Purpose of the Assessment

This report will assess the community development and conflict literature and evaluate the impact of USAID community development (CD) projects on conflict prevention, resolution, and mitigation through local democratic development. The assessment will examine the effects of CD projects on conflict prevention, conflict mitigation, and the development of democracy for three USAID programs in the Europe and Eurasia (E&E) region: the Central Asian Republics (CAR) or Georgia, Macedonia, and Serbia (post conflict). These three cases have been chosen for their pre-conflict, in-conflict, and post-conflict countries. The final report will describe and analyze key CD factors that affect the risks of conflict and development of democracy, summarizing lessons learned about how, when and under what conditions CD projects are most likely to contribute to conflict prevention, resolution, and mitigation and best support the development of democratic institutions and societies. In so doing, the assessment will contribute to the development of the E&E Bureau’s conflict prevention strategy and to the design and modification of CD projects in the field.1

I. Background

U.S. foreign assistance policy is increasingly focused on preventing and mitigating conflict within developing and transitioning countries.2 The rationale is that, if conflict occurs, development is undermined, the potential for future development is impeded, and the instability from conflict risks becoming the breeding ground for transnational crime and international terrorism. USAID plays a central role in developing institutions to better enable communities and nations to deal with conflict.

The E&E Bureau is developing a strategic approach to assess and manage conflict. Explicit in this strategy is the use of community development programming as well as other types of conflict prevention activities. The Bureau and Missions need to know how, when and under what conditions CD approaches contribute to reduced tension and defuse potential conflicts, as well as how CD approaches might contribute to mitigating the costs of past conflict and reducing the possibility of renewed conflict.

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1 See also: “A Strategy for Addressing Conflict in Eastern Europe & Eurasia Bureau” August 2002. EE/PO.
2 Conflict is defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce yet economically viable resources, among two or more parties that perceive incompatible interests or express hostile attitudes. Conflict Prevention activities target actions, policies, procedures, institutions, or conditions such as socio-cultural, economic, or political divisions are minimized, thus fostering cooperation and forestalling broad-based instability and violent conflict that set back investments in long-term sustainable development. Conflict mitigation efforts contain and reduce violence as a way of lessening the severity of adverse effects on the people and the investments in those countries. Conflict resolution efforts find an end to ongoing conflict through mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or other arbitration. Conflict reconciliation involves the re-establishment of, and cooperation among, governmental apparatus and civil society in the short-term and long-term.
The decline of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in violent conflict as part of the transition in many countries of the region. In the past decade, twelve of the twenty-seven transition countries in E&E have suffered from significant violent conflict. The Balkans, the Caucasus region, and the Central Asian Republics, in particular, have been and continue to be conflict prone.

The potential for further conflict in the E&E region remains significant, as illustrated by recent upheavals in Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. In each of these places, future conflict is a distinct possibility from continuing political, ethnic, economic and social tensions. The potential for conflict exists more generally across Europe (e.g., Bulgaria) and Eurasia (the former-Soviet Union states) as reform support wanes, following particularly protracted political and economic transition periods that have not adequately addressed social demands. The importance of creating a more effective conflict prevention paradigm is underscored by the alarming trends forecasted in *Global Trends 2015*.

The root causes of conflict are often related to the absence of democracy and the failure of the economic system to provide appropriate freedom and prosperity. When groups within a country lack peaceful channels to voice their issues and petition for equal access, the potential for conflict exists. Often "bread and butter" economic issues provide the spark that unleashes conflict, particularly where ethnic divisions and religious acrimony are present. The presence of conflict, in other words, is one of the most salient indicators that democratic and economic systems are not working.

Violent conflicts have resulted in widespread death, destruction, and large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. They have disrupted livelihoods, exposed persons to unheard of cruelty and violence, intensified fear and hatred between different ethnic and religious groups, and challenged the territorial integrity of some states. Violent conflict has also impeded the reform of the political, economic, and social protection systems in these states, and reduced living standards still further as a result. Conflicts have led to the destruction of the physical infrastructure of the economy as well as the political and social infrastructure. Often, unless there is a partition arrangement, citizens return to their communities to live side by side with former adversaries. These legacies leave post conflict societies shaped to a large extent by the response of the population to the challenges presented by the violence, displacement, and breakdown of political, economic, and social institutions.

