officials who are in charge of directing the people to the right place could not meet their requests. After visiting the Municipal Hall several times, the Albanian Customer could not find a single official who was able to help them and reply in their native language.

During the round table, representatives from the local administration pointed out that municipal authorities have a large budget problem. It must also be mentioned that the municipal building in Parteš/Partesh does not have inscriptions in Serbian, neither on the new building nor some of the offices. Representatives from the local administration stated it is true that the previous government did not have a single translator employed, and as soon as this administration started its work, an official for translation was hired. However, the problem is that all decisions and documents

that have been adopted previously must also be translated, which takes a long time with only one translator. The political will of municipal authorities does exist, but resources and time are needed.

One problem indicated is that the municipal authorities receive documents from the central level institutions in one language. Ministries omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language, and all documents have to be translated.

The responsibility for enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages rests on several levels and local level institutions, government institutions, organizations, and individuals all share that burden.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner's office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages

PEJË/PEĆ MUNICIPALITY

On April 22, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer" at the round table. As the Municipality of Pejë/Peć has an Albanian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Serbian. Research findings from the Municipality of Pejë/Peć are satisfying and are very positive. All of the inscriptions on the Municipal Hall premises are in both languages, so visitors feel welcomed upon entering the premises as they can orientate themselves and find their way easily. The "Secret Customer" saw that most of the officials in the Municipality of Pejë/Peć speak Serbian/Bosnian language and they were friendly, providing adequate support. All documents and other information that citizens need can be acquired in both languages. Considering the evident lack of qualified staff and the fact that only two (2) professional translators/interpreters are employed, the research results are encouraging.

Topics, such as problems citizens face when it comes to use of language, were discussed. The round table also discussed difficulties municipal authorities have with enforcing Law on the Use of Languages, as well as how the Language Commissioner's Office can help and contribute to solving this issue. Municipal authorities showed willingness to create a working group for languages, which was praised by all participants.

Serb representatives pointed out the language problem in other relevant institutions during the round table, such as health centers, hospitals, judiciary, bus stations, etc. Representatives of the Commissioner's Office committed to ensuring that the Law on the Use of Languages can be in effect in all Pejë/Peć and Kosovo institutions.

Representatives of the Bosniak community also discussed an issue of inadequate updating of the municipal web page and not publicizing news and other information in Bosnian. They demand their language be equally respected as an official one in the municipality.

At the end of round table, it was concluded that there are problems in enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages on the municipality territory. However, it is very important to highlight the willingness of the Municipality in solving these issues and finding a solution related to language rights in accordance with the Law.

RANILUG/RANILLUG MUNICIPALITY

On March 4, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the "Secret Customer." As the municipality of Ranilug/Ranillug has a Serbian majority, the "Secret Customer" was Albanian. Her experience reveals that members of the Albanian community feel comfortable when they enter the Municipal Hall. Most inscriptions and signposts are bilingual, however, in some places they are not. Staff and officials are helpful although they do not speak Albanian. Municipal offices can provide you with all forms and announcements in both languages.

The website is not functional because there is a delay of several days in the minority language of the municipality. The email our “Secret Customer” sent was not answered in his native language by the municipal officials. In conclusion, considering the resources and possibilities, the municipal leaders are indeed trying to enforce the Law on Use of Languages.

Participants pointed out that the budget is small and the insufficient infrastructure is a major obstacle. The problem listed is that they receive documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit information because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language. Traffic signs and road marking are also an issue. Software that the municipal officials get from the central level is only in one working language, Albanian.

Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

ŠTRPCE/SHTËRPCË MUNICIPALITY

On April 1, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer” at the round table. As the Municipality of Štrpce/Shtërpçë has a Serbian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Albanian. The research conducted by CSD was done prior to the round table, and it found that members of the Albanian community feel they are welcomed once they enter the municipal building. There is a bilingual board at the very entrance to the Municipal Hall. The municipality bulletin board contains all decisions and notices in both languages. There were two doormen, one Serb and one Albanian so the “Secret Customer” received all the necessary information. Most of the offices are staffed with officials of different ethnicities, so obtaining necessary information is relatively easy.

Inscriptions on all offices are in both languages, as well as counter signs. The required information was given to the “Secret Customer” in his/her mother tongue. All forms and documents can be obtained in both languages at the Štrpce/Shtërpçë Municipal Hall.

The “Secret Customer” checked the municipality website and discovered that most news is being published in both languages, but certain items are a couple of days late. There are two translators in the municipal administration, one Serbian and one Albanian.

Good will cannot and must not be the crucial factor in this case, especially when we speak about enforcing Law on the Use of Languages. Enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages requires a certain responsibility. We could not get a proper answer to the question saying who would be the responsible person in such a case. The author of the original replied to the message content. If, however, something is lost in the translation or the meaning has been changed, it would be almost impossible to find the person responsible.

The problem indicated is that they receive documents from central level institutions only in one language. Ministries omit information inadvertently because all documents, notifications, and regulations are sent in one language. There are exceptions, but in most cases, positive experiences all come from individual efforts rather than institutional processes.

What also sounded like an interesting initiative was the reintroduction of learning languages of in elementary schools in Kosovo. This means that Serbs will have Albanian language as part of their curriculum, and Albanians will have Serbian language. Finally, the round table was a valuable resource on how to improve the work of the Language Commissioner’s office and better enforce the Law on the Use of Languages.

VUSHTRRI/VUÇITRN MUNICIPALITY

On March 18, 2015, the moderator presented findings on the research conducted by the “Secret Customer” at the round table. As the Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has an Albanian majority, the “Secret Customer” was Serbian. Research results of “Secret Customer” in the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn are satisfying considering that Customer got a response for his every request in his language and the officials demonstrated helpfulness and professionalism. As with other municipalities some deficiencies were noted. The municipality only has one translator/interpreter, however, other officials help and provide service without delay in the language of the Customer. If an official did not know the Customer's language he/she, in a very polite way asked the Customer to wait until official who speaks the language could assist. However, the “Secret Customer” noticed that not all inscriptions and announcements are in both languages. This makes it difficult for citizens to find their way around the premises of local government.

Problems with language use were raised for both Serbian and Albanian languages. Both languages are largely distorted and grammatically incorrect as a consequence of a lack of staff and resources as well as lack of professional translators/interpreters. Of course, the greater issue is with Serbian, but there are issues with translations in Albanian as well.

The municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn has only one translator/interpreter and there is a strong will of management among employees in implementing bilingualism, which was noticed by the “Secret Customer.” Regardless of the difficulties, the municipality demonstrated will to continue improving quality of language use in order to overcome the barriers and problems citizens who reside in the territory of his municipality are facing.

The debate passed in a friendly atmosphere where all participants, regardless of their ethnicity, expressed their dissatisfaction and problems they are facing when it comes to the use of language.

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLES

Results from round tables held in all 12 USAID Advancing Kosovo Together project partner municipalities from February to May 2015 demonstrate that all municipalities have similar issues in the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. During the implementation of the project “Support to the Language Commissioner's Efforts for Promoting the Use of Official Languages in 12 Partner Municipalities,” CSD noticed a few shortcomings in the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. The problem with enforcing the Law has first been seen in the lack of capacity and professional translators/interpreters in local self-governments, as well as lack of direct communication with central authorities.

All partner Municipalities face similar issues, including a lack of capacity and resources when it comes to translators/interpreters and their responsibility to correctly translate text. Serbian and Albanian are official languages throughout the territory of Kosovo and they have equal importance as such. Both languages must be consistent and equal without ambiguity. The Law on the Use of Languages protects both languages equally as well as the institutional ethnic structure. However, fully enforcing this law is still difficult because during the law-making process, implementation and difficulties that may arise were not taken into account. Unfortunately, the case of Law on the Use of Languages is not the only one. There are other cases and laws which are not fully enforced, but can be interpreted in a different way because of poor translation. Each of the mentioned municipalities in which this project was implemented has one to two translators/interpreters which are overworked with translating municipal documents. They mostly work on regulations, letters, requests, and other administrative paperwork, while working least with citizens who are being done a disservice. Municipalities that show progress and fulfill greater

obligations toward this law have equal structures for citizens of Albanian, Serbian, and other communities.

