

Kosovo – Serbia Reality TV

Since the conflict in 1999, there has been little cooperation or inter-ethnic dialogue between the majority and minority populations of Kosovo and Serbia. As the question of Kosovo's final status becomes resolved, increased opportunities for inter-ethnic communication will be critical for the region's security. Sustainable peace and stability can be achieved between Kosovo and Serbia only if the region's ethnic groups better understand each others perspectives.

So, how do you begin to bridge two societies—Albanian and Serbian—divided by language, culture, opportunity, and a recent bloody conflict? An entertaining and thought provoking inter-ethnic reality television show where winners are determined by their ability to cooperate rather than divide!

That's the premise behind *CooperaTiVa*, the first reality TV show targeted at increasing inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation. Three partners (AED, Partes Social Advertising in Macedonia, and Fractal in Belgrade) have come together to design this innovative project to fill the gap and foster cooperation between youth from Kosovo and Serbia. The eight-episode TV series shows inter-ethnic teams of youth working together to tackle specific challenges, while competing against the other team. Woven into each episode of the series are tips and techniques to facilitate improved coordination, conflict mediation, and tolerance for the diverse project beneficiaries — including the program staff, production team, *CooperaTiVa* participants, and viewers themselves.

In February 2008, after outreach efforts in Kosovo and Serbia, the *CooperaTiVa* project team selected 12 young people, ages 18-21, to confront head-on the



misinformation, stereotypes and other obstacles that shape the society they are inheriting. *CooperaTiVa* filming was completed in the summer of 2008 in various locations throughout Montenegro. By December, 2008, the project team had completed post-production of the series and all the episodes were broadcast on national stations in Serbia and Kosovo.

The educational package, *CooperaTiVa: A Guide for Conflict Resolution*, which is comprised of a 35-minute video and a teacher's facilitation guide has been distributed to high schools in Kosovo and Serbia so the lessons of *CooperaTiVa* can live on through school reconciliation programs and Civics Education courses.

After watching selected episodes, surveyed viewers reported the following:

- 92.42% expressed increased awareness about the importance and need for better interethnic cooperation.
- 93.37% stated they had greater interest in communicating more with youth of the other ethnicity.
- 90.53% felt more positive about the future of interethnic relations in the region.



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