



SUCCESS STORY

New Infrastructure Brings Drinking Water Closer to Kosovo Towns

Nearby pipes and taps replace long treks to stand in line



Photo: USAID, Bridget Nurre

New pumping station for the villages of Bubël, Qupeva, and Domanek in central Kosovo



Photo: USAID, Bridget Nurre

Ahmet Rrahmanaj's trip for fresh drinking water went from 2 km to just 2 m, with a tap now in his own yard.

The villages tucked into the hills outside of the town of Malishevë/o in central Kosovo are like many in the landlocked country – difficult to access by road – but many who live there prefer the quiet agrarian life to the faster pace of the country's bigger cities.

However, like many others, the villages of Bubël, Qupeva, and Domanek struggled to find a reliable source of drinking water, with residents traveling 2 km to stand in line for the nearest regulated water source. Only 61% of Kosovo's citizens have regular access to potable water.

“Over the years, my family spent 50,000 euros collectively to try to dig our own wells,” said Bubël resident and farmer Ahmet Rrahmanaj. “My family has always lived in Bubël, but we considered having to move to a bigger city in order to get fresh water.”

Bubël was one of 60 communities across Kosovo identified by USAID's Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation project to install, rehabilitate, expand and upgrade local water systems. The program worked with regional water companies and local government officials, and held over 220 community outreach meetings through the life of the project to ensure that the systems had the maximum effect in each village where they were installed.

Rrahmanaj was actively engaged in the outreach efforts, volunteering his time to recruit fellow residents for community meetings and assisting program specialists in instructing village residents on proper use and upkeep of the pipes and taps installed in their homes.

“USAID is a very important name here. Thanks to their professionalism and community cooperation, we were able to finally overcome the difficult conditions to put this system in place,” Rrahmanaj added.

As a result of the six-year program, over 160,000 Kosovo residents like the Rrahmanaj family now have access to clean, safe drinking water.

“For me now, life is much easier,” said Rrahmanaj's wife Shyrta.

The Kosovo Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation initiative, which began in September 2008, was funded jointly by USAID, the Swiss Government, and local Kosovo government and water authorities.