What also can be considered a conclusion from the round tables is confirmation from representatives and officials of local authorities that the communication with central authorities is always, or very often, only in one language. This means that all documents, regulations, laws and other means of communication from central authorities with local administration is monolingual (only in Albanian in this case), which obliges the translators/interpreters working in local administrations to translate all documentation. Translators/interpreters working in local administrations are not trained in specific technical areas, but they translate/interpret everything, from infrastructure to education and health, which often leads to incorrect interpretation. However, local administrations are obliged to send central institutions all requirements, regulations, and other documents in two official languages or they will not be accepted. Local government has additional difficulties because translators undertake additional work that is nearly impossible to perform adequately and with a high level of quality.

The question of who bears responsibility for incorrect translation was discussed during the round tables. None of those present had a concrete answer, but it is known from prior experience that no one has been penalized because of poor translation. This is true for both individuals and institutions. In this way, citizens are the ones who suffer the most, whether because they cannot understand the translated text or because some procedures are being delayed due to a violation of the Law on the Use of Languages by institutions. In addition, most documents are not in both languages; binding enforcement order is obtained. Sanctioning does not exist when the Law is not followed by the institutions themselves. This, in turn, harms the citizens as such.

We cannot generalize these conclusions to all municipalities, nor say that the Law on the Use of Languages was violated deliberately. Municipalities with different ethnic structures and officials are ahead in terms of ensuring that all their citizens receive adequate services in their own language. This is true in terms of the maximum capacities of local administration. The very ethnic structure and officials who use both official languages in internal communication facilitates provision of services to citizens in both languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MUNICIPALITIES

These recommendations will not solve all issues local administrations have in fully enforcing the Law on the Use of Languages, but they will help municipalities reach out to citizens and provide them with services in their own language, something they are guaranteed by law. These recommendations are in accordance with current abilities of the municipalities to succeed in providing citizens with services in two official languages in all communities with minimal effort.

- Citizens from a minority community do not feel comfortable and have many problems orientating themselves and finding their way around once they enter most local administration premises. If officials in the reception do not know the citizens' language, they simply cannot find required departments and information in those municipalities.

- a) With little effort, translators working in local administrations can adequately translate the names of departments;
 - b) Officials from minority ethnicities working in local self-governments can help with translating into different languages;
 - c) Very little effort is needed to translate information maps, which show department locations, into the minority language.
- In some local municipal administrations, when a citizen from a minority community requests certain information in their mother tongue, the officials do not react because they do not know the language. Very often these people try to find another way or simply give up on their requests.
 - a) There must be more consideration from the officials in the department of reception. When a person who speaks another official language enters, he/she should ask colleagues who also speak the language to help in providing services.
 - When a minority community member asks for a form for the sake of using services provided by the local self-government, he/she receives it in another language or in a very bad, even incomprehensible language of the minority community of that municipality.
 - a) With solidarity of officials coming from minority communities who work in these local administrations, these documents can be corrected and be unequivocally translated in the target language;
 - b) When someone who speaks an official language requests a form from an official, but in language of minority community of that municipality, the official should try and deliver this form in their language, or, if he/she does not understand the requests then he/she should ask colleagues who speak the language to provide services to customers;
 - c) If there is no one who speaks the person's language in the department, solidarity among officials who provide services for citizens is of crucial importance.
 - There are other institutions which are obliged to abide by the Law on the Use of Languages, as well as companies of social value which often do not comply with the mentioned Law. When these institutions or companies violate the Law and do not provide citizens service in their language (one of official languages), even though there are mechanisms for doing so, citizens do not know whom to refer to for help and support in using their rights.
 - a) Local administrations should act as a service provider for its citizens, even if this some cases are not in their jurisdiction. They should then be referred to the adequate address where citizens can ask for help in using their language;
 - b) If a person is not capable of requesting in person or filing a request to the adequate address, the local administration is the one to help its citizens. It should introduce them with processes and procedures so they can use their rights that are guaranteed by law in institutions that are not under the municipality's jurisdiction.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Over the years of CSD's work with officials and local administrations, the problem of not using official languages was encountered on a daily basis, especially during the period of project implementation. In order to solve this problem at a local level, changes in job classification and

compulsory education are needed. CSD recommends the following for solving these problems:

- Every municipal department should have a translator/interpreter. The translator/interpreter of each department should know the department, terminology, and activities of the department. In so doing, problems would be resolved in terms of:
 - a) Availability of information to the citizens in their mother tongue;
 - b) Availability of forms and requests all municipal languages;
 - c) Translations from one language to another will be correct and without ambiguity, reasonable and available to citizens;
 - d) Instructions, signposts, and maps would be clear and in official languages of the municipality;
 - e) Communication with central authorities would be facilitated and there would be no delay, obscurities, or rejection by the central government due to ambiguous translations or requests in only one language.

- Learning the language of the environment as part of compulsory education (both Serbian and Albanian) in all primary and high schools in Kosovo.
 - a) By adopting this recommendation, the problem of not using languages would not be solved immediately, but would resolve itself in the near future. Learning languages in schools would result in a complete, systematic solution to implementing of the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo;
 - b) Because of the general political situation, if this recommendation cannot be implemented soon, the temporary solution would be to introduce informal language teaching in every municipality throughout Kosovo. Officials from local administrations, judiciaries, police, etc. who work directly with citizens would be given preference over all other interested citizens. Another priority group would be company employees who perform a social activity and work directly with citizens by providing services.

THE LANGUAGE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE:

- a) The Language Commissioner's Office can independently, without complaints from citizens, react if irregularities are noticed in the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages;
- b) Every recommendation that Language Commissioner's Office outlines to institutions that do not fully enforce the Law on the Use of Languages should be public and published on the Office website in order to be clearly visible. This would result in raising Office transparency to a higher level;
- c) Public meetings should be regularly organized in municipalities so citizens can gain trust in the Commissioner's Office and realize the importance of communication and cooperation. The institutions themselves will see the necessity for the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages;
- d) Monitoring of the implementation of Law on the Use of Languages should be done in cooperation with civil society organizations at the local level. Define measurable indicators for progress of local governments in the implementation of the law;

- e) Promote the introduction of learning Serbian and Albanian languages as a compulsory subject in primary and high school education in Kosovo;
- f) Until conditions for compulsory language learning in schools are met, the Language Commissioner's Office should support and encourage civil society organizations to organize extracurricular classes of learning the official languages;
- g) Ensure that extracurricular learning of official languages is mandatory for civil servants in central and local institutions that directly provide services to citizens.

Annex H – CSD Guidebook:
***Effective Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages
in Local Self-Government Institutions***



GUIDEBOOK: Effective Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Local Self- Government Institutions

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Handbook: Effective Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Local Self-Government Institutions

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About the Project

The USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program, in partnership with Communication for Social Development (CSD), is implementing a project providing support to the Language Commissioner's efforts to promote the use of official languages in 12 partner municipalities of USAID's Advancing Kosovo Together program. The 12 municipalities include Gjilan/Gnjiljane, Graçanicë/Gracanica, Istog/k, Klinë/a, Klokot/Klokot, Novobërdë/Novobrdo, Obiliq/ć, Pejë/Peć, Partesh/š, Ranillug/Ranilug, Shtërpçë/Štrpce and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The initiative aims to raise awareness of community members on the importance of their participation in preserving and protecting language rights, in cooperation with institutional representatives. Through the knowledge and experience gained, AKT and CSD aims to highlight shortcomings and consequences that may result due to failure to implement the Law on the Use of Languages in Kosovo.

CSD organized 12 debates in 12 selected municipalities, which were attended by local authorities, civil society, media, community members, and distinguished activists, with satisfactory representation of youth and women. After these debates, CSD established an action team composed of one government and one civil society representative from each partner municipality. The action team was assisted and supported by representatives from the Office of the Language Commissioner, USAID AKT team and CSD team. The team participated in the preparation of this Handbook on the Effective Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Local Self-Government Institutions. The Handbook will serve as a resource used daily in all municipal directorates and departments, aimed at improving the use of languages.

This document presents guidelines for the proper use and implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages. Organized into topical chapters, the Handbook touches on different aspects of the official use of the languages, refers to relevant legislation, and addresses the use of minority languages in Kosovo. Equal use of official languages can be achieved only if all parties participating in communication recognize reciprocal rights and obligations. The ability for all citizens to use their languages creates the conditions for mutual respect of linguistic and cultural identities, promotes tolerance between the citizens speaking different mother tongues and supports the foundation for a just and stable state. The purpose of this document is to serve mainly as a guideline for the civil servants of local governance in different aspects of communication in the languages of minority communities.

