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**KOSOVO**

# CASE STUDY

## Campaign Raises Voter Awareness

**Get-out-the-vote campaign targets potential voters throughout Kosovo to boost turnout**



Photo: Oerd Imami, ATRC

Volunteer Leonora Muriqi, a Pristina high school student, took the get-out-the-vote campaign to voters' homes and workplaces.

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### Challenge

Kosovo's second parliamentary election since the 1999 conflict ended was expected to have a depressed voter turnout. Slow economic development, high unemployment, lack of government accountability, limited public participation in decision-making, and disappointment with the closed-ballot election system were all cited as reasons the voters might stay home on election day.

### Initiative

USAID supported an effort to organize a coalition of 74 local organizations throughout Kosovo in a get-out-the-vote campaign. Albanian and Serbian Kosovar organizations worked in their localities, motivating voters to use their right to vote and distributing materials printed in Serbian and Albanian. Using the slogan, "Don't Complain, Vote!" volunteers went door to door, canvassing potential voters — an approach never before used in Kosovo.

In addition, municipal media outlets, print media organizations and two broadcast TV stations broadcast throughout Kosovo gave crucial support to the volunteers' grassroots efforts, airing get-out-the-vote announcements, hosting debates and presenting in-depth coverage of activities.

### Results

While a low turnout was predicted, voter turnout for the October 23 parliamentary elections was on a par with turnout from the previous elections, reaching 55 percent. Although Serbian Kosovars did not vote due to pressure from political representatives to boycott the elections, the rest of Kosovo saw a 5 percent increase in turnout. The most significant factor in the election's success was the get-out-the-vote campaign, which mobilized 2,153 volunteers and demonstrated that large-scale volunteer campaigns can be effective in Kosovo. The door-to-door contact with voters also provided local organizations with a better understanding of the electorate, more solid alliances with other organizations and a greater ability to successfully run major campaigns in the future.