



CONFLICT MITIGATION

New Multi-ethnic Reconciliation Projects

On February 27, the USAID-supported "Kosovo Community Reconciliation Project", implemented in partnership with Freedom House, signed grant agreements with 14 Kosovar NGO's.

Partnering NGOs and projects are Radio Urban FM, for "Human Rights Advocacy on Minority Issues"; Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), for "Strengthening Cross Community Activism"; Media PULS Association, (ELSA Mitrovicë/a), for "Youth Dialogue: Serbia - Kosovo"; OJAZAS - Youth of JAZAS Kosovo, for "Equal Opportunities for All: I have Right to Know"; Forum Gjakova, for "Cooperation between Serbian and Albanian Local Communities: Civil Society Initiatives"; Kosovska Devojka, Kamenicë/a, for "Stop Corruption". Including Women's Center "PREHJA", Skenderaj/Serbica, for "Reconciliation and Peace Building"; Schueler Helfen Leben - Kosovo, for "Stimulating Community Interaction through Youth Participation in Rahovec"; Lansdowne Gjilan, for "Language as a Unity Bridge"; Radio Contact Plus (RCP), Mitrovicë/a, for "Contact across the Ibër/Ibar"; Hareja, Rahovec/Orahovac, for "Discovering New Talents"; and the Center for the Development of Children's Theatre (CDCT), Pristina and Gheto Theatre from Laplaselle/Laplje Selo, for "ARROW Kosova/o";

The Kosovo Community Reconciliation Program supports community advocacy, public dialogue, communication, and cooperation among communities in Kosovo with the objective of increasing public understanding of issues affecting the lives of different communities. Freedom House, along with partners Foundation for Democratic Initiatives, the Balkan Human Rights Network, and Civic Dialogue encourages multi-ethnic cooperation on issues such as freedom of movement, cultural preservation, youth engagement, and objective media reporting.

DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

"Insight into Public Opinion" Study Released

On February 21, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) released the results of a qualitative public

opinion survey after completing extensive research within both Albanian and Serb Kosovar communities.

The study focused on satisfaction with the quality of living and attitudes toward Kosovo's status process. The survey, which follows similar exercises completed in 2004 and 2005, is part of an ongoing program aimed at training political parties on research methodologies and in the use of qualitative research in developing positions.

Supported by USAID, NDI Kosovo programs include legislative strengthening, political party development and civic participation.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Reporting on Trafficking

Writing about a complex and sensitive issue, such as trafficking in human beings, is never easy. In Kosovo, covering the complex issues surrounding human trafficking is further complicated by the fact that the problem surfaced relatively recently and remains "hidden" from public debate.

Media, however, can play a critical role in providing the public with information about trafficking. Therefore, the USAID-supported Partnership against Trafficking in Human Beings (PATH) project, implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Kosovo Population Foundation, together with USAID's Media Assistance Project, organized a four-part training to help journalists better understand and ethically report on this form of modern slavery.

The training involved interaction with a survivor of trafficking, so that journalists could hear real-life stories and better understand how to craft a responsible story. Her key message was: don't identify a victim in your stories; it can threaten her life. Other speakers included representatives from the trafficking unit of KPS, the public prosecutor's office, international organizations, the Office for Good Governance, government ministries, a shelter for victims, the journalist association, clinical psychologists treating victims, and others. Following the training the PATH project also announced a contest for the best trafficking stories.

Studying the Knowledge and Behavior of Kosovars on Trafficking of Human Beings

“**T**rafficking is somewhat or very widespread in Kosovo,” according to a report on Trafficking in Human Beings released on February 22.

The report outlines that the public is aware of the existence of trafficking of human beings in Kosovo, and that they are concerned about the extent of it. However there is a tendency to view Kosovo only as a transit place rather than as a place of origin. Also, respondents often confuse trafficking with voluntary prostitution. More than 80% of those surveyed from the general population, and 90% of the most vulnerable, agreed that girls are the victims and the traffickers are the criminals. Furthermore, most believed the government should do more to assist victims. When asked if they agreed with the statement, I could never be trafficked, 25% of the girls surveyed disagreed, but when asked differently - Do you feel you are at risk of being trafficked, 45% believed they are at risk either to some or a great extent.

Another important finding is public attitudes toward survivors, many of whom have been stigmatized. A majority of client-respondents agreed that the responsibility for caring for survivors should be placed on society at large, and that citizens should provide information to the police about trafficking. However, there remains some uncertainty that this is achievable. At least one respondent indicated that this would jeopardize their safety.

A random sample of 500 Kosovars aged 16 and older (general population) and 300 of the most vulnerable (young girls aged 14 to 18) were included in the survey. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten former victims of trafficking and eighteen clients of sex workers. According to Habit Hajredini, Director of the Prime Minister's Office for Good Governance, "this research completes an important activity incorporated in the Kosovo Government's Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings."

The research was commissioned under the Partnership Against Trafficking in Human Beings (PATH) project, a partnership between Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Kosova Population Foundation (KOPF). For more information on the report see <http://www.kopfund.org>. The research was conducted by Prism Research.

Ethics Training for Ministry of Justice Staff

Fourteen staffers from the Department of Legal Affairs, within the Ministry of Justice, attended legal ethics training from February 20-24.

As a part of the training, participants were given a hypothetical case of an ethics violation based upon existing principals for lawyers and the Kosovo Civil Service Code of Conduct, and then broken into the teams of prosecutor or defense lawyer to argue the case.



From left: Arben Xheladini and Alban Sutaj prepare their case with assistance from DLA-Piper attorney Mr. John Vukelj.

The trainers included three attorneys from the law firm DLA-Piper, who are contributing pro-bono hours to an ongoing training program for MOJ staff. This training is supported by USAID through World Learning.

Upcoming Events

March 12, -- Dr. Michael Farbman, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will speak at the launch of USAID supported Public - Private Educational Partnership between Arizona State University and University of Prishtina.

March 16 -- A Memorandum of Understanding between the American University in Kosovo and Rochester Institute of Technology marks the establishment of the Center for Natural Resource Development at the AUK with support from USAID.



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