The objective of the Handbook is to improve the level of communication and understanding between Kosovo citizens enabling increased use of mother tongue languages.

Acronyms

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
AKT	Advancing Kosovo Together
CSD	Communication for Social Development
USA	United States of America
MH	Ministry of Health
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
MF	Ministry of Finance
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
OLC	Office of the Language Commissioner
GoK	Government of Kosovo

About Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT)

USAID's Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program is designed to facilitate constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction between majority and minority communities, which is vital to the security and stability of the region. The program takes a holistic approach towards the integration of minority populations into Kosovo's institutions and society by partnering with municipalities and other Government partners to support the engagement of targeted communities.

In particular, the program works to improve conditions that enable ethnic minorities to actively engage in the workforce and in the Government of Kosovo's (GoK) institutions while also preserving and protecting their unique cultural heritage. The program aims to accomplish this by:

- Improving communication between majority and minority communities, and between the GoK and minority communities, through small-scale infrastructural projects and other community-based initiatives;
- Improving economic opportunities in target municipalities through training, market research and small business grants;
- Increasing the capacity of target municipalities to respond to the needs of all their citizens with training and technical assistance primarily in financial management and municipal planning;
- Building the capacities of the host-country organizations by leveraging local and cross-ethnic leadership to implement these same objectives.

AKT, implemented from April 2014 to April 2017, partners directly with 16 municipalities, including six (6) Serb-majority municipalities in the south: Gračanica/Graçanicë, Klokot/Klllokot, Parteš/sh, Ranilug/Ranillug, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë, and Štrpce/Shtërpçë; and six (6) Albanian-majority municipalities: Obiliq/ć, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Istog/k, Klinë/a, Pejë/Peć and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. The program is also implemented in Kosovo's four municipalities in the north: North Mitrovica/ë, Leposavić/q, Zubin Potok and Zvečan/Zveçan. The program involves more than 600,000 Kosovo residents, including 146,000 citizens from minority communities.

About Communication for Social Development (CSD)

The NGO “Communication for Social Development“ (CSD), located in Graçanicë/Gračanica, is an independent, non-profit, and non-political local organization established in 2001 with the main objective of promoting and supporting the development of civil society, youth, rights of persons with disabilities, integration of marginal groups in society, connecting local institutions and local citizens, and promoting the process of return and dialogue. Main beneficiaries of CSD include minority communities, specifically Serbs and Romas, youth, and persons with disabilities.

CSD aims to strengthen the NGO sector by providing technical support, informing and educating citizens, and by continuously working for the promotion and representation of civil society in public. CSD is also engaged in supporting the creation of NGO networks and in coordinating NGOs on common projects. CSD provides services such as public information, radio and video material production, promotion of dialogue and reconciliation processes between the communities in Kosovo, and also provides information on displaced persons and education programs for youth.

CSD works with civil society as a constructive strategic partner in relevant communities for problem solving. CSD is also working to bring civil society to the forefront in socio-political decision-making. Working throughout Kosovo, CSD has developed a model that also aims to encourage youth to participate in decision making processes.

CDS aims to achieve cooperation between all community leaders, local government representatives, and civil society – in support of an open, multiethnic, modern and democratic society in Kosovo.

About the Law on the Use of Languages

Law No. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages entered into force in 2007 with the purpose of respecting the linguistic identity of all persons and to create an environment for all communities to express and preserve their linguistic identities.

Articles 1-3

Articles 1-3 of the Law provide linguistic rights for all communities in Kosovo, linguistic equality, promotion of all languages, set official languages both at the central and local level, and set the percentage of language prevalence at which a language can become an official language at the local level.

Use of Languages in Central Institutions

Articles 4-6

Articles 4-6 provide for the use of languages in central institutions, the official languages used on an equal basis for communication, in institutional meetings and appointments, in public meetings, in official documents, and in the official names of the institutions. These Articles ensure the right of language use during the work of the Assembly, various committees, and during the promulgation of laws and normative acts in the official languages.

Use of Languages in Municipal Institutions

Articles 7-10

Articles 7-10 determine the use of languages at the local level. In compliance with them, every meeting, document, regulation and municipal decree shall be conducted or issued in the official languages of the respective municipality. Languages have equal status and, if requested, translation services should be provided from one language into the other.

These Articles provide for the right to use the language in official use and the rights of citizens to request services in these languages, if their language is one of the languages in official use. Furthermore, these Articles explain how the names of institutions, signs, names of municipalities, cities, villages, and streets should be written.

The Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA), through Administrative Instruction No. 2011/02 explained these Articles in greater detail.

Use of Languages in Public Enterprises

Article 11

Article 11 ensures that all enterprises, both state-owned and publicly owned, shall respect the equality of languages. Every person has the right to be informed and communicate in any of the official languages.

Use of Languages in Judicial Proceedings

Articles 12-18

Articles 12-18 provide for the equality of official languages in all judicial proceedings, and the right of any person to use the language of his or her choice during such proceedings. All procedures, documents, information and requests must be in the official languages. Any person, whose language is not one of the official languages or a language in official use, has the right to communicate, request services, and provide answers in his/her mother tongue. Law enforcement institutions, courts, and prisons are obliged to provide assistance for all persons with regards to interpretation and communication.

Use of Languages in Educational Institutions

Articles 19-24

Articles 19-24 ensure that the instructions in public education institutions are in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and the Laws on Education. Each person has the right to be educated in his/her mother tongue. Educational institutions are obliged to undertake all the actions in compliance with the Laws on Education and other relevant laws. The official languages in Kosovo are the primary languages for carrying out instruction in public universities.

Use of Language in Media

Articles 25-26

Articles 25-26 ensure that every person has the right to establish media in the language of his/her choice in accordance with the Law in Force.

The use of language by public providers during program broadcasting is determined by the Law on Media.

Personal Names

Article 27

Article 27 ensures the right of registration of a person's name in public registers. Each person has the right to register his/her name in its original form, according to his/her language and tradition.

Linguistic Freedom

Articles 28-30

Articles 28-30 ensure the right of each person to establish, manage, and maintain legal entities such as cultural associations, organizations, and businesses using their language. In the private sphere, companies may communicate and provide services in the language of their choice. However, in cases where activities of these enterprises, whose language is not one of the official languages, may damage public interests (public order, safety, health), Kosovo institutions require the additional use of the official languages.

In enterprises performing public services, the principle of equality of the official languages is applicable.

Implementation

Article 31

Article 31 ensures that the Government of Kosovo and other institutions shall adopt measures for promoting the use and equal status of official languages, and for ensuring the protection, preservation and promotion of languages of communities, when their mother tongue is not an official language.

The Office of the Language Commissioner

The Office of the Language Commissioner was established in April 2012 within the Office of the Prime Minister, based on Regulation No. 07/2012.

In order to enhance the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages, the Government of Kosovo established the Working Group for the reform of the Language Commission in 2011. The reform project was led by the Office of the Prime Minister/Office of Community Affairs. As a result of this working group, Regulation 07/2012 was issued for the Office of the Language Commissioner, based on which two supporting mechanisms were established, the Language Policy Board and the Language Policy Network.

