



PRESS RELEASE

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Contracting teams give helping hand to Kosovo school

Story by: Rachel Clark, 409th Contracting Support Brigade

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo – Members of the 1902nd Contingency Contracting Team used the A-B-Cs of contracting as part of a humanitarian project enabling more than 1,400 students in Zhur, Kosovo to enjoy simple comforts in their school for the first time in many years.

The school recently underwent major repairs with the assistance of Army Kosovo Peacekeeping Force teams from Camp Bondsteel and the U.S. embassy office in Pristina, Kosovo.



In Kosovo, a local school in Zhur has been recently renovated. This is one of the humanitarian projects that was managed under the contracting team out at Camp Bondsteel. (photo by Rachel Clark)



After multiple renovations to a school in Zhur, Kosovo, local children watch as visitors come to inspect the progress. The children will now enjoy their school with renovations including the repair of eight classrooms, fixing the damaged portion of the room and installing tiles in the hallways. Work was managed by the contracting team out at Camp Bondsteel. (photo by Col. Debra Daniels)

The school, offering grades 1-9, is located in a more than 50-year-old building. When the project was first reviewed for consideration, reports showed the school was in severe need of repair.

“The building itself was a rundown facility with holes in the walls and few working lights,” said contracting officer Capt. Travis Dennis of the 1902 Contingency Contracting Team.

In 2009 the school was one of the several projects nominated for the humanitarian assistance program. After the project received approval, a contract was awarded to renovate the school. Renovation included repairing eight classrooms, fixing the damaged portion of the roof, and installing tiles in the hallways.

“After the final site visit, we realized there was so much more to be done to bring this school to a condition that promoted a safe and secure environment where the students would be able to learn,” Dennis said.

The engineer working as the contracting officer’s representative on the project, 1st Lt. Felix Reyes, 92nd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, identified several additional areas that could be renovated quickly before the students returned for the fall semester.



Sahit Kurtaj (left), principal of the Zhur, Kosovo, school and former student and teacher, talks with senior enlisted advisor, Sgt. Maj. Bentura Fernandez of the 409th Contracting Support Brigade, about the history of the Zhur school. (photo by Col. Debra Daniels)

"I can't promise anything additional will be approved, but if the legal office says we can only do one thing, what would you chose? The principal said lights. The kids can't learn if they can't see," said Dennis after talking to the principal about additional renovations.

The contracting team was able to utilize the remaining balance of the funds to further improve the school.

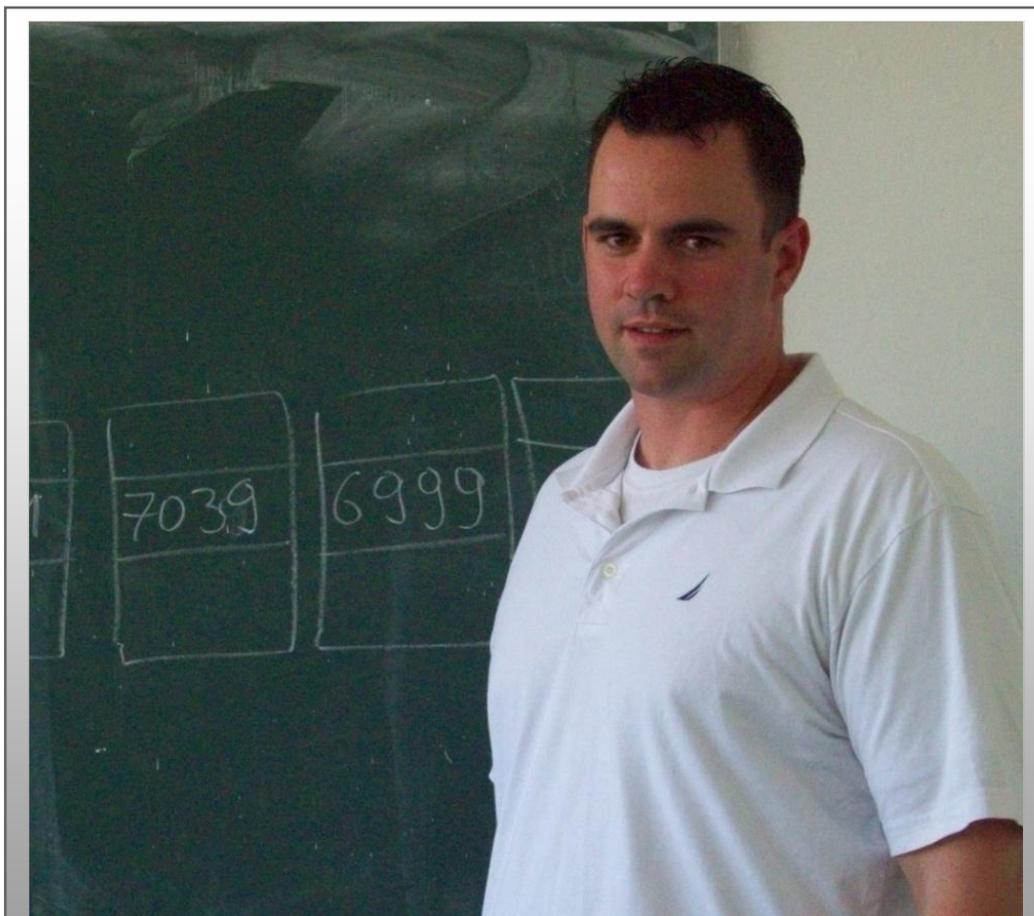
So far, repairs to the school include a new roof, new floors, painted walls, 13 new doors, 300 new overhead lights, 120 electric outlets and switches, eight chalkboards and construction of a retaining wall.

The school renovation has had great impact on the community.

"This restoration has supplied many jobs to the local small businesses, as well as contributing to the local social economic development," said Lt. Col. Pete Reynierse, 1902nd Contingency Contracting Team, chief. Balkans Regional Contracting Office

The Balkans Regional Contracting Office also supports many other projects that cover the entire Balkans region. The territory includes Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia, among others.

“This is a great start for this school, and I am looking forward to seeing this project to completion.” Dennis said.



Contracting Officer Capt. Travis Dennis of the 1902nd Contingency Contracting Team poses in front of a new chalk board recently installed at the Zhur school in Kosovo. Dennis was key in overseeing the work done to the improvements of the school done as a humanitarian project. (photo by Rachel Clark)