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KOSOVO

CASE STUDY

Justice Moves Faster

New equipment expedites court work, reduces case backlog



Photo: NCSC/Albert Avdiu

Baki Krasniqi, a judge with the Pristina Municipal Court, discovered that audio-recording improved his ability to render decisions quickly.

“My work is much easier, I can check what’s been said and review it – it’s evidence of what takes place during the court session,” says Baki Krasniqi, a judge from the Municipal Court in Pristina.

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Challenge

In order for citizens to respect the justice system, the courts must function properly. In Kosovo, a tremendous backlog of cases meant that justice moved slowly – tying up even small cases for years. In addition, poorly administered courts lacked modern court reporting equipment and procedures. In an attempt to improve the justice system’s efficiency and speed up procedures, a new Code of Criminal Procedure mandated that all courts install and use audio-recording equipment. But most courts did not see why it was necessary to comply – many court officials were not convinced of the benefits of using the equipment when the court was in session.

Initiative

USAID developed an assistance program for Kosovo’s justice system that targeted court administration as the basis of courtroom efficiency. Audio-recording equipment is a simple tool that has been shown to enhance court efficiency, while ensuring verbatim recording of procedures. To demonstrate its effectiveness and convince officials that the equipment could bring about positive change, USAID helped install 10 audio-recording units in selected municipal and district courts.

Results

The demonstration showed that session minutes could be produced faster with the audio-recording unit than with the existing manual recording system. The results impressed both judges and prosecutors. Judges found they could go back and review the sessions immediately, something they appreciated greatly. But the impact of the pilot project went far beyond the participating courts: after seeing how the equipment worked, the Government of Kosovo decided to purchase 25 additional units for other courts in Kosovo.