

TRANSITIONING TO LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

An Evaluation of the USAID/OTI Program in Kosovo



Submitted to:
United States Agency for
International Development
Bureau of Humanitarian Response
Office of Transition Initiatives
Kosovo Transition Initiative

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Cover and Layout Design:

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Cover Photos:

- Left** Young Kosovar women singing at inauguration of newly expanded school in Ferizaj (Photo Credit: Robert Morin)
- Top Right** Radio announcer at KTI-funded broadcasting station in Prizren (Photo Credit: Robert Morin)
- Bottom Right** Installation of new electrical transformer financed through KTI grant (Photo Credit: Courtesy of IOM Kosovo)

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November 2001

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United States Agency for International Development
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Kosovo Transition Initiative
Washington, DC

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ACRONYMS

BHR	Bureau for Humanitarian Response
CIC	Community Improvement Council
ENI	Europe and the New Independent States
FY	Fiscal Year
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board (ProMedia)
KFOR	Kosovo Forces
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army (Albanian acronym is UCK)
KTI	Kosovo Transition Initiative (OTI Kosovo)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
USG	United States Government

An Executive Summary

The role of OTI in Kosovo was to bridge USAID’s humanitarian relief efforts with a long-term development program. OTI’s interventions in Kosovo spanned a period of approximately three years, from 1988 to 2001. However, it experienced significant periods of time when program activities were severely curtailed and even halted for reasons of security.

OTI’s goal in Kosovo, as an agent of transition from relief to long-term development, was to initiate, reestablish or expand democratic political processes. To achieve this goal, OTI through the Kosovo Transition Initiative, chose to maximize the number of Kosovars involved in and recognizing the value of participation in decision making and the future development of democracy in Kosovo.

This document is an evaluation of OTI’s program in Kosovo. Its purpose is to tell the story of OTI in Kosovo and to provide a critical eye for use in planning future programming in countries where OTI is considering establishing offices. In doing so, the evaluation team consulted the existing body of documentation and conducted extensive interviews with Washington and Kosovo-based OTI staff and key KTI partners. More importantly, in order to determine the extent to which KTI contributed to building democratic political processes, the team developed and used an evaluation framework model that illustrates the extent of KTI’s impact. The model affords OTI the opportunity of moving beyond reliance on anecdotal information in determining success by introducing a greater degree of objectivity in measurement than had previously existed.

Over the course of the KTI program, over \$15 million in transition assistance was programmed. Approximately 80% of program funds were devoted to developing political processes at the community level. It also is the program area in which the greatest impact was achieved. Communities now have locally elected governance structures, grassroots organizations articulating needs to elected officials, accountability and transparency becoming more important issues, and issues of diversity in representation being addressed.

KTI also contributed significantly to the development of the media sector in Kosovo and achieved similar levels of impact with just under 15% of program funds.

This evaluation examines these results as well as other programmatic areas. In general, it concludes that KTI was successful in fulfilling its mandate of providing transition assistance and in handing over its program to the USAID Mission. The evaluation also brings to light that the success of KTI was due in large part to an excellent understanding among KTI and Mission staffs of the role of transition assistance in USAID’s overarching program objectives. Finally, and most importantly, the evaluation highlights the need for OTI to bring a greater degree of structure to transition programming, in order to more objectively determine achievement of results.



IN CONSIDERING AN EVALUATION

Purpose

This is the final program evaluation of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives' (OTI) work in Kosovo. ARD was contracted to conduct an objective, external evaluation of OTI's Kosovo Transition Initiative (KTI). The evaluation examined the three key programmatic areas of KTI's work: grassroots community participation, local media development, and non-governmental organization (NGO) development. An examination of management issues was also conducted as they relate to increased or decreased program efficiency and effectiveness.

The purpose of this evaluation is to tell the story of OTI in Kosovo, but also to provide a critical eye for use in planning future programming in countries where OTI is considering establishing offices. KTI provides an excellent platform to examine what the organization has learned, how it can more effectively monitor and evaluate activities, and how its work fits into the broader framework of USAID's work worldwide.

The evaluation was conducted in a relatively short time frame. The team worked in Kosovo from September 5 – 22. The events of September 11 however, severely impacted the team's ability to conduct interviews in Pristina and moreover to travel into the field.

Transition Program – Mandates and Roles

In 1994, USAID initiated a new area of programming to provide quick response to "transitioning" democracies. This new initiative was called the Office of Transition Initiatives and was envisioned as a stepping stone between the Agency's

traditional humanitarian relief aid and long-term development missions.

OTI's mission is "to help local partners advance peaceful, democratic change in conflict-prone countries."¹ OTI's country-specific programs have a goal of placing staff on the ground to assess the particular situation and implement hands-on programming to bridge the gap between crisis and development.

The situation in post-conflict Kosovo was ripe for OTI's program. OTI staff had been active in the pre-conflict phase with programs aimed at conflict prevention. In the wake of the conflict however, OTI's staff was poised to enter Kosovo in the emergency phase, seeking opportunities outside the humanitarian relief area to assist communities with immediate needs and begin thinking about longer-term concerns.

Throughout the program, OTI's staff struggled with the definition of "transition." Although working relationships with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and later long-term development Mission staff were generally excellent, OTI Kosovo's lack of clear definition of transition occasionally came into conflict with its partner offices. Early on, for example, KTI field staff's desire to work in the area of shelter created some problems with OFDA, and in some cases their commitment to housing projects was beyond their scope of expertise or manpower. Similarly, KTI involvement in media caused tensions with the Mission's long-term media development strategies, particularly when KTI staff committed to projects in areas beyond the capacity of technical expertise.

¹ USAID/OTI website.
http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/oti/

In general, OTI describes “transition” programming in statements similar to the following:

When a crisis occurs in a priority country, OTI designs a country program to address the fundamental constraints that inhibit governance and economic functioning. Each country program has a set of objectives, a set of program performance indicators, an implementation strategy for accomplishing the program objectives, an approved budget, and a plan for periodic program reviews and exit strategy.²

These words adequately describe the fundamental policy priorities for the United States government (USG) in Kosovo under which KTI functioned and the general structure under which the program functioned. This evaluation will seek to examine more closely KTI’s monitoring and evaluation techniques in terms of implementation within the stated framework.

Determining Impact

During the process of evaluation, one key question that is often raised relates to program impact. In addressing the issue of impact, evaluators look for direct links between cause and effect. In the realm of development however, impact carries with it a sense of looking at effect over long periods of time, generally from 10 to 20 years. Given that OTI’s operational mandate in a given country is usually two years and that impact is an identified issue, it was necessary to modify the scope of impact’s customary parameters in carrying out this evaluation. To do so, a framework was constructed for examining KTI’s contribution to developing to democratic political

process during a transitory phase from humanitarian relief efforts to a longer-term development program. With this overarching framework as a guide it became possible to review each of KTI’s programmatic areas and determine the extent to which each contributed to the building of democratic process in Kosovo.

Structuring the Evaluation Methodology

In order to effectively examine and evaluate KTI’s program, the evaluation team conducted interviews with current and former program staff in Washington, DC, and Kosovo. Given the flexible nature of OTI programming and the philosophy of fast, direct assistance for effective programming, as well as a relatively short time frame for program implementation, there is often inadequate time for development of an overarching implementation and monitoring strategy. As a result, evaluation under such established guidelines is difficult. In order to build a more structured approach to stated program goals, objectives, and activities, the evaluation team conducted an evaluation workshop with KTI staff in Pristina. The results helped build a clearer picture of the conditions under which OTI attempted to change behavior or impact attitudes in development of post-conflict civil society in Kosovo.

This report will begin by providing some historical and political background on the conflict in Kosovo followed by an examination of the program objective, goals, and activities. The final half of the report provides the substance of the evaluation, findings, and recommendations.

² KTI Final Evaluation Scope of Work.

OTI IN KOSOVO – THE CONTEXT

In the Midst of Conflict

In 1989, under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia enforced a harsh regime in the Serbian Republic's province of Kosovo. This regime was designed to control what the Belgrade government perceived as a growing threat of Albanian nationalism in the province. In context, the Yugoslav federation had reached a fragile state after the death of long-term leader and strongman, Marshall Tito. Threats of disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia and a growing Serb nationalist movement built on rhetoric regarding threats to Serb minorities living in Croatia, Kosovo, and other parts of Yugoslavia, contributed to the crackdown in Kosovo.

