



SUCCESS STORY

Emerging from the Dark: Street Light Make Kosovo village safer

Affordable, bright lights bring ease to night travel



[Photo by Advancing Kosovo Together]

The youngest residents of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm (Novo Brdo/Novobërdë) can walk the streets safely with the new energy-efficient LED street lighting.

“Neither (ethnic group) pressured the other. Both were interested in the safety of the village”

September 2015 – The people of Gornje Kuvce/Kufcë e Epërm, the largest village in Kosovo’s Novobërdë /Novo Brdo municipality, can now see in the dark. With the installation of new LED street lights—a joint project between the municipality and USAID—the villages 2,000 residents can now travel at night much more safely.

The village has a Serb majority but a large Albanian minority as well. In December 2014, during a multiethnic community forum meeting, residents prioritized the need for public lighting to make their streets safer. The meeting was organized by the USAID Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) Program.

Predrag Đorđević, village leader and municipal assembly member, described the project as an “interest of both communities. Neither pressured the other. Both were interested in the safety of the village.”

Nebojša Arsić, the Director of the municipality’s Public Services Department added, “We are facing many challenges, for example some of the villages have neither water supply system nor sewage, but our budget is insufficient to address all these problems, so USAID support is of great importance to us.”

The environmentally friendly lighting was installed in 20 days, at a reasonable price. Because LED lights are so bright, it was necessary to mount just one light on every other electric pillar. The municipality paid 20 percent of the installation cost and is now paying the slightly increased electric bill, which, at just 200 euros a month for the entire village, is a bargain.

Both the village medical center and the school are within the seven kilometers covered by the new lights. Since the school functions in three shifts, previously, over 140 students attending the village’s secondary school were upset and afraid to walk down the dark, unlit streets. Now, the last daily shift of students will be able to see to walk home after dark.

Other nearby villages are considering implementing similar projects to light their streets.

The three-year Advancing Kosovo Together (AKT) program aims to increase constructive inter-ethnic cooperation and interaction, which is vital to the security and stability of the region. The program, which started in August 2014 takes a holistic approach toward the integration of minority populations into Kosovo’s institutions and society by working with municipalities and other government partners.

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