Mandate of the Office of the Language Commissioner

The Office of the Language Commissioner exercises the competencies specified in the Law, and:

- Monitors compliance with the Law by any institution under its jurisdiction;
- Takes all necessary measures within its authority, including through mediation, to ensure compliance with the Law by any institution under its jurisdiction;
- Reviews and makes recommendations regarding regulations or administrative instructions made under the Law, regarding the compliance and consistency of any other legislative act, regulation or administrative instruction with the Law;
- Carries out investigations, whether on its initiative or pursuant to a complaint filed by any natural or legal person, regarding failure of any institution under its jurisdiction to comply with the Law or with any other legal act pertaining to the status and use of the official languages as well as to other languages of communities whose language is not an official language of the Republic of Kosovo;
- Provides, as appropriate, advice or assistance to the public regarding their rights under the Law on the Use of Languages;
- Provides, as appropriate, advice or assistance to institutions under its jurisdiction regarding their obligations under the Law on the Use of Languages;
- Assists the government in developing public awareness programs, or develops them itself, and periodic outreach activities to inform the public regarding their obligations and rights under the framework of the Law on the Use of Languages;

In order to carry out its competencies, the Office shall have the authority and power to:

- Request, obtain access to and review files of institutions, enterprises or organizations under its jurisdiction;
- Require that institutions and staff cooperate with the Office, providing the Office with access to their premises and with relevant information, including copies of full or partial files and other documents upon request of the Office, excluding classified files or information;
- Summon any person or witness for the purpose of obtaining verbal or written testimonies necessary for conducting investigations;

- Provide travel and subsistence allowances for persons required to be present at the Office or to travel to provide any information, records or evidence for the purposes of an investigation;
- As a last resort, when recommendations of the Office for redress and improvement or for compensation have not been performed by the relevant institution, issue or impose any sanctions as prescribed by the applicable Administrative Instruction on Determining Administrative Sanctions for the Violation of the Law on the Use of Languages;
- When necessary, in case a person fails or refuses to comply with the requirements of the Office or hinders the Office in the performance of its duties, or when the nature of the violation so warrants, the Office may initiate legal or disciplinary procedures through the relevant authority against the person or the organization responsible for the violation.

Obligations of the Institutions to Implement the Law on the Use of Languages

- Institutions are obliged to take all necessary measures to fully implement the Law on the Use of Languages to enable exercising of linguistic rights in compliance with the Law;
- Institutions are obliged to provide public documentation and information in official languages and languages in official use at municipal level;
- Different institutions should respect the equality of languages in all public documentations issued and published;
- Accompanying materials used for inter-institutional communication should be in the official languages;
- Topographic signs should be used in all official languages, respecting the equality of languages;
- In all institutions under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Language Commissioner, official websites should be harmonized in official languages;
- All institutional information should be released simultaneously in all official languages.

Municipal Assembly

Competencies and responsibilities of the Assembly

The Assembly is elected directly, in compliance with the provisions of the Law on Local Elections.

The Municipal Assembly is obliged to adopt a detailed Regulation on the use of languages within the territory of respective municipality, as specified in the Law on the Use of Languages.

The Municipal Assembly and the Mayor of the Municipality have the right to enact legal acts and, in accordance with the relevant responsibilities, take measures for their implementation. All the acts issued by the Municipality should be in compliance with the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Kosovo. The Municipal Assembly may adopt acts within areas of its competencies.

Acts of the Municipal Assembly shall be effective in the territory of the Municipality enacting the act. These acts shall include

- a) Statute of the municipality;
- b) Rules of Procedure;
- c) Municipal regulations; and
- d) Any other legal document necessary for the efficient operation of the municipality.

Statutes of the Municipality may be adopted and may be amended by a decision for the approval or amendment of the Statute from least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Assembly.

The number of members in the Municipal Assembly shall be proportional and based on the number of citizens in the Municipality.

All members of the Municipal Assembly have fair and equal rights and opportunities to participate fully in the proceedings of the Assembly. The Municipal Assembly shall ensure that these rights and opportunities are provided in its Statute and Rules of Procedure.

The Municipal Assembly operates on the basis of the Law on Local Self-Governance, the Statute, and other sub-legal acts.

Notifications and materials for meetings shall respect the Law on the Use of Languages.

Minutes shall be kept of all meetings of the Municipal Assembly and its committees and shall be approved at the next meeting in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages.

Recommendations

- Due to lack of an interpreter during the planning of the budget, the Municipal Assembly should, in accordance with its capabilities, insert a budget line for translation, in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations.
- The Municipal Assembly during the drafting of the budget may propose a budget line for additional funds for the professional training of interpreters.

Instructions

- Any legal act, regulation, or any other legal document prior to entering into force should be translated in the official languages of the respective municipality. While exercising their daily duties as advisors of the Assembly, meetings and proceedings of the Municipal Assembly, adequate interpretation should be provided in the official languages of the respective municipality.

- ❑ Notifications and materials for the Assembly proceedings should be published simultaneously in both (all) official languages of the municipality.
- ❑ Minutes of the proceedings, prior to approval, should be translated and disseminated to the advisors in both (all) official languages.
- ❑ Each legal act, regulation, or any other legal document adopted by the Municipal Assembly is the same in all official languages, with no gaps for different interpretation or misinterpretation.

The Cabinet of the Mayor of the Municipality

- **Office for Public Relations**
- **Municipal Office for Communities and Return**
- **Municipal Office for Human Rights**

Responsibilities of the Office for Public Relations

Office for Public Relations:

- Takes part in direct meetings of the Mayor of the Municipality, both inside and outside of the Municipality;
- Takes part in the meetings of the Board of Directors, committees and Municipal Assembly;
- has the responsibility to coordinate issues related to local and international press regarding the activities of the Mayor of the Municipality, directors of the respective departments and other offices;
- Contributes to the development and implementation of the municipal responsibilities for communicating with the public;
- Provides information on municipal development policies;
- Monitors implementation of the Strategy for communication with citizens and administers the code of conduct of the officials of public communication, so that they adhere to high ethical standards;
- Ensures transparency and open access in relation to the work of directors and municipal administration, academic and health institutions as well as other public enterprises, providing information and documents for citizens and media;
- Informs the public on the decisions adopted by the Assembly, through conferences and issuing of press releases;
- Maintains close relations with the municipal press and digital media in relation to the issues concerning municipal authorities and bodies;
- Works on publishing an internal municipal gazette ‘Information Bulletin’;
- provides information within the municipality and is in constant cooperation with the directors of the directorates and officials who are employed in the Directorate of Administration;
- Follows the work of municipal representatives and registers all statements of the municipal representatives given to media;
- Prepares leaflets, brochures, information bulletins, etc.;
- selects and archives articles from newspapers referring to the work of respective municipality;

Responsibilities of the Office for Communities and Returns

Office for Communities and Returns

- Is responsible for improvement and protection of rights of the communities;

- Ensures that the communities have equal rights in regard to public services within the territory of the respective municipality;
- Prepares reports describing in details the works accomplished that are the exclusive responsibility of the Office for Communities and Returns;
- Under direct observation of the Mayor of the Municipality, it assists in preparation and drafting of the Municipal Strategy for Return;
- Collects and disseminates information related to returns in the respective municipality (repatriated persons);
- In cooperation with the Mayor of the Municipality, it assists in better operation of the existing structures;
- Exercises administrative work that is necessary for supporting the existing structures for returns, such as: setting of meetings, notification of participants, preparation and dissemination of agenda in official languages and preparation of minutes;
- Takes part in the meetings of the existing committees (Committee for Communities, Committee for Mediation and Committee for Policy and Finance) and in their forums where issues related to communities are discussed or are part of the agenda.

Responsibilities of the Office for Human Rights

- Undertakes all necessary measures for the protection and promotion of human rights at the municipal level, together with three other officials involved within the Municipality;
- Monitors compliance with respect to human rights standards: equal opportunities, the principle of non-discrimination, gender equality, the rights of children, the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of communities, the right of use of language and against the trafficking of human beings;
- Provides advice in relation to drafting and monitoring of implementation of policies, regulations and instructions adopted by the Municipal Assembly in compliance with the human rights standards and the domestic legislation;
- Monitors the activity of the Municipality and at the same time advises the Mayor of the Municipality on issues related to the human rights;
- Cooperates and coordinates activities with the municipal structures and NGOs in the area of protection and promotion of human rights;
- Cooperates, in order to accomplish its responsibilities, with different institutions and agencies, including the Ombudsperson in Kosovo.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen the role of the focal point from the network of linguistic policy, he/she should be responsible and have the ability to address linguistic issues within the municipality;
- Create opportunities for cooperation and exchange of best practices and resources between municipalities to improve implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages;
- During the preparation of the strategy for communities and returns, include the part that addresses and/or refers to the improvement of quality of the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages;
- Name the streets within the administrative territory of the respective municipalities, which do not hold names of personalities, should be translated into the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All names of the public institutions and private enterprises dealing with the public good should emphasize or state name and competencies in the official languages.