In addition to the general nature of these building tensions, Kosovo was unique within Yugoslavia. The federation had struggled throughout its history with governance of the province, whose population was over ninety percent ethnic Albanian and spoke a completely different language and followed significantly different traditions than other citizens of Yugoslavia. The culture, language, and fierce independence of the Albanian people had long been a problem for the government in Belgrade, which wavered between providing more autonomy for the province and managing strict controls to thwart attempts to assert independence from central authorities.

Furthermore, the relationship between the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia and its province of Kosovo included an intense mythology revolving around the historic Battle of the Blackbirds, considered by the Serbs to be a defining moment in their historical development and resistance to Ottoman domination. Kosovo was also

considered the heartland of Serbian culture and the sacred home of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Thus, as Serbian nationalism developed, Kosovo was the logical place for the Milosevic regime to assert early repressive actions and dominance.

In 1989, the regime in Belgrade began to enforce a systematic, apartheid-like campaign to disenfranchise Albanians in every aspect of life. Albanians were dismissed or forced to resign from state posts across all sectors, from schools to hospitals to government. Police were given free reign to punish perceived troublemakers, enforce curfews, harass, and generally enforce an atmosphere of fear. Use of Albanian language, cultural symbols, or other expressions of culture were controlled.

In response, the Albanian leadership in Pristina determined that nonviolent protest would be the most effective method of resistance. Drawing on a strong tradition of family networks and pride in the Albanian community, an elaborate parallel system of schooling, health, and other public functions was organized across the entire province. A government in exile based in Europe was created, which used small cells of secret leadership in Kosovo to manage the parallel system. Although some "taxes" were collected through this system, the activities were largely supported by contributions from the diaspora community living in the United States and Europe.

In the period between 1989 and 1998, the passive resistance effort was largely unsuccessful. International attention focused on wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, which began in 1992 and

were followed by huge international assistance efforts. During this period, violent resistance was not considered by the majority of Albanians living in Kosovo due to visions of the war destruction wrought on their neighbors to the north. However, as time dragged on and the situation in Kosovo grew more repressive, a small violent resistance movement began to grow in the countryside.

Where the original, passive resistance movement to Serb domination had been led by intellectuals and political leaders based in the cities, new tactics emerged from rural areas. The new approach focused on surprise attacks on police and other official Serbian institutions. Known as the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA), it is unclear exactly when the movement began. Originally comprising less than one hundred men, Serb attempts to destroy the movement contributed to its rapid growth. By early 1998, the rebel Kosovar army was engaged in a full-scale guerilla war with the Yugoslav army and police.

Crisis Brews

OTI began programming in Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro) in July 1997. Although the USAID Mission in Belgrade conducted democracy programs designed to support moderate leadership in Serbia, OTI's program was designed to reach more deeply into civil society to support the growth of citizen's initiatives. While the program was based in Belgrade, it supported programming throughout both republics and their constituent provinces. Working conditions in Serbia and Montenegro were difficult, as international pressure to unseat Milosevic mounted in the wake of the wars in Bosnia and Croatia. In addition, increasing tension between Serbia and Montenegro after the election of more moderate Montenegrin leadership in 1997 increased interest in

supporting other forces aligned against the Milosevic regime.

After conducting a specific assessment of Kosovo in late October/early November 1998, OTI opened an office in Pristina. The stated objective of the new program was to "promote local participation in community decision making."³ Unfortunately, extremely repressive conditions in Kosovo made the work difficult. KTI first attempted to engage both Serb and Albanian participants in programs aimed chiefly at media and NGO activities. Although there were some measures of success, the Serb community in Kosovo generally felt supported by their government and thus found participation irrelevant. In contrast, the Albanian community recognized great needs in terms of material assistance projects as well as in the media and NGO sectors, but security concerns and lack of support from Serb authorities made anything outside of small grants in the media and NGO sectors next to impossible.

Meanwhile, as fighting in the countryside grew, international attention focused on the tiny province out of concern for a spread of the conflict and growing humanitarian outcry. Although the Milosevic regime insisted the conflict was an internal problem, requiring strong measures to destroy a dangerous "terrorist" movement, the international community viewed the conflict as a continuation of Serbia's nationalist policies, which could potentially ignite the southern Balkans.

Diplomatic pressure on Belgrade resulted in a series of peace conferences held in Rambouillet, France. When negotiations between Serb and Albanian leaders failed in early March due to Belgrade's refusal to initial a peace agreement, the Serbs

³ BHR/ENI Assessment Mission Report, November 1998.

were given ultimatums by the international interlocutors to cease military actions in Kosovo. Instead, Belgrade initiated a full military operation designed to drive out Kosovar terrorists. In response international observers were withdrawn from the province and on 28 March 1999, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began what would be more than three months of bombing in Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia.

As the bombing campaign commenced KTI's offices were closed and staff located in Pristina were evacuated to Skopje, Macedonia. Administrative and managerial staff based in Belgrade were evacuated to Budapest, Hungary, along with other USAID Mission staff.⁴ The program continued to function minimally in Macedonia, building relationships with Kosovar refugees who had fled the surge of violence in Kosovo.

Crisis to Transition

Kosovo, after international intervention, presented an entirely new foundation on which the KTI program could be built. Post-conflict Kosovo was a virtual vacuum of leadership, governance, and order. Security concerns from Serb police and other Yugoslav authorities were gone. In place of the Serb authorities were a confusing array of self-appointed local leaders and United Nations appointed administrators, none of which seemed to draw legitimacy from local communities. The presence of international donors resulted in a mushrooming of local NGOs, which drew their mandates from donor priorities versus community needs. Destruction of housing stock and food resources left citizens focused on individual

humanitarian needs instead of community concerns. An atmosphere of revenge and fear among Albanians resulted in killings and the exile of the majority of Serbs and other minority populations living in the province. Finally, destruction from war and generally poor maintenance from 1989–1998 meant that the needs for reconstruction were overwhelming and basic utilities like water, electricity, and communication barely functioned.

Facing these daunting challenges, KTI began its program with focus on three areas:

1. Media
2. NGOs
3. Citizen Participation

The theme of the program would remain true to the original objective. The activities however, would be greatly expanded and increased as the post-conflict emergency phase passed and a return to order in daily life resumed.

⁴ Background provided via telephone interview with former KTI administrative manager Nives Mattich, 1 September 2001, Washington, DC.

OTI IN KOSOVO - THE PROGRAM

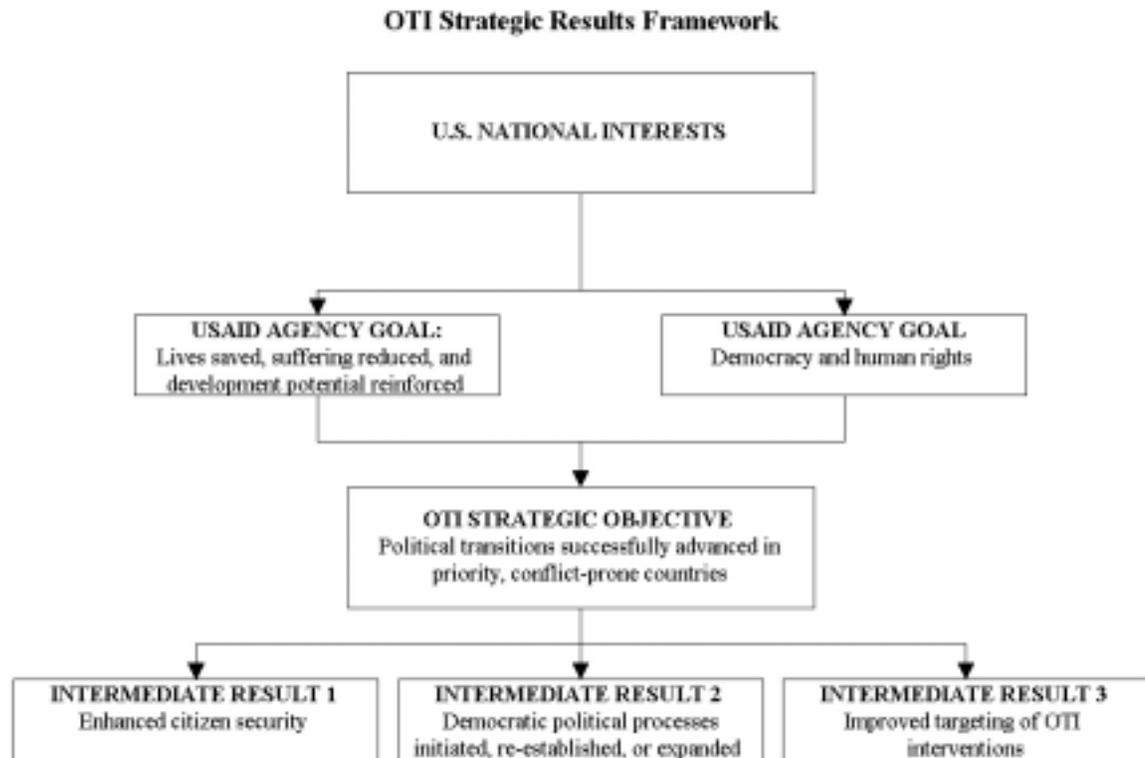
Setting the Goal and Outlining the Approach

