

## INITIATING POSITIVE CHANGE PROGRAM (IPCP) IN KOSOVO

After nearly a decade of international supervision, Kosovo declared its independence on February 17, 2008. Kosovo's road to independence has been long and fraught with difficulty. For nearly a decade, Kosovo Albanians eagerly anticipated the possibility of official independence from Serbia and from international supervision; Kosovo Serbs feared that possibility, unsure of what place, if any, they would have in a majority Albanian country in which they are often viewed as the enemy. While significant, the declaration marks only the beginning of a critical new phase in Kosovo's development. The coming years present a unique opportunity for the world's youngest country to develop a new set of institutions and policies that guarantee democratic rights for all citizens, encourage active citizenship, promote economic development, and build a harmonious multi-ethnic country.

The overall goal of the IPCP is to assist the Government of Kosovo and minority communities in making this multi-ethnic vision a reality by promoting stability through increasing the confidence minorities have in their futures and their role as active stakeholders in society. The program engages community, regional, and national level actors to achieve results that support the three following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** *Stimulate cooperation between minority communities and Kosovo government institutions, businesses, and NGOs with a particular focus on freedom of movement, economic security, and quality of life*

- **Objective 2:** *Support the Kosovo Government in strengthening and maintaining a shared belief in a multi-ethnic Kosovo through improved public information and strategic use of media*

- **Objective 3:** *Improve the capacity of stakeholders such as Kosovo government institutions, the international community, and minority communities to develop and implement policies that advances minority integration*

Through technical assistance to the Prime Minister's Office of Community Affairs; a small and large grant infrastructure program; development of minority policy platforms at the central and local levels; and media joint reporting and programming, program activities work to increase K. Serb and other minorities' confidence in their future through infrastructure improvements at the local and regional level; strengthened small businesses and increased income generation activities to provide more economic opportunities for minority communities; greater interaction with stakeholders at all levels to improve relationship building; and lastly, a more robust use of media by government, media professionals, and communities to provide accurate information on minority issues.

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