

# Multi-sectoral initiative for community stabilization and improved human security in Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica North and South and Zvečan/Zveçan



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



## Fast Facts

**Area:** Kosovo

**Duration:** October 2008 to April 2011

**Implementing UN Agencies:** UNICEF; UNFPA; WHO; OHCHR; UNDP

**Other Implementing Partners:** Government ministries; local municipalities; NGOs; business advisory centres

**Budget:** \$3,038,958.80

**Key Words:** Minority groups; capacity building; economic development; health; education

## BACKGROUND

The Kosovo conflict of 1998/99 interrupted essential social services, stifled economic development, and exacerbated the growing hardships faced by an already vulnerable and distressed population. In the neighbouring municipalities of Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica North and South and Zvečan/Zveçan tensions between Kosovo-Serbs and Kosovo-Albanians presented further obstacles to achieving human security in the region. As a result, the provision of public services was highly politicized and led to the creation of parallel social, health, and economic

structures which inhibited coordinated capacity development and vital infrastructure improvement. Moreover, the area was home to one of the largest populations of displaced minority groups in Kosovo who had been systematically excluded from access to public healthcare, formal education, and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Therefore, eliminating social divisions was crucial to facilitating the return of displaced groups, improving social services, and developing the economy in Mitrovicë/ Kosovska Mitrovica North and South and Zvečan/Zveçan.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project was to improve human security and stability in Mitrovicë/ Kosovska Mitrovica North and South and Zvečan/Zveçan through a multi - sectoral approach ensuring the protection and empowerment of local stakeholders, building appropriate institutions, and enabling the planning and delivery of services to fully meet the needs of different communities. This was achieved through (i) establishing mechanisms for local authorities to involve communities in the

planning, monitoring and assessment of service delivery; (ii) increasing enterprise activity within the three municipalities by fostering stronger trade links between communities; and (iii) improving inter-community relations through increase local ownership and empowerment and strengthened capacities of civil society organisations (CSO), as well as the implementation of neighbourhood and inter-community development projects.

### BENEFICIARIES

The project directly targeted an estimated 100,000 people in the municipalities of Mitrovicë/ Kosovska Mitrovica North and South and Zvečan/Zveçan,

comprising around 25,000 Kosovo Albanians, 75,000 Kosovo Serbs, and 2,000 minority RAEs with a focus on marginalised groups such as youth and women.



## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

(i) Through increased local ownership and strengthened capacities of the CSOs, the project made significant gains in improving inter-community relations in the area. With the establishment of 3 Municipal Economic Development Plans in collaboration with local communities, the project implemented numerous inter-community development projects. In addition, the project supported a Forum on Divided Cities that brought together communities to discuss common solutions to their shared problems. As a part of this process, 29 grants that required CSOs to work together across ethnic divides were distributed.

(ii) In order to help protect and empower local stakeholders and help bridge the gap between community needs and the ability of municipal authorities to deliver more effective social services, training was provided to civil servants on issues ranging from participatory planning, human and minority rights obligations, environmental protection, and financial management. For example, 300 teachers

attended 13 trainings on inclusive education in pre- and primary schools, while 60 municipal officials participated in trainings on management, monitoring and evaluation, and fundraising. Consequently, 55% of Kosovo Albanians and 41% of Kosovo Serbs felt that municipal representatives were more responsive to their needs and opinions at the end of the project.

(iii) Lastly, as a way of creating stronger trade links between communities living within the three municipalities and increasing enterprise activity, the project ensured that up to 25 enterprise activities were funded, with 10 projects linking 20 small businesses across the municipalities. As a result, the project strengthened connections between the private sector, youth, women, and the RAE, empowering these marginalised groups with the necessary skills to identify economic opportunities. A total of 915 Serbs, Albanians, and RAE men and women found short-term employment, while an additional 46 men and women secured long-term employment opportunities.

## LESSONS LEARNED

In a challenging environment where ethnic and political tensions pose significant obstacles to multi-sector development, the human security approach enabled the project to remain apolitical by focusing on service delivery and by addressing the immediate threats to human security faced by communities in the three municipalities. Touching on issues that mattered to all ethnic groups in the area, the project was able to engage with beneficiaries across dividing lines and to execute a coordinated and multi-sector initiative.

Moreover, the project illustrated that the most durable solutions to existing social, economic, and health challenges were dependent on a meaningful and consistent engagement between local institutions and the communities they served. In this regard, building the capacity of institutions and stakeholders around the protection and empowerment framework was fundamental in improving service delivery, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening social cohesion.