Rebuilding the Mostar Bridge

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Background

• Bridge built in 1576 by the Ottoman architect Mimar Hajrudin

• “Stari Most” means old bridge - Mostar means keeper of the bridge

• Symbol of Mostar, Bosnia and Yugoslavia and of ethnicities living together in the Balkans

• Mostar population was equal shares of Croats, Bosniacs and Serbs – the bridge was their joint identity and the symbol of harmony

• On November 9, 1993 bridge was destroyed by shelling

• Bridge is about 37 meters long and 4 meters wide
The Project

• Objective: to contribute to the climate of reconciliation among the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the recognition and rehabilitation of their common cultural heritage in Mostar.

• Components:
  – Bridge and towers
  – Public infrastructure in the old city
  – Some neighborhood improvements
  – Three monuments – community buildings for each ethnic group

• Governance:
  – Bridge is owned by Mostar city
  – Project Coordination Unit reported to city
  – Partnership among Mostar City, World Bank, UNESCO, World Monuments Fund and Aga Khan Trust for Culture
  – Historical accuracy and integrity assured by international committee of experts ICE - assembled and managed by UNESCO
  – Finance organized by World Bank with all money place in Trust Funds that use all World Bank rules for financial reporting and procurement
  – Independent oversight by private engineering firm
Financing

Who was involved and why?

- Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina requested financing
- World Bank’s objective was to foster reconciliation arguing that reconciliation was a necessary precondition for revitalizing the economy and rebuilding the social fabric of the city
- Three donors contributed in-kind: France, Turkey and EU as did WMF and AKTC
- World Bank was joined by Italy, Netherlands, Croatia and Council of Europe Development Bank to raise $15 million total cost of project

Involvement the communities
- Attitude surveys conducted before and after
- Public Relations campaign launched
- Choice of monuments key variable
Results

• Reconstruction to high standards of historic preservation
• Inscription on World Heritage List in 2005
• Tourism and economic rationale validated
• How much did project contribute toward reconciliation?
Lessons

• Will World Bank support this type of project in the future?
• What motivated donors to fund Mostar?
• Is complex oversight necessary?
• How does this compare with other approaches to reconciliation?
• Is there an economic justification?