Community development projects have been introduced in many post-conflict societies as the major programmatic element in USAID’s response to these intrastate and interstate conflicts.

Community development is a broad term (see Appendix A for a list of definitions) used to describe a variety of activities at the local level in which communities drive and control the decisions and actions that affect their lives. In other words, community development is a mechanism for active citizen participation and local collaboration in the selection and implementation of activities that have tangible community-level benefits. Through this approach, various sectors of the community are often brought into productive partnerships. The scope of such projects is broad and can focus
on expansion of education and health care delivery services, local infrastructure rehabilitation, job creation, environmental problem solving, and strengthening of social capital3.

Understanding the relationship between CD projects and conflict is far from complete. Nonetheless, many CD practitioners/experts believe that by their proto-democratic and participatory nature, CD projects model democratic behavior and establish other venues/mechanisms for managing potential conflict between non-homogenous groups and local actors with differing perspectives on key issues. Such projects may help reduce conflict by constructing synergies and building consensus and by empowering/mobilizing citizens to identify unmet needs and solve their own problems. It has also been observed that CD projects can provide individuals hope that social inequalities such as poverty and unemployment can be overcome, and that a brighter future can be realized. With such an outlook conflict may be less likely to ensue, as fewer citizens feel marginalized and social dissatisfaction dissipates.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

A. Problem Analysis

Community development activities have a long track record in international development and are not new to the E&E region. Current CD projects in the E&E Bureau appear based on integrated rural development models from the 1980s. But unlike integrated rural development, broader community development takes place in both rural and urban settings. Many E&E missions have CD program that do not include conflict prevention/mitigation as an explicit (measurable) project outcome and focus on infrastructure rehabilitation or income-generating activities though principles of community engagement/capacity building. This assessment will not examine these types of CD projects but focus on CD projects that aim to reduce the risks of conflict and support democratic development in communities.

In general, CD projects introduce techniques to mobilize community participation and enhance the capacity of community organizations to address a range of community problems: rebuilding infrastructure (Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Central Asian Republics), creating employment (Bosnia, Central Asia), improving health and education (Armenia), reducing human suffering (Georgia), and resettling refugees (Serbia, Bosnia).

For the majority of CD projects in the EE region there is an assumption that an increase in cooperative action among community residents will bring about ethnic, religious, or sectarian cohesion—either within a particular country or across national boundaries. The presumed outcome is that increased cohesion will contribute to a reduction in conflict or will prevent conflict from erupting. Thus, while conflict prevention is not typically a primary objective of the EE programs, it is often an implicit secondary objective.

3 "Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue.” The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital." (Robert Putnam. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. 2000: 19)
At the end of hostile actions in Kosovo in 1999, the U.S. Government designed a CD project to address the needs at the community level, and to accelerate the return of normal life in the villages and towns of the region. The Kosovo CD project evaluation, however, focused primarily on the rebuilding public utilities and buildings (markets, community centers, etc), and contributions of these to economic development. Any impact on reducing/preventing future conflict as a result of the community's involvement was not addressed.

By contrast, the Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) recently initiated in the Central Asian Republics, explicitly identifies conflict prevention as an objective. "The goal of (CAIP) activities is to enhance community participation in local development planning and decision making processes, strengthen community conflict prevention and resolution capacity, and increase income and employment opportunities for community members, in particular for women and youth." The communities selected are in impoverished, drought-affected and conflict-prone areas.

The E&E Bureau does not have a sound theoretical model nor empirical evidence to link CD projects with conflict prevention much less a system for determining what the best practices of community development vis-à-vis conflict are, given various obstacles in the region. Consequently, these costly programs are coming under increased scrutiny.