Instructions:

Office for Public Relations

- In communication with the local press, information should be published simultaneously in the official languages;
- There should be simultaneous public approach regarding the work of directorates in the official languages;
- All printing information and documents should be identical, without the possibility for differing interpretations, and should be published simultaneously in the official languages;
- The public should be informed simultaneously in all languages about all decisions of the Municipal Assembly;
- The municipal "bulletin" should not be published only in one language. Instead, prior to being published, it should be identically translated in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Internal information and cooperation between the directorates and civil servants should be in accordance with their mother tongue (in one of the official languages);
- Any statement of the Mayor of the Municipality and municipal officials should be properly translated and made available in real time in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All bulletins, brochures, and other informative materials should be published in the official language of the respective municipality. They should not be published only in one language if they are not ready in the other languages as well, but they should be published simultaneously in the official languages for better and more suitable information for the citizens;
- All news related to the municipality should be translated into official languages prior to being archived.

Office for Communities and Return

- Any violation of the Law on the Use of Languages should be reported to the respective office within the local government and the Office of the Language Commissioner.
- Every report of OC should be available in the official languages prior to publication and archiving.
- All information related to returning and repatriated persons should be available at the same time in the official languages.
- All administrative duties of the Office for Communities such as setting meeting schedules, informing participants, preparing and disseminating agenda, should respect the Law on the Use of Languages.
- All information collected in meetings related to returning and communities should be provided in the official languages and the targeted group in the respective municipality should be informed.

Office for Human Rights

- The right to language is a fundamental human right and hereafter this office is obliged to report any identified failure initially to the Mayor of the Municipality and then to the Office of the Language Commissioner and appeal to all relevant actors to follow the Law on Languages.
- To warn the Mayor of the Municipality and all directors of respective departments on the importance of adequate and simultaneous publication of public documents, decisions, calls and forms in official language.

- No official document, invitation, decision and information should be published only in one language while it is being translated into another official language, in order to avoid denial of equal opportunities for all communities of the respective municipality.

The Directorate for Administration

Role and competencies of the directorate

- Services that concern the work of the Assembly and the executive, such as preparation of meeting materials for the Assembly, the committees and the Council of Directors, starting with the drafting of the invitation and of the decisions resulting from the meetings, proofreading and translation of materials in official languages;
- Administrative services in relation to procurement – procurement procedures, based on the Law on Procurement;
- Services related to the area of logistics and its functioning, including management of vehicles' parking lot, maintenance of official vehicles, etc.;
- Registration and keeping record of official material received and delivered from the warehouse of the municipality;
- Based on the Administrative Instruction of the MLGA, services include accurate communication with citizens, making requests available for citizens, provision of legal/administrative assistance regarding request fulfillment, registration of all parties' requests, reporting on closed cases on monthly basis, archiving of cases and ensuring their preservation;
- Overseeing postal services, security services and facilities maintenance;
- Maintenance of information technology equipment, etc.
- In the administrative services dealing with provision of services to citizens are included:
 - Services of marital status including civil status of the citizens, registration of: newborns, marriages, deceased and issuance of certificates proving the civil status of the citizen, including also the certificate of residence as well as the change of personal name;
 - Verification of documents based on the genuine copy of the documents;
 - All other works based on the competencies delegated by the central government.

In providing administrative services for citizens other tasks also are performed concerning the organization of citizens in neighborhoods, villages, local offices and local community offices.

Recommendations:

- Provide the translation unit/office with professional capacities so that the translation may be adequate in the official languages;
- In compliance with the statutory requirements to establish an office for citizen orientation/citizen services (for those municipalities that have not established them yet) – this office will be composed of members of all communities living in the respective municipality;
- Motivate translators of the municipality that perform their work beyond standards, as well as the other officers providing services for citizens in all official languages without translator assistance;
- In a visible place in all public institutions within the municipality, display information related to opportunities for complaints in case the citizens think that their linguistic rights have been violated;
- The complaint commission should be obliged to consider the complaints related to the use of languages at the local level and to make recommendations to the respective department;

- Create conditions for improving the capacities of municipal officials in relation to the provision of services for citizens in the official languages.
- Ensure proper categorization of translators and also ancillary equipment/tools for their work.

Instructions:

- Put an orientation board in all offices, in a visible place in all public institutions of the municipality;
- Each directorate and office should have a title, in the official languages of the respective municipality, on its function and jurisdiction;
- All instructions and information should be printed out in the official languages;
- Brochures, information, notifications, vacancy announcements and any other document of public interest should be simultaneously published in all languages of the municipality;
- Any request of citizens, either verbal, in writing or through phone or any other way addressed to the local administration should be responded in the language of the citizen (in one of the official languages);
- Services related to Municipal Assembly issues should be identically translated in the official languages of respective municipalities, without potential for differing interpretations;
- All materials from Municipality proceedings, committees and board of directors, prior to archiving and submission for further use, should be identical in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Any disciplinary measure should be submitted in the mother tongue of the officer, unless requested otherwise, whereas the same should be translated in the official language(s) for archiving effect;
- Any opportunity for vocational training of civil servants should be provided to the officers of all communities and proper translation should be provided in their language;
- Any evidence, registration and/or file should be available in all official languages and as such should be archived and forwarded for further use;
- The provision of advice to citizens should be in their mother tongue in case that language is one of the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Legal assistance for citizens regarding the fulfillment of requests and forms should be provided in the mother tongue of the citizen. At the same time, the requests and forms should be in the mother tongue of the citizen if that language is one of the official languages of the respective municipality.

Directorate for Health

Role and competencies of the directorate

- Drafting the strategy for primary health care, including: promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases, irregularities and injuries, health education and immunization;
- Ensuring provision of social and family services within the territory of the municipality, according to the standard specified by the respective ministry;
- Performing social and family services within the territory of the municipality, through the activities of Centers for Social Work (CSW);
- Drafting of budget, based on local needs, according to the instructions of the Ministry of Health (MH);

- Reporting on the achievements of targets set forth by the Mayor of the Municipality and the Municipal Assembly;
- Developing, monitoring, and implementing the regulations in force;
- Implementing norms and standards of infrastructure and human resources approved by MH;
- Overseeing epidemiology situation at the municipal level;
- Collecting and analyzing information at local level;
- Setting local priorities and targets based on the information, in compliance with the strategy of primary health care;
- Taking measures for health protection related to the provision of safe water and hygiene, provision of safe food and nutrition, and activities of disinfection and eradication;
- Conducting awareness raising campaign with governmental and non-governmental organizations and drafting of agreements with them.

Instructions:

- While drafting health promoting materials it should be ensured that they are in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Every health institution should have a notification board of health services and the units within the institutions in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Communication with patients, as well as issuance of the necessary documentation should be in the mother tongue of the patient (in one of the official languages);
- Ensure that all information related to health insurance and health services are simultaneously available for citizens in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Provide home-care for patients in their mother tongue (in one of the official languages);
- Ensure that all information regarding epidemiology measures are simultaneously available for all citizens in the official languages and in languages in the official use of the respective municipalities;
- Social and family services for citizens should be provided in their mother tongue (in one of the official languages);
- All documents and forms should be made available for citizens in the official languages of respective municipalities;
- Citizens should be informed simultaneously in their official languages on the measures undertaken in regard to health care;
- Information related to hygiene, drinkable water, feeding, up to the activities of disinfection and disinsection should be made available for all citizens in the official languages of the respective municipality;

Social Welfare Sector

The role and competencies of the Social Welfare Sector

- Ensuring the right to have, develop and use property, in order to ensure social shelter for persons within the municipal territory;
- Cooperating with MH, deciding on and implementing the policies on protection of the categories of vulnerable children and all other categories of children, through SWC at the local level;
- Undertaking of measures for identifying the nature and the need for social and family services within the municipal territory;

- Drafting of annual plans for developing and maintaining social and family services and maintenance of accurate statistical data;
- Coordinating and supervising the works of the Center for Social Works
- Ensuring shelter for the homeless;
- Registering and licensing of the care and employment centers,
- Paying salaries and training of social welfare professionals.

Instructions:

- All the forms, statements, certifications and other documents must be made available to citizens in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- The plan and the program on social protection as the means of implementation of rights and services must be published in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Ensure communication and counseling for citizens in their mother language (in one of the official languages);
- Ensure that in every request from citizens, be it verbal, in writing, through telephone or any other form, the response is to be returned in the same language, if that language is one of the official languages in the respective municipality;
- Information regarding homeless persons must be made available throughout the municipal territory in the official languages of the respective municipality.