Prior to March 1999, the KTI program goal was “to promote local participation in community decision making.”⁵ This program goal was derived in the context of U.S. policy goals for the USAID mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which generally sought to expand democracy and moderate leadership in opposition to the nationalist Milosevic regime. At that time, conflict aversion through citizen initiatives and support of moderate leaders throughout Serbia was the focus of activities.

Following international intervention in Kosovo and resumption of the KTI program in July 1999, the general goal remained the same, but the focus shifted

away from Belgrade to Pristina. The goal of normalizing life in post-conflict Kosovo and promoting moderate Kosovar leadership focused policy and programming on local communities. In addition, security circumstances allowed for a completely different implementation strategy. Instead of programming primarily in the media and NGO sectors in Pristina, the focus of execution now shifted to community-based infrastructure projects and citizen participation through Community Improvement Councils (CICs) throughout the province.

Shifting circumstances in Kosovo led to shifting programmatic concerns, but reporting and monitoring for the program still related back to OTI’s Strategic Results Framework, as designed in 1999.



⁵ BHR/ENI Assessment Mission Report, November 1998.

Under this framework, KTI's program traveled through three distinct phases in FY 1999, which reflected the changing circumstances in the province:

Phase 1, Crisis Aversion (October–March): KTI funded NGO and media projects in Kosovo and Serbia promoting anti-war actions.

Phase 2, Programming in Exile (May–June): In Macedonia, KTI supported the leadership structure in refugee camps, promoted better relations between camps and local Macedonian communities.

Phase 3, Kosovo Emergency/Re-Entry Phase (July–September): KTI returned to Kosovo and began working in communities to implement community improvement projects. Media and NGO projects were managed by KTI Pristina.

In October 1999, program goals and objectives were reviewed by KTI staff at a retreat in Kosovo. The overarching program objective agreed by the staff was:

Democratic political processes initiated, reestablished, or expanded.

This fell within the intermediate results of OTI's strategic results framework and provided what was felt to be a reasonable goal given the circumstances on the ground in Kosovo. A sub-objective of that goal became the mission statement most frequently cited by KTI staff:

To maximize the number of Kosovars involved in and recognizing the value of participating in decision making and the future development of democracy in Kosovo.

Beyond understanding the objective, long-term activity planning was not engaged by staff or management. This followed OTI's philosophy of flexibility and response to changing circumstances on the ground. Established programming continued in the community, media, and NGO sectors with primary responsibility for the community sector devolved to the field staff. The driving force behind project grants was a desire to build trust and community participation by showing that KTI could realize desired projects in a reasonable time frame. Media and NGO programming remained centered with management staff in Pristina until April 2000 when the schedule for local elections allowed a more dovetailed approach at the regional level for programming in all three sectors.

In the months leading up to the October 2000 municipal-level elections, voter participation became the driving force behind KTI programming. To this end, responsibility for all three program areas was shifted into the seven regional offices. CICs, local NGOs, and local media outlets were encouraged to submit projects for pre-election activities. In the post-election phase, KTI programming was driven by a desire to build relationships between citizens and elected leaders. Therefore, work with CICs was dropped as a primary focus. Community leaders interested in funding for projects were referred by KTI staff to municipal assembly members to gain approval and acceptance of the project at the municipal level.

The phases of programming from April 2000 through September 2001 in summary are:

Phase 1, Pre-Election (April-October 2000): Local media and NGOs receive grants, technical support. Community election activities include local debates, radio call-in shows, and public service announcements.

Phase 2, Post-Election (October 2000–July 2001): Newly elected municipal assemblies included in community improvement grant approval process. Ties between elected officials and communities encouraged.

Phase 3, Close Out (July–September 2001): Focus on completing final cycle of projects, close out, and final hand over to USAID Mission.

Designing Activities

Throughout the program, the three components remained the same, but activities were designed to fit the changing circumstances on the ground in Kosovo. Although the citizen participation, media, and NGO components were originally designed as three complementary elements, they functioned largely independently until April 2000 when the province-wide municipal elections provided a framework for coordinated activities. A detailed description of each program component and a timeline of OTI's involvement in Kosovo follow.

Media Component

From the outset of the KTI in November 1998, the KTI program had a defined media component. Pre-war media activities were considered essential in providing both Serb and ethnic Albanian citizens free and unbiased news in the highly restrictive pre-conflict atmosphere. In addition, support for moderate journalists and media sources was considered an essential part of conflict-prevention.

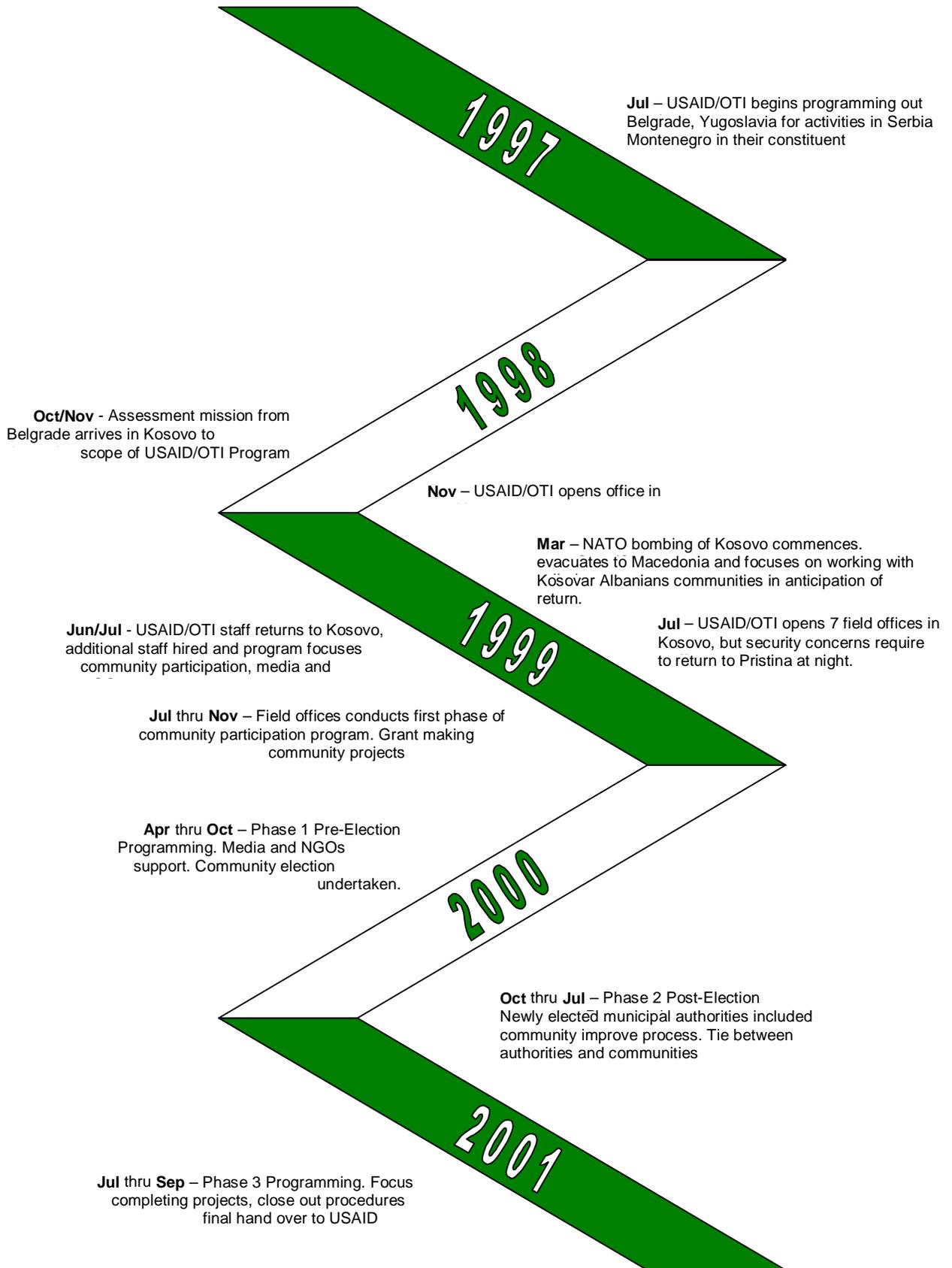
Pre-war substantial grants were provided to several Kosovar Albanian newspapers as well as radio stations. These grants provided support for Internet access, as well as limited print and broadcast capacity. Support for multi-ethnic radio contact was also provided. In addition,