While the E&E Bureau has implemented numerous CD projects, the Bureau does not have a good understanding of the presumed causality/linkages, nor of the extent to which appropriately designed projects can better contribute to conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and reconciliation as well as the development of democracy in the region. There appears to be both a shortage of academic research on these topics and a wealth of as yet undocumented project experiences and lessons learned. This assessment will resolve both of these lacunae.

B. Working Assumptions and Hypotheses:

Assumption: Social capital is non-existent or weak in those areas where ethnic, religious, or sectarian conflict occurs; hence programs aimed at “building social capital” can prevent or mitigate conflict.

Hypothesis 1: Community development activities can overcome barriers to cooperation based on longstanding ethnic, religious, and sectarian conflict and increase in social capital based on diversity and inclusiveness.

Hypothesis 2: Communities with greater social capital are less at risk of conflict, better able to resolve conflicts, and more effective in mitigating the costs of past conflicts.

III. OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SCOPE OF WORK

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5 These obstacles include lack of trust between the non-governmental, private and public sectors; lack of experience and skills for collaboration; limited understanding of the benefits of partnership and collaboration; no tradition of voluntary community involvement due to the socialistic tendency of governments to meet needs; imperfect or incomplete privatization of residential and commercial property; and limited resources available to communities.
A. Objectives

The objective of this activity is to conduct an assessment of the E&E Bureau’s activities that have been implemented for the primary or secondary goal of decreasing the likelihood of conflict between ethnic, religious, or communal groups within a single country or across national boundaries. The assessment will ascertain:

- What the literature says about the relationships between CD projects and conflict (developing an analytic model of how CD is supposed to influence conflict)
- How and to what extent project outcomes appear to have contributed to conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and/or reconciliation;
- Lessons learned in the implementation of projects, as they relate to decreasing the risk of conflict, resolving differences between groups of people, or mitigating conflict, including the pros and cons of different types of projects within the E&E region.

The assessment will examine USAID CD programs in pre-conflict CAR (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan), in-conflict Macedonia (where the program was conceived prior to the conflict and has operated after the conflict as well), and post-conflict Serbia (although the impact of conflict has varied dramatically within Serbia). If there are problems with conducting the assessment in any of these countries, USAID and the contractor shall reach agreement on other E&E countries and programs for evaluation. In each country, the evaluation shall compare communities where CD approaches have been employed with those that have not had USAID or other donor engagement of this type.

B. Illustrative Research Questions

1. What does the literature review and the fieldwork say about the presumed relationship of community development and conflict prevention and/or conflict mitigation?

- Is there evidence that CD projects increase democracy and reduce conflict?
- What does the research say about when and under what circumstances CD projects reduce conflict? How? To what degree? Are there particular elements of CD projects that are more/less related to reducing conflict?

2. What does the literature review and fieldwork say regarding what circumstances CD projects are likely to be most effective in conflict mitigation/prevention?

The literature review should identify where and why CD and conflict prevention/mitigation have been successful/unsuccesful. The fieldwork shall consider the impact of CD projects in three countries/regions selected due to the variation in conflict. The fieldwork should assess how the results of CD projects vary (and are explained) by a host of variables, including the following:

- Countries (level of conflict, characteristics of democracy, level of economic development, ties to Europe, ethnic composition, social protection system);
• Communities (level of conflict, social composition, level of development, character of civil society, quality of local governance, ethnic composition, types of local issues in contention, local value structure);
• Objectives pursued (civic engagement, type of infrastructure rehabilitation, local economic development, job creation)
• How CD is implemented (case selection, comparison with any control cases (communities where CD is not implemented), role of new institutions, participation of pre-existing institutions, type of community participation, characteristics of community leaders, methods of facilitation, size of project, type of project, length of CD process).

