



ADVOCATING THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A proposed regulation to require municipalities to designate a driving school to modify a vehicle for use by disabled driving students was debated at a roundtable discussion organized by Jeto Jetën (Live the Life). Jeto Jetën is a civil society organization (CSO) that promotes the interests of people with disabilities. Participants, forty of them included officials from the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunication, members of the Central Assembly, driving school representatives, and people with limited physical abilities. Following the event, Central Assembly Member Flora Brovina voiced her commitment to creating equal opportunities for all citizens, stating that "a truly democratic society involves the integration of all citizens: people with limited abilities, minorities, etc. As a deputy of Kosovo's Central Assembly, I strongly support this initiative." Jeto Jeten will continue to work with Brovina and other elected officials to ensure that the regulation passes. Jeto Jetën and other CSOs throughout Kosovo have found local and central officials increasingly open to such public dialogues and CSO initiatives.

Supported through USAID's Democracy and Governance program, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) provides training and technical assistance to more than 60 CSOs in Kosovo, including Jeto Jeten, as they advocate to elected officials for improved services. With continued cooperation between civil society leaders and elected officials, Kosovo's citizens can expect to see more legislation that responds to their needs and interests.

KCBS PROJECT INTRODUCED TO CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS STAKEHOLDERS

The development of construction materials businesses in Kosovo was addressed at a March 7 meeting organized by the USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project (KCBS) with the representatives from the construction sector. "Construction materials" is one of three business clusters that USAID/Kosovo will address under the KCBS project. KCBS project goals in this area are to help strengthen business associations and service providers, aid in standards development, facilitate increased investment in the construction materials businesses, and develop testing procedures to ensure standards are met.



"With license please", the logo of the campaign for provision of driving lessons for people with disabilities.

USAID FORGING ALLIANCES IN RULE OF LAW

Under the auspices of USAID's Judicial Reform project implementer, National Center for State Courts (NCSC), a U.S.-based private law firm is volunteering its expertise to strengthen rule of law in Kosovo. DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary (DLA Piper), a large global law firm, will work with NCSC and the Department of Justice with United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK DOJ) in the development of the justice system in Kosovo.

"This specific partnership, a donation by a private law firm, brings needed expertise to Kosovo" said Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director

This undertaking will include drafting new laws, revising existing legislation, and training, primarily relating to criminal law and criminal procedure. These efforts will be carried out in cooperation with the UNMIK DOJ and with other international and local institutions working on judicial transition in Kosovo in order to ensure greater synergies between programs. DLA Piper's contributions will be made through its non-profit affiliate, New Perimeter, through which the firm will donate approximately 4,000 attorney hours in 2005.

KOSOVO POLICE SERVICE AND ITS FUTURE

Role of the Kosovo Police Service and its future transformation was the subject of a one-day workshop organized at the Advocacy Training & Resource Center (ATRC) on March 14.

The workshop explored the duties of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), and possible transformation of changes that might occur by the end of the year. Today, KPS is a "reserved power institution," under the management of the international administration. The speakers, Col. Behar Selmani, Head of KPS support service, and Steve Bennett, head of Kosovo Police Service School, discussed the present situation of KPS, while Nicholas Booth, senior adviser to the Deputy SRSG for Police and Justice, spoke about the law being drafted by the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) Pillar 1 with regard to the police. Booth expressed his belief that authority over KPS will soon to be transferred to local institutions.

During the six years of its existence, KPS has grown to over 6,200 police officers, due to the efforts of the Kosovo Police Service School, an integral part of the KPC success. The school offers numerous training courses which in other countries are offered by separate schools.

ATRC is supported by USAID's Kosovo NGO Advocacy Program, a cooperative agreement with East-West Management Institute.

ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

Confusion regarding maintenance responsibilities of infrastructure projects is a concern that USAID's Municipal Infrastructure and Support Initiative (MISI) has addressed. Working with local communities and government officials, MISI focused on balancing needs and responsibilities between citizens and local government on specific projects, thus trying to ensure proper maintenance and sustainability of each project.

MISI, implemented by Mercy Corps, in cooperation with Community Working Groups, is in the process of designing a maintenance plan for each project, whether it is a road, a school annex or a water project. The plan will include a "contract" between community residents and municipality, outlining the roles and responsibilities for each party involved in the project,

communities and local government alike, in order to ensure the infrastructure project's sustainability.

USAID PROGRAMS COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER FOR BENEFIT OF KOSOVAR SOCIETY

Following study visits and training programs organized by USAID's Participant Training Program (PTP), implemented by World Learning, Kosovars have undertaken result-oriented activities upon their return. One study tour for eight Kosovar wood processors resulted in concrete action upon their return - the formation of the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo.

The study tour helped the group understand that one key to success in business is to act together to develop Kosovo's wood processing sector. The participants, after visiting several wood manufacturers in Blue Field, North Carolina in October 2004, recognized that one of the barriers blocking their businesses' expansion is the lack of cooperation between companies. To increase cooperation and to institutionalize that cooperation, they established the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo, with help from USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support, implemented by Chemonics International. The eight participants of the PTP US study trip are charter members of the association and now are in the process of drafting a strategic action plan.

The wood processors' study trip is one of several tours/training programs organized by PTP in cooperation with other USAID partners that is helping meet USAID's objective to develop Kosovo's human capacity.

Upcoming Events

March 28, Mission closed -- Easter Monday

March 30, Wood Processors Trade Fair

April 2, ABA/CEELI present the Publication of Legal Reform Index

April 6, Meeting with Partners



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