Radio B-21 in Belgrade received substantial funding to support anti-war broadcasting.

In the pre-war phase, media programming was designed to provide better information to the community. In the post-war phase, the activities were designed to tie the media more closely to the community with a goal of not only providing more objective information, but also serving as a forum for citizen concerns. The program faced several challenges, however. First, local media outlets were largely not functioning due to lack of equipment and funding. Second, KTI field staff were overburdened with implementing quick impact community improvement projects designed to establish goodwill and create strong ties to the community.

As a result, management staff in Pristina took control of media activities and devolved little authority to the regional offices. Program activities included highly technical equipment support for radio and television, and equipment packages for local radio stations. Unfortunately this resulted in the initial phase of the media program having little direct connection to the larger component dedicated to citizen participation. This gap became critical in later phases of the program designed to encourage more open citizen participation in the election process. Relationships had to be built by regional staff who had not developed this kind of working relationship with local media. Support for local stations had arrived with few conditions and no additional training. Coordination between KTI and Mission personnel, which might have filled some gaps, had been minimal. As a result of these factors and lack of technical support, much of the equipment provided to local media outlets was ineffective or required large investments of staff time and additional financial resources to correct.

Timeline of OTI's Involvement in Kosovo



These issues recognized, however, the importance of these early activities cannot be underscored. The network of local stations supported early in the program provided the broadcasting foundation on which later election-related projects could be built. The network of regional radio outlets supported by KTI became crucial in creating an open forum for debate and discussion in the pre- and post-election phase. Moderate journalists were recruited to host debates between local candidates. Debates were broadcast live for citizens. Call-in shows with candidates and leading citizens were featured broadcasts.



**VOTE...
FOR A BETTER KOSOVO**

Man: Hey my woman, you are going to vote for who I tell you to. Do we understand each other?

Woman: You keep thinking that way my husband, but for sure I will vote for the person I want to. That's my right!

(Cover Page from targeted educational material on voting - published by a KTI's grantees.)

The shift in activities was also accompanied by new personnel at the Pristina level. A media program manager and technical support expert were hired in

July 1999. This team completed an assessment of KTI's media project in August 2000 and brought beneficiaries from across the province together to discuss technical, licensing, training, and other needs with a variety of donors, international organizations with media oversight responsibilities, and Kosovo Forces (KFOR) counterparts.⁶ This coordination allowed beneficiaries to finally connect with international agents responsible for licensing and training, two key areas that had hampered their operation.

Sustainability was also an issue of concern for KTI-supported media outlets. According to the Media Affairs Department of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), there are currently 70 licensed radio stations, of which 50 are transmitting; 24 licensed television stations, of which 10 are transmitting; and 7 daily newspapers.⁷ This huge number of outlets covers a relatively small media market and clearly represents large investments of donor funding versus locally funded initiatives. In August 2000, a sustainability study of KTI beneficiary radio stations was conducted by the East-West Management Institute. The study reviewed 14 out of 15 KTI-supported stations and primary results indicated eight of the fourteen were likely able to support themselves over time from advertising and other sources of local funding.⁸ Although the reports indicated that some continued transitional donor funding was probably necessary, the long-term prognosis was good.

⁶ Interview with Vjollca Krasniqi, KTI media officer, 13 September 2001, Pristina.

⁷ *Local Capacity Building: An Assessment of USAID/Kosovo's Efforts*, December 2000.

⁸ Interview with Fron Nazi, E-W Management Institute, 6 September 2001, Pristina.

NGO Component

Prior to NATO bombing, the NGO sector played a key role in organizing civil society in Kosovo. Human rights, humanitarian, and youth NGOs were key players in supporting community needs and in bringing moderate leadership voices to the forefront in both ethnic groups.⁹ International donors, including KTI, supported these efforts.

Following the conflict and broader international intervention in Kosovo, donor aid for NGOs increased significantly. Prior to the conflict, approximately 15 to 20 well-established and experienced NGOs were operating in the province, for the most part from a base in Pristina.¹⁰ In the year 2000, the number of registered NGOs surpassed 570.¹¹ International donors largely drove this huge swell in numbers and some donors focused on promoting agendas that were not always in line with community priorities.

Many fledgling NGOs took advantage of this situation in order to leverage donor funding for operational costs versus activities. Most of these nascent organizations were able to secure initial funding without well-developed mission statements, recognized role in the community, or organizational plans. KTI's focus on providing grant funding to NGOs for broad-based community projects that incorporated democratic development proved problematic for the inexperienced and unfocused groups. In addition, even experienced organizations were losing focus and had difficulty

adjusting their missions to the changed circumstances and plethora of donor requirements and goals tied to funding conditions. An attempt was made to sensitize NGO leadership to community-based needs by encouraging CICs to reach out to NGO representatives but the success of this attempt was negligible.

In general, KTI field staff did not support grants for NGOs in the regions. During interviews regarding this subject, staff indicated that the organizational capacity of NGOs was low and few donors had initiated capacity-building support programs. Most NGOs sought operational funds for undefined objectives and therefore few clear activities that might have been of interest for KTI support.

KTI did support grants for Pristina-based NGOs with province-wide activities. For example, the Forum, a Pristina-based youth organization, received funding to organize and support pre- and post-elections debate activities. The Forum's mission statement incorporated ideals of broad citizen participation and activities included various media projects designed to increase accountability of elected and appointed officials.¹² KTI also supported regional partners of the Forum in execution of their activities wherever possible, hoping to build on the Forum's desire to work in coalition with organizations across the province.

Citizen Participation Component

This was by far the largest part of the overall KTI program in Kosovo. Citizen participation included three stages that linked closely to the situation on the ground in Kosovo at the time of execution.

⁹ Serb organizations were largely based in Belgrade and operated in Kosovo

¹⁰ Interview with Dina Cernebreku, former KTI NGO program manager, 14 September 2001, Pristina.

¹¹ Registered by the UN provisional government as reported in *Local Capacity Building: An Assessment of USAID/Kosovo's Efforts*, December 2000.

¹² Interview with Jetemir Balaj, CEO & Co-founder of The Forum, 21 September 2001, Pristina.

Stage 1: Community Improvement Councils (CICs)

This stage evolved over time and varied slightly from region to region as circumstances for implementation dictated. The goal of this activity was to connect individual citizens with the decision-making process for community-level reconstruction projects supported by international donors.

In the emergency period (July-December 1999), the process of community participation was relatively unstructured. During this period, KTI management and field staff primarily focused on quick impact projects which would build trust in the communities. Since KTI did not support large-scale shelter initiatives or other types of relief programs, building a



Community members contributing manpower for a local infrastructure improvement project. (Photo Credit: IOM Kosovo)

sense of trust in the communities was a difficult but necessary consideration in the face of high expectations resulting from promises made by other donors. Working in coordination with BHR's other component organization, the OFDA, some of the emergency humanitarian needs were met in communities, but KTI's focus on projects

benefiting a broader base of citizens and on citizen participation remained the primary task at hand.