3. Lessons Learned both from the literature review and fieldwork evaluations

• Where have CD projects most successfully contributed to the prevention and/or mitigation of conflict in the region? What evidence was gathered to show how we know the projects contributed?
• Why were these CD projects successful? What conditions were present that contributed to conflict prevention and/or mitigation? What evidence was gathered to show how we know the contribution of these projects?
• What approaches to community development work best to prevent conflict? What approaches do not work?
• Does it make sense to work in individual communities? Can CD projects transcend communities and alter attitudes and perceptions at regional and/or national levels? Can CD projects be replicated to reach national-level conflict risks?
• When is community development appropriate? Under what conditions, if any, would you not want to pursue community development? What conditions would not be appropriate for CD projects
• Which approaches have given the E&E Bureau the largest return? What are the common denominators for those CD projects that have been most successful at bridging the divide between conflicting groups?
• Are certain socio/political environments more conducive to implementation of CD projects than others? Do different environments require different approaches?

Obstacles

• What are the key obstacles to implementing CD projects?
• Are there common obstacles across the E&E region or across sub-regions? Are the obstacles beyond the capacity of USAID?
• Have CD projects found approaches to overcome obstacles?

IV. CONTRACTOR TASKS AND DURATION OF TASKS

The assessment team will review relevant literature, develop testable hypotheses that link conflict prevention, resolution, and mitigation and community development, and - in accordance with that model - collect quantitative and qualitative information on the three USAID projects (CAR or Georgia, Macedonia, Serbia). For each of the three program CD project assessments, the contractor
will provide a comprehensive report describing and analyzing the findings, conclusions, and lessons learned.

A. Phase I: Literature Review and Development of a Working Hypotheses (20 days)

As a first step in the assessment process, the contractor shall review USAID historical documents and summaries of relevant country-level strategic objectives and program summaries, as well as key home-office contractor/grantee documents on CD programs from USAID’s most significant implementing partners. As these documents are not exhaustive, the team will be responsible for identifying and reviewing additional materials (academic, evaluations and assessments of other donor CD programs, etc) relevant to the assessment.

The contractor will use this literature to provide an initial response to the illustrative research questions identified above, and to set forth hypothesized cause-effect relations that can be examined in the field. USAID expects that the research design for fieldwork will be adequate to “test” this model and its assumptions, although it is understood that evidence may be qualitative in nature. The quality/validity of the research design will be a key element of the selection criteria (30 percent).

B. Phase 2: Planning and Conducting Fieldwork (20 days/country - 3 countries)

As noted above, USAID (in consultation with the CAR, Georgia, Macedonia and Serbia Missions) will identify three CD programs to assess. The contractor will be responsible for developing a research plan for each CD project evaluation that discusses the objectives, methodology to be employed, and the most salient issues and aspects of the program to examine. USAID will review and approve the research plan prior to fieldwork. The contractor will be responsible for providing a report and both a Mission and E&E Bureau debrief following each CD program evaluation.

C. Phase 3: Final Assessment Report – Conclusions (15 days)

The final phase of this assessment will be for the contractor to carry out data analysis and submit a draft and a final assessment report for E&E Bureau and USAID Mission comment and review. USAID will provide written comments on the draft report within 15 days. The contractor will in turn revise the draft report, reflecting USAID’s comments/suggestions, within 15 days of receipt of these written comments. Following acceptance of the report by USAID (CTO/evaluation officer) the contractor will then provide USAID with electronic and (100) bound copies of the final report. In addition, the contractor will arrange a briefing for USAID/W staff to discuss the report.

V. Methodology

The contractor will designate a team (subject to USAID approval), to design an assessment methodology plan; carry out a comprehensive literature review and develop hypothesized cause-effect relationships; conduct field research in three countries and provide written and verbal reports after each; analyze the data and compile key findings; draft and obtain USAID/W acceptance of the final report, and orally present the findings to the Bureau.
Before beginning and after completing each of the three phases discussed above, the contractor will meet with an advisory group of USAID staff in E&E/Program Office, which may also include select E&E Technical Offices and Pillar Bureau staff, to review products and progress and agree on next steps.