Directorate for Education

The Role and Competencies of the Directorate

- Managing and coordinating preschool, primary and secondary education in the municipality;
- Employing teachers and other school personnel in accordance with legal procedures for recruiting, selection and employment of public employees;
- Appointing principals and vice-principals of institutions, in accordance with legal procedures for recruiting and legal criteria set by MEST;
- Paying leading staff, professional staff and other staff employed in the educational institutions of the municipality;
- Supervising educational institutions in the municipal level;
- Registering and enrolling pupils, in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination;
- Registering data for pupils, based on the template approved by MEST, in accordance with the law;
- Promoting equal opportunity in the possibility to attend preschool, mandatory education and secondary education in the municipality;
- Registering and inspecting public health and security, as well as licensing of preschool educational institutions in accordance with the law;
- Respecting and affirming the rights of communities and their members;
- Drafting, approving and implementing the Rules of Procedure for schools, including the Code of Conduct for leading staff, teachers, other staff and pupils, as well as of the disciplinary measures;
- Bringing decisions about complaints against guiding decisions of educational institutions, stipulated by law;
- Promoting cooperation between teachers, parents, pupils and education institutions, as well as between educational institutions and the family;

- Cooperating with education directorates of other municipalities in joint educational projects, in joint use of physical and human resources, as well as setting of the funds for such projects and purposes;
- Setting the specific areas of coverage by schools at the municipal level;
- Undertaking measures for securing the surrounding environment, urban or rural, where the school is located, in accordance with the right of the pupils to have a safe school environment;
- Assessing special needs, as foreseen by law;
- Proposing special education for pupils and provision of a professional assessment;
- Establishing advisory and health services for special needs;
- Also exercising other competencies, that are transferred on the basis of the law or by the central authority.

Instructions:

- Publish in the municipality web page all the laws that are related to education process (primary and secondary) in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Every announcement for hiring employees in primary and secondary schools must be published in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Promote the significance of learning languages of other communities living in the respective municipality;
- Cooperate with NGOs for the purpose of promoting and applying informal education.

Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sport

The role and competencies of the Directorate

- Managing local cultural resources, including local museums and cultural heritage resources;
- Publicizing the amount of the available budget, annually, for the preparation of cultural, youth and sport activities, including the funds for grants that are available for qualified persons, and it also drafts regulations on the submission of applications for grants and for assigning the grants;
- Managing the Municipal Archive, “Dodona” theatre, city Library, city Stadium, Sport Hall and other accompanying facilities;
- Organizing the marking of historically important dates, when required;
- Organizing of debates for developing and advancing the culture, youth and sports;
- Reviewing contractual relations with regards to the facilities for culture, youth and sports;
- Collecting factual data about the achievements in culture, youth and sports;
- Cooperating with and reporting on its work to Mayor, Municipal Assembly, respective Committee, as required;
- Cooperating with directories in the central level from the respective scope of action, and with advisors from these fields;
- Registering of bands, clubs, ensembles, etc.;
- Supporting cultural, youth and sport activities, as well as development of their renovation within the municipal territory;
- Respecting of, support and assistance for associations, clubs and unions, as well as identification of individuals with specific creative skills, without any racial, gender, religious or national discrimination, etc;
- Making its institutions available for general service to citizens (with the primary activities that they carry out, but in emergent cases other activities as well);
- Attracting investors and seeking additional funds;

- Cooperating with Directorate of Education with regards to the reforms and the conditions that youth may have.

Recommendations:

- Establish possibilities for encouraging cultural events that would promote multilingualism, aiming at learning official languages of the respective municipality.

Instructions:

- Ensure that all cultural events are published and promoted in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the facilities that are used for organizing and promoting cultural activities must have the title written in the official languages;
- Available funds for preparing cultural activities and funds for financing them must be published at the same time in all the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the announcements with historical importance of any community must be published or publicized at the same time in all the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Guidelines and forms for registering folklore groups, ensembles and other cultural associations must be provided in all the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Citizens should be informed about the results of cooperation with other countries, national and international organizations, and with regard to the possibility for integration and exchange of experiences - in official languages;
- Support should be provided to associations, clubs and natural persons in their language, if that language is one of the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the communities should be well represented in discovering new talent and provision of services must be done in their mother language, if that language is one of the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the documents, prior to archiving, must be appropriately translated in the official languages of the municipality.

Youth and Sports Sector

The Role and the Competences of the Sector

- Establishing the conditions for returning the youth in the country and for their re-education;
- Organizing different surveys, seminars and trainings, inclusion of Kosovo youth in youth activities, European and global;
- Publicizing the amount of the available budget, annually, for the preparation of cultural, youth and sport activities, including the money for grants that are available for qualified persons, and it also drafts regulations on the submission of applications for grants and for assigning the grants;
- Organizing of debates for developing and advancing the culture, youth and sports;
- Reviewing contractual relations in relation to the facilities of culture, youth and sports;
- Cooperating with and reporting on work with the Mayor, Municipal Assembly and respective Committee, as required;
- Cooperating with directorates at the central level from the respective scope of action, and with advisors from these fields;
- Registering of bands, clubs, ensembles, etc.;

- Supporting cultural, youth and sport activities, as well as development of their renovation within the municipal territory;
- Cooperating with other cities and countries, to enable proper integration and exchange of experiences, as well as with NGOs and other organizations;
- Respecting, supporting, and assisting associations, clubs and unions, as well as discovering individuals with specific creative skills, without any racial, gender, religious or national discrimination;
- Attracting investors and seeking additional funds;
- Taking care of other formations from sports, that do not have working space and conditions;
- Cooperating with Directorate of Education with regards to the reforms and the conditions that youth may have.

Instructions:

- When organizing seminars, trainings and designing surveys/researches, ensure that announcements have been published at the same time in official languages, and the official languages of the respective municipality must be used throughout these activities;
- Before making funds available for preparing youth activities and rules for the submission of applications, everything should be translated into the official languages of the respective municipality and that the announcement is given at the same time in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Every debate about development and advancement of youth and sports must be translated into the official languages, if the parties belong to different communities;
- Every document, be it a report, decision or minutes, before being archived, must be translated into the official languages;
- Every form and call for registration of different sport clubs, bands and associations, before being published and implemented, must be translated into the official languages of the municipality;
- Support should be provided to associations, clubs and individuals (natural persons) in their language, if that language is one of the official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the facilities that are used for organizing and promoting cultural activities must have their inscriptions written in official languages;
- All announcements, information and documents regarding youth and sport activities in the municipal web page must be published at the same time in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Announcements about the use of sports and cultural facilities must be available to all the communities in the official languages of the respective municipality.

Directorate for Finance

The role and competencies of the Directorate

- Assisting the Mayor in preparing the draft-budget before presenting it to the Committee for Policy and Finance and the Municipal Assembly;
- Dynamic planning of the implementation of projects and allocation of means for budget items;
- Planning the cash flow statement;
- Providing professional advice for municipal bodies in budget management;
- Preparing municipal draft-regulations about financial issues;

- Managing financial issues;
- Maintaining accounts and annual financial reports;
- Planning and setting obligations based on municipal regulations of certain entities in the municipality, the level of charges, the property tax rate, municipal fees and fines;
- Planning net municipal income;
- Maintaining data about all the land and facilities that the municipality possesses or uses;
- Developing procedures for expropriation, dispossession and de-expropriation of municipally-owned land;
- Handling and developing administrative procedures for arbitrary usurpations of municipally-owned land.

