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**ALBANIA**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Protecting Women's Legal Rights

### Protecting women by training future judges and prosecutors

Albania has passed critical laws in support of women's legal rights in recent years, including a new family code and anti-trafficking legislation. But it remains one of the few countries in Eastern Europe without legal protections for victims of domestic violence. The few laws that do exist to protect women are inadequately enforced due to poor judicial administration and lack of awareness of domestic violence across the legal profession.



Photo: Magistrates School

Second-year law students at Albania's Magistrates School in Tirana learn about legal and judicial aspects of family law and domestic violence.

***Albania has integrated domestic violence, trafficking in persons, and gender sensitivity coursework into the Magistrate School's curriculum, training future generations of Albanian legal professionals to protect women's legal rights.***

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A USAID-supported program, the Women's Legal Rights Initiative, has successfully integrated domestic violence, trafficking in persons, and gender-sensitivity coursework into the existing curriculum of the Magistrates School which trains Albania's future judges and prosecutors, for the first time exposing them to these issues. The school's domestic violence curriculum now includes 14 hours of instruction for second-year law students on topics ranging from the legal and judicial aspects of family law and domestic violence to the role of prosecutors in these cases.

By all accounts, the curriculum has been a resounding success. In their evaluations, students gave this course the highest rating. The courses on trafficking in persons and gender awareness and sensitivity follow the same format, framing the legal and judicial issues in a social and economic perspective. More importantly, judges and prosecutors carry the specialized knowledge and heightened sensitivity that they acquire in these courses and apply them in their professional lives.

Ariana Fullani, Executive Director of the Magistrates School, says these courses have been fully integrated into the institution's permanent, ongoing curriculum and will be funded by the school's budget beginning in the fall of 2006. This decision demonstrates the direct impact USAID's work in protecting women's legal rights now and for future generations.