After the literature review (phase I) and prior to fieldwork (phase II), the contractor will provide evidence to USAID that the logistical arrangements for the fieldwork are in place. The contractor will carry out site visits to Georgia or the Central Asia Republics, Macedonia, and Serbia. As noted above, the end of each country visit, the contractor will provide to the Mission and AID/W a draft of the country report and provide an oral debriefing.

At the end of Phase III, the contractor will have submitted a final synthesis report acceptable to USAID.

VI. USAID'S ROLE IN THE ASSESSMENT

The E&E Bureau will:

- organize a small USAID advisory group for implementation of this scope of work;
- provide programmatic and budgetary information to the team;
- provide project documents and evaluations to the team;
- facilitate additional information-gathering;
- facilitate obtaining USAID/Mission input
- arrange USAID/Washington meetings

In some instances (though the contractor should not depend on this) an additional “team member” may be assigned by the USAID/Mission in each country/region where a program evaluation takes place. In all cases, USAID Mission staff and/or the USAID team members will be available to assist the contractor in providing in-depth knowledge of the various projects and activities that are being evaluated.

VII. CONTRACTOR EXPERTISE AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

The EE Bureau Division Chief (or designate) will serve as CTO and must approve all experts suggested for this project. Changes in key personnel or the work plan must be approved by the CTO.

VIII. DELIVERABLES

The contractor’s deliverables shall include:

- A written methodology plan (research design and operational workplan);
- Conducting a comprehensive literature review
- Developing hypothesized cause-effect relationships from the literature review
- Identifying and refining key research questions,
- Developing appropriate research instruments for field work,
• Presenting written and verbal CD country reports (before departing the country and subsequently in AID/W)
• Analyzing data and identifying key findings
• Submitting the draft final report (electronic and hard copy) to AID/W (within one month after completing the last country evaluation) for comments. USAID will be responsible for distributing the report to the USAID Missions and for compiling comments regarding the document to the contractor. USAID/W will provide the assessment team with a written comments within three weeks of receiving the draft report. Three weeks after USAID's comments are provide, a final report will be due to USAID/W. An oral presentation of the assessment findings is to be provided to USAID/W within two months of approval and acceptance of the final report.

IX. TEAM COMPOSITION

For planning purposes, the team for this assessment will consist of up to four members, as described below. However, USAID encourages prospective contractors to come up with alternative staffing scenarios on taking into account the objectives of this assessment, our illustrative budget, and our proposed methodology. USAID/W must approve all individuals proposed for the team.

1. Senior Level Social Science Analyst/Team Leader: Strong leadership skills. Knowledge of USAID and the E&E region is desired. Must be able to participate in the entire assessment, with overall responsibility for producing the final report. This person will have substantial experience in evaluating CD projects and must provide evidence of having worked with CD projects that are designed to be a conflict prevention or conflict resolution tool.

2. Mid Level Democracy & Governance Analyst (expert on conflict analysis): Researcher with proven research/conceptual understanding and experience in understanding, analyzing and publishing on conflict prevention and mitigation in Europe and Eurasia.

3. Mid Level Evaluation Methods Analyst (with Community Development Program experience): Expertise in design and evaluation of CD activities.

4. Administrative Support (mid level)

X. LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

The team will be responsible for all AID/W and in-country logistical support. This includes responsibility for scheduling, hotel accommodations, arranging for all in-country transportation (including vehicle rental and drivers), arranging for interpreters/translation services, and attending to all other administrative issues. The contractor shall work closely with each USAID Mission on schedules.

XI. ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the assessment will be completed in approximately nine months from the award of the contract.
XII. ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET

The contractor is asked to submit a proposed budget that separates salaries, international travel, in-country expenses, materials development, and miscellaneous DC-based costs. The budget should assume fieldwork in CAR, Macedonia and Serbia. A detailed illustrative budget is provided as Budget Annex 1.