Instructions:

- Regulations on financial issues, before entering into force, has to be translated into the official languages of the respective municipality;
- The annual financial report, before being publicized, has to be translated into the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Designation of obligations and regulations for legal and natural persons within the municipal territory has to be available in the official languages;
- Prior to setting and announcing the tax rates, property tax and municipal fines, everything has to be translated identically, without giving any possibilities for misinterpretation, into each official language;
- Plans and registration of all incomes must be translated into the official languages prior to archiving and publicizing;
- The municipal property database has to be available in official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the administrative procedures and the documentation, before entering into force, have to be available at the same time in all the official languages of the respective municipality;

Sector for Economy and Development

Scope of the Directorate

- Setting the priorities for investments in the municipality in cooperation with the Mayor of the Municipality;
- Drafting conceptual programs, aimed at developing priority sectors, contacting internal financial institutions such as commercial banks and international financial institutions, in order to obtain sufficient and accurate information with regard to the conditions for loans (financing) of different businesses;
- Providing advice to different business persons on the possibilities for investments, in order to direct their capital in productive and profitable activities, and for the upcoming ones as well;
- Coordinating public-private partnerships;
- Cooperating with the Ministry of Trade and Industry about the possibility for coordination of works and activities for economical development of the municipality;
- Providing information and work reports, about certain periods, on the work efficiency of municipal institutions;
- Issuing working permits for trading companies;
- Setting the level of fees for working permits according to municipal tariffs, taxes and fines;

- Keeping record of changes for working permits and business certifications;
- Providing forms for application and the timely informing of businesses;
- Providing information and reports for the Directorate and municipal institutions;
- Providing professional trainings in the field of business;
- Providing data to respective Ministries, as requested by them;

Instructions:

- Ensure and publicize the designation of investment priorities at the same time in all official languages;
- All the information about the development of the primary sector, conditions and modalities for crediting a business have to be made available to all the citizens in all the official languages. Under no circumstances shall they be publicized in one language only, but all the data shall be disseminated at the same time;
- All the legal entities and citizens shall be provided with sufficient advice with regard to their businesses in their mother language, if that the language is one of the official languages in the respective municipality;
- Information on the work and activities that are related to economic development of the respective municipality shall be available in all official languages, be it in a private partnership or any other one;
- Issuance of licenses for trade companies has to be in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages, implying that they shall be in all official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the information regarding the possibility of obtaining licenses, set tariffs, taxes and fines shall made available in all official languages of the respective municipality;
- All the certificates issued on the work of economical entities in the municipality should be in all official languages; Opportunities for application by economical entities and the forms must be available in the official languages at the same time to all the citizens of the respective municipality;
- Information on trainings for business start-ups and development shall be accessible to all the citizens in official languages;
- Trainings for business start-ups and development shall ensure adequate translation into the official languages;
- The strategic plan for economic development, including short term and long term aspects, shall be available in the official languages at the same time, and they shall be identical in all official languages;
- All the legal entities and citizens shall be provided with sufficient advice with regard to their businesses in their mother language, provided that the language is one of the official languages.

Directorate for Urbanism, Construction and Environment Protection

Scope of the Directorate

- Drafting programs, municipal development plan, urban development plan, and urban regulative plans of settlements and other complexes and providing suggestions and opinions for their approval and implementation;;
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- Collecting, processing, and supplementing the spatial development documentation, in accordance with the Law on Spatial Planning and the provisions derived based on this Law;
- Cooperating with all participating entities for planning and developing the city and the municipality for drafting spatial plans;
- Dealing with municipal urban and rural planning and planning for use of land;
- Cooperating with regard to the concept of solutions and contents of the urban regulative plans;
- Monitoring urban planning and designing and dealing with their implementation;
- Organizing and appointing the professional group for supervision, technical acceptance of constructed buildings and other relevant services;
- Issuing decisions and certifications about the conditions of existing buildings;
- Developing and organizing cadastral capacities, homogenous network, rebuilding of cadastral information into digital form, a model of information system about land and property;
- Registering real estate and municipal land;
- Issuing certificates for persons that do not have real estate;
- Engaging in the gradual reduction of pollution, environmental degradation and destruction, as well as in the reduction or prevention of those economical aspects and other activities that compose a major risk to human health and environment.
- Drafting the program and supervising valuable natural landscapes, proposing new zones for protection, protects and rehabilitates the diversity, cultural values and aesthetics of the landscape;
- Supervising and controlling safety conditions for the lives and health of people in construction sites and around it, during operations.

Instructions:

- Development urban plans, and regulative plans for settlements and other spaces must be in all the official languages, and as such be approved and published;
- Each decision and verification about the condition of buildings, as well as the permissions for using completed buildings has to be issued in the official languages.
- The forms for registering real estate have to be in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Certifications issued to persons that do not have any real estate or any other certificate, have to be in citizen's mother language (if that language is one of the official languages), or in the official languages;
- All measures undertaken for environmental protection have to be publicized at the same time in the official languages;
- All guidelines, in official boards have to be in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- Any citizen request made in any of the official languages must be addressed in the same language.

Directorate for Agriculture and Forestry

Scope of the Directorate

- Monitoring and implementing development policies for agriculture, plowing, livestock, gardening, growing vegetables and beekeeping;
- Drafting annual plans and reports of production and supervision of implementation of these plans for the autumn and spring sowing, harvest and gathering of crops by farmers;

- Monitoring scientific achievements in production of farming and creation of statistical tables;
- Monitoring of implementation of annual development plans for farming and plowing;
- Monitoring and participation in development of projects and plans for the protection and development of forests in the municipality;
- Recording data on uncultivated land, land given for use and the land with modified purpose of use;
- Providing data to respective Ministries, as required by them;
- Providing raw materials for farmers for planting, through commercial banks, enabling loans for the stimulation and improvement of farming produce;
- Coordinating interaction with the NGO sector that supports agricultural activities and ensures close cooperation with agricultural cooperatives;
- Providing professional trainings in the field of agriculture;
- Coordinating and monitoring of hunting activities;
- Providing assistance to farmers for their better organization, ensuring advices from experts, to get closer to donors and investors.

Instructions:

- All the steps for the implementation of this department's development policies must be available to citizens in the official languages;
- Annual plans and reports that deal with production and realization of autumn sowing, harvest and yield must be available in all official languages;
- All the statistical data have to be made available in the official languages prior to their publication;
- Any change in use of the land has to be archived at the same time in official languages;
- All the information and procedures on loans for farmers have to be made available to citizens in the official languages;
- Any opportunity for obtaining raw material for agriculture has to be available at the same time in the official languages for all citizens;
- Forms and certifications issued by this department have to be available in all official languages;
- For every request submitted by citizens in whichever of the official languages, the response has to be given in the same language the request was made in;
- Assistance to farmers has to be provided in their mother language, provided the language is one of the official ones;
- Information regarding the professional training of farmers has to be published at the same time in the official languages;
- When organizing trainings and professional education, adequate translation has to be ensured in the official languages for all participants.

Directorate for Public Services

Scope of the Directorate

- Deciding and monitoring the provision of public services, including supply with water, waste water, water-supply pipelines and waste water treatment;
- Organizing summer and winter maintenance, cleaning of local roads and sidewalks;
- Organizing provision and maintenance of public parks, green areas, public places and maintenance of cemeteries;

- Coordinating and approving activities of the public transport of passengers and goods, with public companies and associations of drivers of individual taxis and operators according to legal regulations, setting the transportation routes and travelling schedule for the public transportation of passengers;
- Cooperating with the police for the purpose of regulating the aspect of communication and increase of traffic safety, especially near schools and pre-school institutions;
- Implementing vertical and horizontal signage of existing roads and regulates the traffic in the municipality;
- Closing or blocking roads for use in special occasions (public holidays, special events of state and municipal interest, etc.);
- Supplying potable water through special tanks and reservoirs;
- Providing care services and/or elimination of stray dogs;
- Issuing licenses for use of public land in front of catering service shops;
- Providing and maintaining public lighting, advertising signs, illuminated advertising of companies and other different advertisements;
- Consulting with the central level about the construction, repair or changing of inter-municipal street signs that affect the municipality;
- Carrying out risk assessments within the municipal territory from natural disasters and other disasters, in accordance with the laws in effect, through administrative instructions, and based on risk assessments from natural disasters and other disasters.
- Planning and implementation of protection and rescue measures;
- Securing means for urgent temporary sheltering in cases of natural disasters and other disasters;
- Cooperating closely with the municipal security authorities, KFOR, police, KSF, NGOs, health institutions, public enterprises and citizens in prevention of fire, as well as in cases of other natural disasters.