During the KTI staff retreat in October 1999, regions shared experiences regarding methods used to encourage participation and decision making at the community level. Various techniques included working with self-appointed local authorities, seeking out political party representatives, calling on village elders, and convening spontaneous town meetings. Most of the regions experienced similar problems in promoting and working with CICs. The most significant problem was that of older males dominating the decision-making process. A related problem was the nonexistence of broad-based representation as self-appointed powerbrokers sought to dominate. Nevertheless, diluting that power in favor of participation remained a clear goal of the activity.

After October 1999, a more structured approach was adopted for the CIC process. Participation of women was made a prerequisite for grant approval. In addition, organizers of initial town meetings were encouraged to incorporate the broadest base of representation possible. From this broad base a CIC would be elected. That CIC would then be responsible for calling subsequent meetings to inform citizens about progress on the project. Characteristics of a typical CIC included an average membership of 15, a delimited geographic region, a diverse representation including youth and women, a focus on the process of participation and decision making versus the material reward of the project.¹³

Other lessons learned about community participation and CIC projects included a

¹³ KTI Implementation Guide 1 May-August 2000.

clear difference between rural and urban communities. The CIC model did not work for cities and larger towns. Citizens in larger population centers were unable to agree on priorities except in a few cases where CICs operated at the neighborhood level. Effective representation of all citizens' interests was also difficult if not impossible to achieve in an elected CIC. Some group or area always felt left out. At the staff retreat, KTI also concluded that large-scale urban projects such as electrification or supply of water were difficult to sustain. Problems involving maintenance and payment of utilities were pervasive. Overall, KTI learned to focus on smaller communities in rural areas as a result of early failures in urban communities.

In addition, the CIC model encountered difficulties when applied to minority communities. Attempts to initiate programs in these communities were mostly hampered by the fact that citizens were largely displaced from their original homes, meaning they had little "ownership" of or attachment to their current community. Early attempts to build trust, particularly in the Serb communities, were difficult due to general distrust of America and American initiatives. These barriers took time and initiative to break down. Where Albanian communities were constantly approaching KTI with new projects, minority communities required outreach.

Furthermore, in other communities, such as the various Roma enclaves, a tradition of community participation did not exist, requiring more effort in terms of working with the community to gain an understanding of how community investment and participation might be demonstrated. Therefore, although programming with minorities was an objective for all regional offices, the accepted CIC model was difficult to

apply across the diversity of ethnic groups and thus projects in these communities were slower to implement.

Finally, at the October 1999 retreat, KTI adopted a requirement for community contributions to project financing. KTI always had and continued to maintain a policy of not paying for labor as part of its grant funding and as a result communities often contributed the labor themselves or solicited donations to cover this cost. Levels of contributions varied regionally and by community, however. In deciding to leverage financial investments from communities, a sense of community ownership of the project was instilled and a commitment to maintenance strengthened. In addition, leveraging contributed to the feeling of community pride and achievement, which found widespread appeal, especially in Albanian communities. Based on these results, leveraging community investment became a key element of the grant approval process thereafter.

Stage 2: Election-Related Activities

During the summer and fall of 2000, KTI gradually distanced itself from CICs in preparation for the election of municipal officials. As a first step, KTI initiated a number of election related activities at the



KTI Ferizaj Field Office Staff Emine Qerkini and Brian Kelly discussing KTI-funded grant for school expansion with local government official. (Photo Credit: Robert Morin)

regional level which involved citizens, local media, and NGOs.

Initial activities included the completion of a CIC-based survey of voter opinions on various community issues that were intended to stimulate debate during the election campaign. This project was completed in coordination with OSCE's Elections Office and the UN's Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The completed "Voter's Voices" was published as an outline of Kosovar concerns and used by political parties, candidates, and international officials.

During the election campaign period a variety of activities were initiated in order to provide forums for citizens to address political candidates directly with their concerns. Candidate debates with representatives from all political parties were held in every region. In some regions separate debates were also held for women candidates, many of whom were first time candidates due to a newly mandated election law requiring that 30% of party lists include women.

Media coverage was encouraged for all election activities, and local media participation was excellent. Local journalists also participated as moderators in some events. In addition to the Pristina-based Forum, local student organizations and NGOs initiated activities and organized events. This was the first time all three KTI program component areas worked in a coordinated fashion. The framework of the elections provided a platform for citizens, media, and NGOs to work together in common activities.

Stage 3: Transition to Local Governance

Following the election of local municipal officials in October 2000, KTI staff determined that continued work with CIC structures would undermine locally

elected officials. The CICs were not official, elected bodies, and it was feared that continuing to work with them would empower a parallel network of community leaders with financial resources and decision making. As a result, KTI initiated a new process for project approval. When communities approached KTI with new projects, they were directed to municipal assembly presidents and committees with oversight on community improvement measures. Given the municipal-level involvement, KTI also increased its project funding level, so that larger projects could be considered. KTI staff followed up with municipal officials regarding community projects referred to the municipality. In coordination with local communities, meetings were held between communities and municipal officials to discuss projects, to clear up technical issues (such as land use), or to consolidate municipal budget contributions towards project implementation.

In some cases CICs continued to function after direct KTI involvement. Since village-level elections were not part of the internationally initiated and supervised election structure, CICs served as an interim representative structure in some areas. Often CIC structures acted as a liaison between local communities and other international donors. One legacy of the CIC process appears to have been increased member savvy on how to work with donors and local and international officials. To KTI's credit, some donors adopted the CIC model to better inform their community-level project priorities.

In this final stage of community improvement project funding, KTI continued to fund community-based priorities, but the process expanded to incorporate interaction between elected officials and community representatives. KTI also worked with local media,

NGOs, and community leaders to lobby for more open practices within the municipal structures. In several municipalities the number of municipal assembly meetings open to the public was increased from the minimum of two per year, as required under UN regulation 1244, to one per month. The presence of elected officials allowed KTI to incorporate elements of accountability into programming.

the initiation of long-term development programs. However, the details of how transition functions in a post-emergency phase and into long-term development, as well as strategies for the eventual integration into USAID's program and staff requires some refinement.

A Word About Transition Activities

USAID and KTI staffs began devoting to transition strategies in September 2000. That these "hand over" strategies became a focus early on is exemplary. Friendly working relationships at the management level also contributed heavily to this process, as did early recognition by the Mission Director of the value of KTI's programs.

KTI's community-based philosophy for infrastructure improvement projects was adopted by the Mission's long-term infrastructure development program. KTI's staff members were instrumental liaisons between USAID project managers, local officials, and communities.

Shortfalls in KTI media projects are being addressed by USAID grantees in terms of capacity building and training, and finally, some of KTI's NGO partners are serving as a valuable network in NGO capacity-building and advocacy programs.

Although smoother working relationships could be developed and better definition of OTI's "transitional" role may be necessary (particularly in the area of media); overall integration of OTI's program into USAID's strategic objective framework was successful. KTI provides an example of how OTI programs can assist with the transition between post-conflict emergency humanitarian aid and

FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

Agency Coordination

In 1994, USAID entered a new phase of institutional approach when it initiated the OTI with the specific mission of addressing the needs of “transitioning” democracies. Envisioned as a stepping stone between the Agency’s humanitarian relief aid and long-term development missions, OTI was a concept which has operationally met some difficulties as it struggles to find its place beside the more established and traditional roles of USAID programming.

At the crucial stage between crisis and development, OTI has attempted to define “transition” through a variety of program activities. Those activities range from conflict prevention/resolution to peace building projects, including but not limited to demobilization and civil-military relations, to community development through support for NGOs and media and small grant community improvement projects. Although the logic of this transitional approach is widely accepted, OTI programs in the field have sometimes come into conflict with other Agency programs or have suffered from a lack of clear overall strategy of how AID’s component parts fit together to achieve common goals.

In Kosovo many of the institutional conflicts were resolved due to the excellent working relationships of individuals on the ground. As a result, it is possible to look at KTI’s activities and how they helped to further define “transition” and the role of OTI in developing countries.