Budget Summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<td>Fully Loaded Labor Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Travel and Per Diem</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assessment Factors

Firms submitting a proposal to provide services under the CDIE IQC Task Order for the CD and Conflict Assessment should explain how they would do the assessment. The information provided should be 15 single-spaced pages or less (not including resumes). Prospective contractors should list staff proposed for this task order; include their resumes and statements of availability.

The selection criteria/assessment factors are as follows:

Personnel – (50 percent) - The experience, expertise and knowledge of all key staff.

Overall Research Design – (30 percent) - Quality of contractor’s overall research design. Prospective contractors shall describe their overall approach to this scope, including how they propose to carry out each phase of the work. This description should include a work plan that identifies all staff requirements and discusses/justifies the contractor’s proposed research design.

Past Performance and Corporate Capabilities (20 percent) - Prior experience and track record of contractor in design, management and conduct of community development and conflict assessment, and/or in carrying out similar assessments.
ATTACHMENT A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE EE REGION
Country, Name of Program, SO, Relevant Evaluations, Description where available

1. Bosnia-Herzegovina
   • Business Development Program
2. Bulgaria
   • FLAG
   • Roma program
3. Central Asian Republics
   • Community Action Investment Program
     "The CAIP builds on the success of other small community grants in current health, civil society and Tajikistan programs to strengthen community action for micro-credit and job creation, and social infrastructure improvements in health facilities, schools, water supply and community centers. It focuses on the southern areas of each republic, where the potential for conflict (poverty, ethnic differences, growth of Hizb-u-Tahir) appears greatest." *Source:* Cover memo from Annual Report Submission, February 2002.
   • Kyrgyzstan: community grants where local government and citizens can submit a project and received small grant ($2-3,000)
   • Uzbekistan: Counterpart Consortium has social partnerships
4. Cyprus
5. Department of Labor projects for local economic development
   • Hungary
   • contact person is Liz Mckeon in EEST
6. Kosovo
   • OTI program *(Transitioning to Long-Term Development: An Evaluation of the USAID/OTI Program in Kosovo, ARD, Inc. November 2001)*
   • Follow-up to OTI program
7. Macedonia
   • Youth employment program and other underserved communities
8. Serbia
   • OTI program
   • New program under SO 2.0.
9. Ukraine
   • Community Partnerships (SO 2.1)
ATTACHMENT B
Preliminary List of Reference Materials


Kumar, Krishna. Aftermath: Women and Women's Organizations in Postconflict Societies. Conwal, Inc. | USAID. Bureau. for Policy and Program Coordination. Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) Series: USAID evaluation highlights, no. 74


Office of Women and Development. Intrastate Conflict and Gender. Information Bulletin No. 9, December 2000. USAID

Practicing Community-Based Conflict Mitigation: Executive Summary, 1995. U.S. Department of State, USAID.


ATTACHMENT C
MISSION LEVEL EVALUATIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Albania

Gruenloh, Carrie A. *Albanian Social Sector Rehabilitation and Support Program (SSRP/A). External Evaluation Report.* September 27, 2001. (Major goal of the program was to support local communities directly affected by the influx of refugees. The primary tool was the use of grants to NGO, that in turn were to increase community involvement.)

Armenia

Dershem, Larry. *Review and Evaluation of Community Development Program.* Save the Children/Armenian Field Office. February 11, 1998. (Among the reported impacts was an improvement in social capital [inter-and extra-local linkages between community groups, new local NGOs, governmental structures and extra-local organizations] )

Bosnia-Herzegovina

PricewaterhouseCoopers. *BiH Impact Study.* Final Report. August 2000. (Addresses the impact of the Municipal Infrastructure Services Program and CIRP on community relations, concluding that relations between domicile population and returnees had improved significantly. Program goal was not worded as conflict mitigation ).

Central Asian Republics

Adamson, Fiona B. *Building Civil Society From the Outside: An Evaluation of Democracy Assistance Strategies in Uzbekistan and Krygyzstan.* No date. (Cites as one of the achievements "a limited number of small-scale community development successes" and identifies "a need for more community development projects in the region.")

Kosovo
