



## BEFORE & AFTER

# Construction Unites Ethnic Groups

**Community members build a new sewage system — and stronger ties with each other**

A ditch filled with sewage and garbage used to run through the center of a multi-ethnic neighborhood in Kamenice/Kamenica (the Albanian/Serbian names), Kosovo, filling the air with an awful stench and creating a serious health problem for residents. Populated by Roma, Serbian, Ashkali and Albanian Kosovars, the neighborhood needed to remove ethnic divisions that have kept people apart in post-conflict Kosovo. USAID has established a program that helps residents, community leaders and municipal officials work together on infrastructure projects that improve neighborhood conditions and help reintegrate displaced minorities.



Photo: Feriz Sinani, Mercy Corps

**BEFORE** Residents of the neighborhood identified the ditch as their community's highest priority for rehabilitation. Smelly and unsightly, the garbage-filled trench often made the nearby road impassable and created a health hazard.



Photo: Feriz Sinani, Mercy Corps

**AFTER** Residents worked with municipal officials on the construction of a simple sewage system to eliminate the ditch. But alongside the system residents also built a sense of community, as various ethnic groups worked together to create a solution that would help everyone. "Were I to live here another 10 years, I am sure that without this project, I wouldn't have had the chance to make these contacts with people of different ethnicities," said resident Hajdin Krivaqa. "But now we have done it, and we have established very good relationships with each other."