KTI Program Goals

Given the relatively short duration of OTI programming, objectives and results are formulated to be more immediately

achievable relative to the overarching and longer-term Agency goals. Recognizing the defined latitude of its interventions, OTI focuses on designing programs that successfully advance political transitions, regardless of the country in which it establishes a presence. To advance political transitions in Kosovo, OTI’s intent was to design programs that would contribute to “democratic political processes being initiated, reestablished, or expanded.”¹⁴ To operationalize this intent, KTI chose to “to maximize the number of Kosovars involved in, and recognizing the value of, participating in decision making and the future development of democracy in Kosovo.”¹⁵

In terms of the transition from relief to development in the context of the stated goals, three program areas were defined: citizen participation, NGO development, and media. KTI began its work in Kosovo in the emergency phase when OFDA’s relief mission was addressing its objective of saving lives through provision of basic humanitarian services such as emergency food, basic health needs and materials for winterization.

This was a difficult period for KTI as the pressure to initiate activities through grant making was high, but the reality of conditions on the ground did not necessarily fit within the three program areas. KTI staff often struggled to program funds in an atmosphere where individuals and communities were demanding projects relating to humanitarian needs versus needs in the wider KTI programmatically defined areas. This led to coordinating with OFDA on a few shelter projects, with

¹⁴ Intermediate Result 2 of the OTI Strategic Objective Framework.

¹⁵ USAID/BHR/OTI/Kosovo Program FY 2001 Budget.

KTI focusing on mobilizing local communities to help identify problem areas and specific humanitarian needs.

Despite the tendency to characterize this period as one fraught with difficulties, in retrospect, KTI's contribution was more important than realized at the time, particularly as it relates to coming to understand the role of community participation in building democratic processes. Through early efforts to involve communities in identifying problems and needs, KTI was able to refine its community involvement strategy, and very soon thereafter, began making community improvement grants. These grants not only helped establish the credibility of KTI in the regions but they provided a platform on which the CIC approach could be built. This eventually led to a strategy that fit more readily into the Agency's, and in general, the international community's focus on stability, restoring security, and stabilizing community services.

The early months of the KTI program were not unique in presenting a challenge to staff but to KTI's credit the issue of generating equitable community participation within a sustainable context was addressed. Aggressively encouraging communities to involve women and youth in determining priorities, followed by adopting a policy of compulsory in-kind or financial contributions as part of the grant application process, were contributing factors to establishing a sense of community ownership. Consequently, community ownership weighed heavily on maximizing the potential for sustainable community involvement in decision making.

Well into the program, the role of CICs as decision-making bodies came into question as municipal elections resulted in local governing entities. KTI reacted by shifting the community involvement focus to the newly elected body of

officials. Some CICs repositioned themselves as representatives of community interests while others disbanded. With the change in focus, KTI also had to also consider how best to begin planning for the close out or hand over of its program to the Mission. Here again KTI faced some challenges and realigned its approach to more coherently fit within the Mission's goal of achieving sustainable improvements in the province, both economically and socially. Sensitivity to the Mission's development strategies helped to avert potential programming conflicts and some program synergy was established.

Throughout the process of conducting this evaluation it was obvious KTI was identified or recognized almost solely for the innovative contributions it made in promoting participation through the CIC program. This mindset was encountered early on during interviews in Washington and on the ground in Kosovo. Interest in or concerns over the results and impact of the media and NGO programs tended to come almost exclusively from individuals most directly involved in their implementation. That the CIC program overshadows the media and NGO programs without obvious or objective reasoning became of immediate concern and in short order provoked more substantive questions surrounding overall program impact.

While KTI made extensive use of the *OTI Grant Database*, an impressive data tool and the subject of further discussion below, no framework existed by which regular evaluation against results and objectives could be measured. Moreover there was no mechanism to determine the degree to which KTI's transition assistance in Kosovo contributed to the Agency's focus on long-term economic development and social welfare. That recognized, the evaluators set about designing a structure to facilitate a

participatory assessment of KTI's impact and provide answers to the larger question of contributions to the transition initiative in Kosovo.

Program Impact

Although KTI produced regular field reports and utilized the *OTI Grant Database*, designed in Washington and used principally in the field to track grants funding, these reports did not lend themselves to results analysis other than determining efficiency in programming grant funds by period, region, and program area. Undeniably, extensive efforts were made to populate the database with additional data sets such as grant processing information and even evaluative information on each grant made, but the potential value of this information could not be exploited in determining results and objectives without a contextual evaluation framework. Subsequently, no information was collected regarding the baseline status of Kosovar society in terms of media, community participation, or NGO development. Program reports provided anecdotal information about communities and project activities, but the lack of baseline information made it difficult to evaluate the true impact of program activities in terms of results.

Given these circumstances, the evaluation team discussed methods of designing a framework and instrument to measure achievement of results and objectives and to shed light on program impact. The outcome of the discussion was the decision to structure an evaluation framework around OTI's Intermediary Result 2: "democratic political processes being initiated, reestablished, or expanded". The rationale behind this structure was that inherent to the result statement is the notion that democratic processes can evolve or devolve over time and thus pass through various phases of development. Using this logic set the

stage for determining the extent to which KTI's program contributed to initiating, reestablishing or expanding the democratic processes in Kosovo. Additionally, the logic, once transformed into an evaluation instrument, would contribute to the analysis of KTI's goal of "maximizing the number of Kosovars involved in, and recognizing the value of, participating in the development of democracy in Kosovo."

To further build the evaluation structure and instrument, the evaluators initially opted to capitalize on the participation of a wide representation of individuals from among KTI staff and its partners. However, time constraints narrowed the options to calling upon the KTI staff as a source of expertise. They would be tasked with describing the characteristics of the various phases in the development of democratic processes in the Kosovar context and then use those stages to determine the level of development of the processes in each of the seven regions where KTI worked.

During a one-day workshop the evaluators led the staff through a series of exercises, the first of which resulted in identifying stages associated with the development of democratic processes. However, instead of using the terminology employed in OTI's intermediary result (initiated, reestablished, and expanded) the participants chose to associate the phases with the terms nascent, emerging, expanding, and mature. This exercise was followed by a collaborative effort to describe, based upon their experience in the Kosovar context, characteristics for each stage as they applied to the development of community involvement, media, and NGOs. These characteristics were then fit into a matrix as illustrated below.

KTI Program Assessment			
Characteristic of Stages of Development			
Nascent	Emerging	Expanding	Mature
Communities & Local Governance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communities demonstrate ability to regroup after crisis in absence of formalized governance structure solidarity within communities evidenced by willingness to address immediate needs some citizens groups begin to act towards improving environment decision making tends to be made by a few and in non-representation of entire community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> international governance structures operating community demonstrates ability to articulate goals in terms of needs larger community audience begins to become part of decision-making process recognition of need for locally elected governance structures exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> local governance structures elected and beginning to operate grassroots community organizations more independently articulating needs to elected officials accountability and transparency become issues for local communities issues of diversity in representation begin to be addressed by community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalization of interaction between municipal structures and communities to address needs and accomplish goals diversity of community represented in governance and grassroots structures local government officials are fully accountable to community and operate in transparent manner
Media			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> government controlled print and electronic media predominates independent media nominal and may operate partially in exile equipment lacking, little networking among members of media few resources exist standards of journalistic professionalism minimal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proliferation of media outlets, evidence of improvements of in media infrastructure new technical equipment available making external contact possible issues of licensing and spectrum management entertained, citizens experience increased access to information from news sources journalistic standards improve but are uneven across region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some media groups generating income and showing evidence of sustainability media organizations incorporate newer technologies into operations regulations and standards established media becomes critical in coverage of news events, investigative reporting skill improved associations of journalists become organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> media organizations are secure and free from intimidation and control media is unbiased and objective in reporting on news events, most media organizations self-sustainable
NGOs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> role of NGOs in civil society not clear to majority of population limited number of high profile NGOs operating mostly in capital city NGO focus on providing humanitarian services absence of recognized legal parameters for NGOs funding not diversified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> role of NGOs in civil society beginning to be discussed as external influences increase number of organizations grows and roles change basic legal statutes for NGOs in place community outreach and services broaden regionally based NGOs organize, funding base limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs define missions and goals community begins to understand role of NGOs in civil society training and professionalism of NGO leadership organizations creating networks and beginning to understand their role in citizen advocacy recognition of importance of accountability to citizens full legal regulations exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs are able to clearly define their mission in civil society citizen advocacy role defined and when appropriate organizations working together in coalition NGOs addressing issues of sustainability by diversifying funding base

In constructing the matrix a consensus was reached on combining KTI's programmatic efforts involving communities and local governance. This was justified by the fact both areas were so closely linked that the characteristics for one could not be disassociated from the other.

