

## Aiming community reconciliation through economic development

In six localities in the of Mitrovica region, Runik/Rudnik, Bajë/Banja, Gojbulë/Gojbula Vushtrri/Vucitrn, Çabër/Çabra, Zubin Potok, Partners Kosova Center for Conflict Management in cooperation with NGO FRACTAL from Belgrade are implementing a two years project aiming Community Economic Development project financially supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Project Coordinator, Florent Hajrizi, said the project aims on building relations between communities, Albanians and Serbs, through implementation of different Community economic development. The implementation of this first phase of this project started in November 2009 and will last for two years the entire programs will last six years. Until now PK and Fractal did field assessment, formed working groups, which are currently being trained Cooperative Planning and Business development. After completing Capacity Building process it is expected all working groups which consist of seven members from each locality and community to work closely with External Economic expert in assisting them to develop their business plans for project implementation. Mr. Hajrizi considers the project is a unique chance for Community reconciliation and to improve interethnic relations, but furthermore community economic development in each specific project location. "Working groups meet once a month as the specific location/municipality, to discuss joint economic development opportunities and ideas for community economic development. This project foresees Community support grants of 45.000 € per each project location and this amount is foreseen to be given only during the first phase of this project" says Mr. Hajrizi. Although the six areas mentioned, two locations from each three municipalities involved, each location is inhabited in the project is either dominated by Albanians or by Serb community but attached to each other, according Mr. Hajrizi the groups from different communities have the opportunity to come up with a joint idea from their respective municipality for its implementation therefore they will be able join their donation into one particular project.



Zeqiri Izmir member of the working group in village Çabër/Çabra, expects the project will improve economic and social conditions and will offer something positive in his village and community and considering that Çabër/Çabra is the right place to implement such projects.

"I believe this would be a good example not only for the local population, but also beyond, because the needs of local population are very high, while the possibilities are small. He considers this project as a form of propulsion and hope for further development of Çabër/Çabra but he also strongly believes this project will have direct impact on improving interethnic relations between Albanians from Çabër/Çabra and Serb community from Zubin Potok.

Nedeljko Kovacevic, member of working group Bajë/Banja in Skenderaj/Srbica municipality, also thinks that the project will have positive effects on community and economic development at his district. "through this project we have good cooperation with the Albanian working group in Runik/Rudnik, and this cooperation will get strengthened through the implementation of community economic development project component. Ekrem Merovci, member of the group of Vushtrri/Vucitrn, at the same time Municipality Community and Returns Officer estimates the project has a particular importance as it relates different communities and offers concrete opportunity for Community Economic Development through mini grants as support to their local economy "The entire program will last six years, this project phase will last two years and during this period this project will improve our relations with the Serb community members of working group in Gojbulë/Gojbula in our municipality which already are good as there has been no incidents reported since the March 2004, this project will only build bridges between both communities "states Merovci