



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans May 2015

SWITZERLAND SUPPORTS MUNICIPAL AUTONOMY AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KOSOVO



Citizens are able to voice their concerns at a municipal assembly. © Kuno Schläfli

Since independence in 2008, Kosovo has been moving to reform and decentralise its administration. Local self-administration in the 38 municipalities is to be expanded. The SDC project “Decentralisation and Municipal Support” (DEMOS) supports 17 municipalities in improving their public services.

Kosovo has been making progress in local governance terms since 2008. The new mayors that have been at the helm of a number of municipalities since the elections of 2013 are motivated and citizen-oriented. Nonetheless, the services provided in the community do not meet the expectations of the public – especially as far as infrastructure is concerned. There is no controlled system for waste management, for example, which means that illegal dumping is a typical daily occurrence.

A FOCUS ON CITIZENS’ NEEDS

The SDC aims to make improvements in three areas by the end of 2017 through its DEMOS project. As part of its cooperation work with Eastern Europe, it is supporting Kosovo in its transition to democratic and decentralised government. The populations of six of the 17 municipalities involved in the project have a

Serb majority.

- 1) Public services in 17 municipalities (40% of the total population) are geared to citizens’ needs in the areas of waste management, public spaces and mobility.
- 2) The 17 municipalities promote democratic processes and exercise prudent financial management.
- 3) The Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM) – strongly influenced and supported by the electorate – is committed to addressing the concerns of the different municipalities at a central level effectively and attends to the needs of its members.

PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES SET AN EXAMPLE

The direct partners of the project are municipal governments and parliaments. DEMOS shares the interests of the reform-oriented municipalities, helping them to achieve tangible improvements in service delivery. The communication of success stories through the AKM motivates other communities to follow suit. This leads to a multiplication effect.

The “Performance Based Grant System” is the core of the project. It rewards municipalities with additional financial resources when they achieve particular progress in the areas of municipal services, financial administration and property tax reform. Municipalities must demonstrate the progress they have achieved each year, for example in tax revenues and in the political participation of the population. Municipalities may also ask for targeted technical support.

The project promotes controlled systems for waste management so that urban waste can be more efficiently disposed of, in compliance with regulations. With regard to public spaces, the project includes aims to make more and better parks, playgrounds and street lighting available. Lastly, transport infra-

structure must be kept in good working order and urban traffic better regulated.

PREVIOUS SUCCESSES WITH DECENTRALISATION PROJECTS

DEMOS's predecessor, LOGOS (Support to Local Governance and Decentralisation) brought a number of clear benefits. In the years 2007-2013 public services were improved in nine municipalities and political participation was enhanced. The AKM was responsible for implementing programmes in the municipalities.

Overall, the population of the nine municipalities is happier than before with the opportunities they now have to participate in political decision-making processes. In the municipal elections in 2013, community-related themes played an important role and the population was better informed than in previous election campaigns. LOGOS lent support for example to the popular television programme "Life in Kosovo", which raises political issues and discusses them in detail.

In the municipality of Klokot a survey in 2013 showed that about 88% of people were now satisfied with the street lighting; in 2010 it was only 35%. Thanks to LOGOS, municipalities were also able to increase their 2014 tax revenue over the previous year by around 5%.

FURTHER INFORMATION

SDC activities in Kosovo (en):
www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/kosovo.html

Helvetas website (en):
www.helvetas-ks.org/demos/

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Decentralisation and Municipal Support (DEMOS)

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEME

Democratisation, decentralisation and local governance

COUNTRY/REGION

Kosovo

PARTNERS

Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
Ministry of Finance and Economy, Ministry of Local Government Administration and other administrative authorities concerned in Pristina
Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite reforms, services at the municipal level do not yet meet good governance requirements. Municipal funding is contested and legislation still contradictory. The population is therefore dissatisfied with public services.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The SDC project "Decentralisation and Municipal Support" (DEMOS) targets 17 municipalities that need to improve their public services.

TARGET GROUP

17 of a total of 38 municipalities (700,000 citizens).
Actors at the central government level

PHASE DURATION

August 2013 – December 2017

PHASE BUDGET

CHF 12,820,000

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