Based on this work, staff from each region were then asked to provide an assessment of where their regional

programs fit in this framework. Although the process was highly subjective in nature, it nevertheless provided a revealing and useful illustration of KTI's impact on of the development of political processes by program area and region. The results presented in the following diagram.

KTI Program Assessment					
By Program Area and Regional Office					
Program Area	Regional Office	Nascent Stage	Emerging Stage	Expanding Stage	Mature Stage
Communities & Local Governance	Ferizaj	██████████	██████		
	Gjakova	██████████	██████████	██████	
	Gilan	██████████	██████		
	Mitrovica	██████████	██████████	██████	
	Peja	██████████	██████████	██████	
	Pristina	██████████	██████████	██████	
	Prizren	██████████	██████████	██████	
Media	Ferizaj	██████████			
	Gjakova	██████████			
	Gilan	██████████		██████	
	Mitrovica	██████████		██████	
	Peja	██████████		██████	
	Pristina	██████████		██████	
	Prizren	██████████		██████	
NGOs	Ferizaj	██████████	██████		
	Gjakova	██████████			
	Gilan	██████			
	Mitrovica	██████			
	Peja	██████████	██████		
	Pristina	██████████	██████████	██████	
	Prizren	██████			

Insufficient time and logistical difficulties prevented design and implementation of a truly objective and tested instrument for gathering data. With more time a framework would have been developed that incorporated a questionnaire that could have been taken to focus groups in the field. Data gathered from this instrument would have provided a more accurate picture of democratic political process development in Kosovo similar to the matrix built with KTI staff. Use of a more sophisticated instrument would have provided fuller measurement of KTI's impact in terms of stated objectives.

That said, given the circumstances, the tool constructed with KTI staff was useful in providing data by which some conclusions could be drawn. In addition, it provided KTI staff with a framework with which they could provide some insight on the program objectives and in turn served to underline the need for the collection of a set of baseline data during the early stages of program implementation.

Communities & Local Governance

Concerning the development of democratic processes within communities and in the area of local governance, there was little variation across regional offices except in the case of Ferizaj and Gilan. In general, the impact of KTI's program was that communities and local government structures are entering a stage of expansion: local governance structures are elected and beginning to operate; grassroots community organizations are more independently articulating needs to elected officials; accountability and transparency are becoming more important issues for local communities; and issues of diversity in representation are beginning to be addressed by the community.

Staff from Gilan readily acknowledged that difficulties in community involvement were encountered from the very early stages of KTI due in part to the presence of larger minority populations. While Ferizaj staff was not in a position to clarify its rating vis-à-vis the other regional offices, a discussion ensued regarding the extent to which results could be directly attributed to KTI. Most

agreed that prior to KTI's program, many communities, particularly in terms of participation, were well into the nascent stage due in large part to the strong tradition of solidarity among ethnic Albanians.

Although the information gathered provided more shape to the program in terms of the objectives, the evaluators recognized that the outcome also reflected some of the internal program biases. The impact on minority communities was not readily apparent. The reason was that Kosovar democratic development mainly focused on the Albanian community in terms of programs and results. Considering the overall community, including minorities, measurement of evolution became more complicated. Where characteristics of development might show an advanced stage of development in terms of the Albanian community in the area of community participation, for example, when minority communities were taken into account those results might not register as strongly in the developmental stage.

Media

The ratings of the impact of KTI's media activities indicate that this sector is also entering into the expanding stage. More precisely, some media groups are generating income and showing evidence of sustainability; media organizations are incorporate newer technologies into their operations; regulations and standards are established; media is becoming critical in coverage of news events and investigative reporting skill are improved; and associations of journalists are organized.

Gjakova proved the exception to this rating as, in terms of media development, it is just passing from the nascent to the emerging stage. Staff felt that this underlines the fact that the Gjakova area

is unlike other regions in Kosovo and demonstrates the extent of regional diversity within the confines what is generally considered to be a small geographic area.

Without prompting from the evaluators KTI staff commented on the similarity in ratings between community & local governance and media. The pervasive feeling was one of surprise given that so much programmatic attention had been paid to the former as opposed to the latter. The question raised and discussed (but for which no conclusive answer was provided) related to levels of funding for each programmatic area. Were similar levels of impact in the two areas achieved with similar funding levels? The general opinion was that question alone might merit being the subject of a study unto itself.

NGOs

The results of ratings in the area of support to NGOs varied greatly by regional office. In some areas, particularly in Gjakova, Mitrovica and Prizren, the development of the NGO sector remains solidly in the nascent stage. In the Pristina region however, the NGO sector is well into the emerging stage. The Pristina region has an NGO sector that can be characterized as NGOs clearly define missions and goals; a community that is beginning to understand the role of NGOs in civil society; a trained and professional NGO leadership; NGOs creating networks and beginning to understand their role in citizen advocacy; and NGOs which recognize the importance of accountability to citizens.

The disparity in ratings was of no surprise to KTI staff. It was readily acknowledged that the focus of support to NGOs had always been on the larger, established and Pristina-based organizations. The question raised

however, was whether greater impact could have been achieved throughout Kosovo through stronger KTI programming in this area. Most staff felt the answer to this question was definitely yes, but that increased programmatic support would have required a significant increase in KTI expertise in NGO strengthening and capacity building.

Funding Levels vs. Impact

In the course of conducting the evaluation, the question of correlation between program funding levels and impact was raised. To shed light on this matter, the evaluators extracted data from the *OTI Grant Database* and constructed two reports in table format. The first

for these two areas is presented separately. However, in discussing possible correlations between funding levels and impact, the two areas are considered as one.

The most revealing information is in terms of total funding levels for communities & local governance and media versus the impact in both areas. In support of communities & local governance, KTI programmed \$12,475,445. To strengthen media the total funding was \$2,130,773. The gap in funding is significant, particularly when compared to program impact in each area. Based on the results of the impact rating exercise both communities & local

Estimated Grant Funding By Program Area and Office					
Regional	Community Improvement	Local Governance	Media	NGO Support	Total
Belgrade	0	0	49,770	22,630	72,400
Freizaj	1,835,160	459,576	72,103	10,491	2,377,330
Gjakova	1,631,597	410,044	43,336	174,324	2,259,301
Gjilan	787,066	514,328	78,709	40,396	1,420,499
Mitrovica	1,172,450	361,609	56,417	25,666	1,616,142
Peja	1,281,477	458,530	109,188	143,251	1,992,446
Pristina	1,354,748	594,131	860,067	265,747	3,074,693
Prizren	1,153,864	455,280	212,613	16,395	1,838,152
Skopje	0	0	0	15,000	15,000
Unspecified	5,585	0	648,570	12,751	666,906
Total	\$9,221,947	\$3,253,498	\$2,130,773	\$726,651	\$15,332,869

Estimated Grant Funding By Program Area and Year					
Year	Community Improvement	Local Governance	Media	NGO Support	Total
1998	0	0	65,000	17,746	84,744
1999	4,812,040	0	823,014	150,208	5,787,261
2000	4,005,755	21,993	695,650	194,754	4,920,152
2001	404,151	3,231,505	515,695	363,943	4,517,295
Unspecified	0	0	31,415	0	0
Total	\$9,221,946	\$3,253,498	\$2,130,774	\$726,651	\$15,332,869

report details funding levels by programmatic area and regional office. The second report examines funding levels by programmatic area and year. Because the database disaggregates community improvement funding from local governance activities, the funding

governance and media programs achieved the expanding stage. The immediate question is whether KTI could have more efficiently programmed funds in the area of communities & local governance and achieved the similar results. The evaluators agreed the answer is most

probably a resounding yes but that more importantly, the question merits further examination in order to serve as a lesson learned for future OTI programs.

The first report also reflects the degree of attention paid to supporting NGOs in Kosovo. Of the three programmatic areas, support to NGOs was significantly lower and correlates to the results of the impact rating in this area.

