



PHOTO & CAPTION

Building Roads and Mending Relations



Photo: Mercy Corps/Kole Berisha

A road can be more than just a piece of pavement between villages — it can also serve as a link between different ethnic groups, communities, and local government officials.

Throughout Kosovo, USAID is teaching communities to work together across ethnic lines by helping them cooperate in completing infrastructure projects. The village of Rubofc/ Rubovc in the Municipality of Lipjan/Lipljan is one of the 42 places where USAID has launched this initiative. Working with local communities and ethnic groups to build a 14,000-foot road, USAID funded about 10 percent of the cost — the rest

was covered by the local government as well as labor and cash contributions from nearby communities.

“USAID taught us not only about construction, but how to take the lead in improving conditions for returns and integration, how to strengthen communication between municipal officials and leaders of majority and minority communities, and how to address the barriers between municipalities and communities,” said Xhevat Olluri, president of Lipjan/Lipljan Municipality. Assisted by USAID, the local government worked closely with representatives of Albanian and Serbian Kosovar communities to identify and address their needs. “Through joint effort, the work was done faster and the contribution was higher,” said Xhevat. “Albanian and Serbian Kosovars worked together to construct this road, and I strongly believe that together they will construct others.” By engaging both sides in the process, the municipal officials received support from all communities for the project.

This old man was one of the first to test out the new road in Rubofc/ Rubovc connecting the Serbian-Kosovar neighborhood to the Albanian-Serbian municipality of Lipjan/ Lipljan.

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