



CONFLICT MITIGATION

Theaters - a model for bringing communities closer

Two theatres, the Pristina-based Centre for Development of Children's Theatre (CCTD) and the Ghetto Theatre from Laplje Selo, are using the world of theatre as a model for bringing communities closer. The theater troops, one Albanian speaking and the other Serbian speaking, conducted theatre workshops in Prizren, Laplje Selo/Llaplasell and Pristina. The theaters, in cooperation with artists from England, organized a joint workshop by using stories from different ethnicities to further explore the role the art can play in creating a multi-cultural spirit.

"The workshops were especially useful, because they brought together creative minds, different perspectives and different expertise. They opened the possibility of continued cooperation for mutual benefit in the future," points out Jeton Neziraj, executive director of the CCTD.



Theatre workshop held in Laplje Selo with Kosovo Serbian children: Balinese masks, created by Tiffany Strawson and Balinese craftsmen and designed to be adaptable to different cultural situations, were used to encourage children to express themselves.

The workshops resulted in a short theater piece Rainbow Bridge scheduled to be performed in September in both theaters, and in the future throughout 15 other community theaters.

The workshops are part of the Arrow Kosovo/a project, which aims to create a multicultural theater troop that will continue to encourage reconciliation through cross cultural dialogue and creative conflict transformation.

RULE OF LAW

New Program to Support Judiciary

USAID/Kosovo's new Justice Support Program, working with the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and other institutions to improve the courts' functioning and increase the public's trust in an independent judiciary, starts this month.

"Establishing the rule of law as a strong practice is one of the top priorities of the US Government," says Michael Farbman, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director. "This program will help address key challenges in the transfer of justice sector competencies from the international community to Kosovo's rule of law institutions."

The three-year program will be implemented by the National Center for State Courts. The program will help strengthen the courts by working closely with the KJC, the institution responsible for court operations, and aid the KJC in a future restructuring of the courts. Additionally, the program will work with the system of nominating judges and prosecutors, as well training for judges and court staff to help the judiciary work effectively and professionally.

Through technical assistance, training, and rehabilitation support, a selected group of municipal and district courts will implement changes needed to improve how cases are handled and reduce the case backlog. The KJC will also be aided in providing judicial services to minority communities. Within the Ministry of Justice, the program will help develop experts' skills in legal drafting and policy formulation.

Legal Clinic Students ruled in Several Mock Trials

Fifty students of the Law Faculty at the University of Prishtina participated in "mock trials" organized from July 3-5th. Mock trials have become an effective and popular way of incorporating practical skill-building components in the law curriculum, and are one component of an ongoing reform at the Law Faculty.

Participants were honored with certificates of completion upon finishing the mock trials, which covered two criminal cases and three civil cases.



Graduates of legal clinics rule a mock trial

The mock trials offered students a complete overview of court proceedings, from opening statements through sentencing. The activities have been implemented by ABA Rule of Law Initiative, USAID's partner in implementing the Legal Professional Development project.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Supporting local government reform and decentralization

USAID's Effective Municipal Initiative (EMI) is a new project aimed at supporting decentralization and the local government reform process in Kosovo.

The program is designed to help stand up new municipalities called for in the settlement document, assist the Ministry of Local Government Administration in creating and promulgating the legislative framework for decentralization, and help municipalities increase own-source revenue and improve service delivery.

"USAID in Kosovo has been working closely with its partners in building democratic institutions, and we strongly believe that decentralization and local empowerment will become the centerpieces of this new democracy. Kosovars will be judged by the quality of the governance they achieve, especially at the local level, and this program will help Kosovo improve the quality of that governance," said Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director.

The three-year program, implemented by Research Triangle Institute International (RTI), will provide hands-on training for local government officials in the new municipalities. The program will also provide funds to address some infrastructure or information technology needs of the participating municipalities

INSTITUTION STRENGTHENING

Helping Improve Performance at KEK

A management training for Kosovo Energy Cooperation (KEK) junior and senior managers concluded with a ceremony on June 29th. The course was the first in a series of training efforts aimed at improving the performance of KEK management.

Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID Mission Director, honored the 26 participants of the trainings with certificates of completion and emphasized the need for further improvements. "We hope that our assistance will help instill the effective management skills and procedures that have become a necessity within organizations such as KEK. These skills will empower KEK's management to successfully operate an efficient organization that will enable Kosovo's economy to become competitive in the global business environment," said Farbman.

The one-week training addressed management competencies that will help KEK as it transitions to meet new business objectives. Topics covered in the training included roles and responsibilities, motivating employees, team building, change management, time management, and communications.

The training was led by the United States Energy Association.

Upcoming Events

August 14 -- USAID-supported Kosovo Inclusive Community Change and Reconciliation (KICCR) program, implemented by Partners Kosovo will organize a one-day lessons learned conference



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