The second report, which presents program funding by program area and year, serves principally to show the dramatic increase in funding from 1998 to 1999 and the subsequent relatively equal funding levels thereafter.

Management/Administrative Findings

Implementing Partners

Although the evaluation team did not examine management practices or administrative functions, these issues were addressed in terms of their effect on program function. Like all field operations, the smooth function of the program depended on efficient administrative and logistical support. In the conflict stage of the program, KTI was supported by RONCO as the primary agent in charge of administration and logistics. That relationship continued when the program returned to Kosovo in July 1999, with the exception of two regional offices which were managed by IOM as a result of relationships developed in Albania during the period of exile from Kosovo.

Overall, staff indicated that the relationship with RONCO was difficult. Slow procurement practices and low quality of materials impacted program credibility and efficiency. Delays in procurement resulted in loss of credibility when OTI was unable to meet its commitments even though the community fulfilled their obligations in

terms of meeting criteria designed to encourage wide participation in the decision-making process and contribution of matching funds, materials, and labor.

In addition, the gap in funding resulting from the transition to overall IOM management from RONCO created some difficulties for field staff. The funding gap meant that commitments made in the initial phases of programming were delayed in some cases for six months. This left field staff in an awkward position in terms of enforcing process criteria and managing credibility issues with participants despite long delays in project implementation and funding.

Problems with RONCO were evident prior to departure from Kosovo in March 1999. KTI program managers seemed reluctant to demand changes in contractor support due to perceived difficulties this would incur, but in the end problems were prolonged or delayed due to this hesitation. Criteria for periodic review of contractor performance and a more formalized process for field staff to report problems likely would have provided a more efficient path to correcting difficulties with existing support organizations or initiating the process of hiring a new organization. Resolution of these support issues and processes would have saved staff hours and contributed to maximizing program efficiency.

Early Planning and Coordination for handing off KTI's program to the USAID Mission

In Kosovo, excellent relationships between KTI and USAID Mission staffs contributed to a uniquely smooth coordination and hand-off process. These relationships resulted in the inclusion of a hand-over plan in the Mission's strategic framework, which has not been the case in other countries where OTI has worked. OTI's role as a stepping stone between relief and development mandates a need

for clearer guidelines for hand off between the various stages of Mission involvement in a post-conflict situation. In addition, clearer hand off strategies will help OTI to better define its role in the transition process in other countries.

In many post-conflict circumstances, Missions require time to rebuild or build staff, assess strategic objectives, and create strategic frameworks. Once basic objectives are determined, OTI program activities can be assessed for the intermediate term. OTI programs can bridge the gap between relief and development by contributing to building a foundation for USAID community-level development and finding a baseline against which the growth of a democratic society can be measured.

CONSIDERING THE FUTURE

OTI/KTI successfully engaged Kosovar communities with the goal of self-identification and prioritization of development projects. OTI/KTI stands out among international donor programs focused on reconstruction and infrastructure development as the only organization which followed the approach of asking citizens what they needed or wanted versus presenting project ideas to them to accept or reject. OTI/KTI also appears to be the only organization which insisted on a wide reaching participatory community process not only to identify projects, but to contribute to their implementation and supervise their completion.

Although transitional programming is unique to the particular circumstances and working relationships between Mission components in a given country, KTI provides some lessons learned which might be applied to future programming. The successes and failures of KTI have certainly contributed to helping define the role of transition programs in post-conflict countries.

Transition Programming

OTI Mission/Flexibility

Flexibility in terms of KTI program activities allowed for quick response to changing political, security, and community concerns in Kosovo. A propensity to believe in the flexibility of program objectives and strategy, however, created confusion and sometimes led to over-extension of staff when political prerogatives flowed from Washington and the international community.

Flexibility was important because it allowed KTI to answer community-based priorities more readily and provided a

results-oriented time frame for funding. This built trust with program participants and goodwill with communities. In an atmosphere of readily available donor funding with mixed results it also provided support for grant criteria designed to encourage broad-based community participation, such as the inclusion of women and youth in the decision-making process. Participants responding to the sticks of the grant criteria quickly recognized the carrots resulting from their efforts.

Donor Coordination

Regional coordination with other donors maximized community influence over donor priorities and decisions regarding projects. This “leveraging” of funds from other donors allowed wider community satisfaction and more productive community-donor relations.

In the context of massive multinational reconstruction and recovery efforts in Kosovo, the importance of coordination cannot be underestimated. KTI’s ability to build relationships with local communities proved to be a valuable resource to the scope of international actors as well as contributing to maximizing the benefits for the citizens of Kosovo.

Attitudinal & Behavior Change

Grant criteria requiring a diversity of participation (including women and youth) in the decision-making and implementation process likely contributed to changing attitudes and behaviors in the community and opening grassroots community participation to these previously marginalized groups. As a traditional, rural society, Kosovo was not culturally biased towards broad-based participation despite the development of grassroots communities during the ten-

year period of Serb domination in the province. The community improvement councils provided a forum for KTI to enforce its grant criteria for diversity in decision making. The empowerment of new leaders through this process helped broaden the base for future participation in community development.

Missing Pieces

Lack of a conflict resolution agenda contributed to failures in minority programming. Although clearly early in the program conflict resolution was not appropriate due to harsh post-conflict conditions, later stages of the program could have benefited by inclusion of this agenda in a strategic plan.

Program Staffing

Selection of enthusiastic and professional national and international staff was an essential element in the success of the community participation program.

Training must be made available to national and international staff at intervals throughout the evolution of the program. Investment in staff resources will contribute to a more effective function of the program. For national staff, training in basic areas of discussion facilitation, office management, and even software applications will allow them to take a more active role in the program earlier. For international staff, training in grant management, strategic planning, USAID regulations, and monitoring and evaluation will increase their contribution to the overall program development and success.

Appropriate training modules or a training plan for national and international staff was never developed. Hindsight provided opportunity for training of national staff in the final stages of the program, but earlier efforts

would have clearly benefited staff, particularly national.

Although OTI has a pool of staff designed to support ongoing operations (the “bullpen”), it is unclear if the resource is being properly utilized or staffed. In order to properly support field operations, OTI should have a pool of technical experts to provide assistance to ongoing or planned programs on a rapid response basis. Areas of expertise might include strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, media, democratization, conflict resolution, and training.

Technical Support

It is clear that lack of technical expertise in media, democratization, and other areas hindered the KTI program. Properly utilized technical expertise, particularly in the area of media, would have saved staff hours and contributed significantly to the strategic planning and development of the program. Furthermore, concrete methods of taking advantage of existing expertise present in USAID grantees working in a country could also be considered in the context of smooth transition initiatives and maximizing ongoing program impact.

In general, KTI’s unclear strategic plan or program framework left the organization unable to recognize its limitations. As a result, staff members were engaged in activities inappropriate to their skill level or technical expertise due to their sheer presence and experience working on the ground in Kosovo.

Measuring Performance

No baseline study was conducted to determine a context for democratic development at the community level in Kosovo. As a result, KTI lost an opportunity to better define its program strategy and address specific goals. In addition, the lack of baseline data

provided no defined starting point for KTI to measure the program's potential impact on the evolution of community-level democratic development.

The grant management database provided by OTI Washington was an important tool for tracking program data.

KTI has no monitoring and evaluation systems included in program plans or infrastructure. This contributes to a lack of follow up or clear analysis of impact relating to KTI activities.

Misunderstanding among the KTI staff of election activities led to a characterization of a new program area – “elections”. In fact, these activities were carried out in relation to the existing program components (community, media, NGO). The framework of the elections provided the context for KTI to regionalize more effectively component activities, particularly in the area of media.

As an initial phase of program planning and implementation, baseline frameworks should be developed which will provide a context for measuring and evaluating program activities and impact. KTI missed a valuable opportunity to measure the influence of its program on community participation by not having a framework for monitoring developments. In addition, these baseline frameworks could be utilized in long-term Mission planning and programming to provide context for strategic planning and results analysis.

programming clearly facilitated the transition process.

Open and ongoing dialogue relating to KTI II maximized seamless hand over to USAID.

Intra-Agency Coordination

Collaboration between OTI's mission and the development of the longer-term, broader reaching USAID mission goals was important to addressing the overall objectives of the United States in Kosovo. USAID's early recognition of the value of OTI personnel and