Instructions:

- Information with regard to water supply, local services, difficulties and faults of equipment of public interest have to be provided to citizens in all official languages;
- All warnings and announcements in public places and green areas have to be written in the official languages;
- All activities regarding public transportation of passengers and goods have to be published in the official languages;
- All regular city transport routes, for which the license/permit has been issued by the Directorate for Public Services, have to be published at the same time in the official languages;
- All announcements and warnings for better traffic safety shall be published in the official languages of the respective municipality;
- If case of necessity to supply with drinkable water from a tank or reservoir, the public shall be informed at the same time in the official languages;
- With regard to treating stray dogs and all the respective measures taken in this regard the public shall be informed in the official languages;
- The requests for obtaining a permission for using public land shall be provided in the official languages;
- All the information regarding risk assessments from natural disasters shall be provided in all the official languages;
- Guidelines on all the measures to ensure protection of citizens shall be provided in the official languages, in accordance with the Law on the Use of Languages;

- Announcements with regard to temporary shelters due to natural risks and other risks have to be available in the official languages;
- Information regarding drivable roads and closed roads in the territory of the respective municipality shall be provided to citizens in the official languages;
- When carrying out their tasks and while providing services, civil servants in direct communication with citizens shall provide a communication in the mother language of the citizen, if that language is one of the official languages in the respective municipality.

Directorate for Inspection

Fields that fall under the competences of the Directorate for Inspection are:

- Inspection in the field of construction;
- Inspection in the field of trade;
- Inspection in municipal and traffic issues;
- Inspection in the field of environment, and
- Inspection in the field of hygiene and veterinary.

Scope of the Directorate

- Inspecting construction, installations, renovations, expansions, modifications, transformations, demolitions, excluding ordinary maintenance of buildings, for which no construction permit is required;
- Inspecting technical documentation (construction designs, construction permits, building licenses);
- Inspecting building safety measures and conditions, as well as traffic safety measures around these buildings;
- Inspecting commercial buildings, industrial buildings and warehouses;
- Inspecting work spaces and other buildings;
- Organizing inspection of adherence to the working hours of commercial businesses, inspection of the data on the origin of the goods, inspection of the calibration of scales, inspection of commercial sales-purchases books;
- Inspecting the adherence of business entities to their obligations of for putting company titles in their stores;
- Supervising illegal connections in the public water supply network by natural and legal persons, preventing misuse of drinkable water for washing streets or cars, filling wells, or watering gardens;
- Undertaking measures for protecting the health of the population from harmful effects of tobacco products and smoking of tobacco in public places.

Instructions:

- Officials of this Directorate, when carrying out construction inspections, shall provide the opportunity to communicate with the parties in their mother language, if that language is one of the official languages;
- During the inspection and approval of the technical documentation for construction of buildings, construction permits and permits for using the buildings, requests in any language

must be accepted, if the language is one of the official languages, or a language in official use in the respective municipality, and the request shall be addressed in the same language;

- ❑ During the inspection of the safety measures in the buildings, as well as measures for traffic safety close to these buildings, attention must be paid that all the signs are put up in the official languages;
- ❑ During the inspection of commercial and industrial buildings, the communication in the mother language of the parties shall be ensured, if that language is one of the official languages;
- ❑ During the inspection of the working hours, the data on the origin of the goods, inspection of commercial records and other obligations in trade and industrial activities, documents in any official language of the respective municipality shall be accepted, and mutual communication shall be ensured in the language of the party;
- ❑ During the inspection and controls on the misuse of drinkable water by natural and legal persons, the communication with the parties shall be ensured in their language, if that language is one of the official languages in the respective municipality;
- ❑ All protective measures from harmful gases, tobacco smoke and smoking of tobacco in public places shall be written in the official languages;
- ❑ All undertaken punitive measures shall be translated into the official languages prior to sending them for further proceedings;
- ❑ All complaints and objections, in any of the official languages of the respective municipality shall be accepted.
- ❑ All the requests shall be answered in the same language as they were submitted, if that language is one of the official languages in the respective municipality.

Recommendations for Central Institutions

- Central level institutions have to enforce the Language Policy Network by involving independent mechanisms to protect the rights of citizens, and by involving civil society organizations to improve the quality of all language policies in every municipality;
- Central level institutions must ensure more funds for the Office of the Language Commissioner to improve the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages;
- It is necessary to amend and supplement the Law on the Use of Languages, and the amendment of the administrative instructions. By doing so, punitive measures for breaching and violating the Law would be set clearly, resulting in a more qualitative implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages and in an increase of the executive competence of the Office of the Language Commissioner. Through Administrative Instructions the implementation of the Law shall be specified together with the set deadlines.
- Central institutions should have better a relationship with local institutions by way of the Law on the Use of Languages. Central institutions should respect the official languages in communicating with local authorities, contributing to the quality of adherence to the Law on Use of Languages, which should be reciprocal from both levels.
- It is necessary to find ways for recognizing and rewarding local entities that respect the Law on the Use of Languages to encourage other municipalities to also find ways to improve the quality of implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages.
- Interpreters and civil servants should be trained on the knowledge of the official languages throughout the territory of Kosovo.

- Employees that provide services for citizens in an official language that is not their mother tongue must be encouraged and recognized – compensated as appropriate;
- Local languages (non-native languages) should be taught in primary and secondary schools – at least as an elective subject if it is not possible to introduce it as a mandatory subject;
- Set specific motivating measures for universities in Kosovo that establish departments for students of other communities in their mother tongue languages.

Recommendations for the Office of the Language Commissioner

- Increase monitoring of the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages;
- Publish all findings and results of research in order to increase transparency and trust among citizens;
- The OLC shall organize regular meetings with communities, for citizens to be informed about the work of the OLC, and for the OLC to collect information about the problems and difficulties of citizens, in terms of practicing the right to use mother tongue languages which are also one of the official languages;
- The OLC shall work towards increased promotion of its work to raise awareness amongst citizens on practicing their rights;
- In every institution, instructions for submitting complaints should be displayed in a visible place, in order for citizens to be able to speak up if they think that they have been threatened or that their language rights have been violated;
- The OLC shall increase cooperation with civil society organizations which can be a bridge to citizens, in order to enhance the implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages.

Recommendations for the International Community

- Assist in organizing language courses for all citizens, especially for the employees who are directly providing services to citizens – in cooperation with civil society organizations and Kosovo institutions;
- Encourage and stimulate local institutions in order to fully implement the Law on the Use of Languages – through grants;
- Provide support to local and central institutions in overcoming identified problems in implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages through a mechanism involving interpreters;
- Support the exchange of best practices with countries that have experience with multilingual systems - in cooperation with civil society organizations and Kosovo institutions;
- Provide more funds for civil society organizations in order to directly deal with the promotion of the Law on the Use of Languages and promotion of the initiatives of the OLC.

My Language, My Right, My Opportunity

Even after school instruction on writing skills, where to use uppercase or lowercase letters, where to use a full stop, comma or other punctuation mark, is a distant memory, language will still be needed. In fact, opportunities for flexibility and complexity open up horizons and give space to operate with the language. Language teaches people to respect other cultures and alphabets, increasing understanding and respect for people that speak different languages.

Often when writing, we face dilemmas on how to write a word or we simply get confused about the alignment of the general structures of the sentences. Orthography is a set of conventions

for how to write in a given language. It assists with communications and this handbook seeks to help improve communications in Kosovo across many languages.

Language prompts awareness, the sharing of opinions and stances, and the visibility of people, events and occurrences. Therefore, it is very important to be able to use our mother tongue language in the interests of respecting human rights and protecting the dignity of each citizen in Kosovo. Therefore, it is very important to properly implement the only Law that guarantees the right to use the language.

Through this, Kosovo demonstrates the representation of the principle of equality. Avoiding discrimination against any ethnicity is a fundamental principle of using these Guidelines for Effective Implementation of the Law on the Use of Languages in Local Self-Government Institutions in Kosovo. This Handbook is intended to advise, recommend and teach how to respect fundamental human rights through the use and respect of alternative languages. Language preservation is becoming increasingly vulnerable. Apart from a weak education system and a lack of reading materials in mother tongue languages, English is becoming increasingly universal and incorporated in day-to-day interactions. This could result in further and drastic declines of the use of mother tongue languages. Use and preservation of official languages on a greater scale is very important for preserving the cultural identity of Kosovo.

Therefore, Kosovo's institutions must familiarize themselves with the Law on the Use of Languages, through which we may educate members of all communities on the importance of the use of official languages, enhancing understanding among citizens, neighbors and colleagues.