



CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

Toward an informed citizenry

In June, USAID/Kosovo announced the beginning of two new projects, the Kosovo Civil Society Project and Kosovo Assistance to Media Project. The programs build on previous USAID support to these sectors. Their objectives are to develop an informed citizenry that influences public policy decisions, and at the same time holds government officials accountable. Good governance is critical to progress in Kosovo, thus the programs are designed to address and assist citizens' participation in the political decision-making process.

Both projects will be implemented by the International Research & Exchanges Boards (IREX), an international nonprofit organization with a \$48 million portfolio worldwide specializing in education, independent media, Internet development, and civil society programming. Founded in 1968, IREX was the first US organization to conduct bilateral educational programs with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, including the former Yugoslavia. Since 1997, IREX, funded by a USAID grant and ECA funding, has supported the development of Kosovo's independent media sector.

Playing for Peace

On July 13, a friendly soccer match between community members and staff members of USAID/Kosovo marked the official opening of the sports field in Bostan/e, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo Municipality. The sports field project is the fourth project in this municipality supported by USAID's Municipal Infrastructure and Support Initiative (MISI).

The rainy weather didn't stop children, young people, senior citizens, women and men from the community from attending the event, which also included a soccer match between Mercy Corps staff and the staff of the municipal administration, and a basketball match between Mercy Corps and USAID staff members.

MISI is designed to assist communities and improve conditions for returns and reintegration of minorities through cooperative efforts of ethnic groups. The sports field will serve Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Kosovar youth from Bostan/e and the surrounding villages.



Basketball and soccer for tolerance and peace July 13th
Bostan/e, Novobërd/Novo Brdo Municipality

The total project cost was 26,829.89 euros, with the municipality contributing 5,991.20, 20,838.69 by USAID, and the community contributing labor of 130 euros.

ECONOMY

"Kosovo at the Crossroads" - Dialog Meets with Success

"Kosovo at the Crossroads" was the title of a conference developed and co-hosted by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) project in cooperation with Alliance of Kosovo Businesses (AKB). The conference was designed to encourage participants, from both the public sector and from private business, to think "outside the box" about the economic challenges facing Kosovo.

The two-day conference brought together some sixty private sector representatives, key government officials, and donor agency staff to examine four possible but very different futures for Kosovo. The scenarios were to prompt discussion on what actions need to be taken immediately, regardless of when status is defined, and whether the public or private sectors take the lead on economic development.

The conference, held June 20-22, identified five crucial issues that Kosovo's public and private sectors need to address together over the next six months. The issues included: identifying proper roles for the private and public sectors in social and economic development, human resource development in basic education and skills devel-

opment, and assuring transparency and rule of law in tax policy, industry product standards, infrastructure development, and finance reform.

The participants formed task groups for each issue with both public and private representatives. The groups are to develop clear and specific action plans that will improve the business environment in Kosovo, help businesses grow, increase employment, and encourage foreign direct investment.

The task groups will develop new kinds of private-public partnerships to limit the costs of these efforts to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and encourage the private sector to accept both greater responsibility and accountability in developing the business environment in Kosovo.

This summer the groups will meet and identify specific plans and targets. Work on the action plans is expected to begin this fall and be completed by the end of the year.

LEGAL NEWS

Judicial ethics examined as basis for fair judiciary

Judicial ethics are the basis for a fair and impartial judiciary, agreed area judges and prosecutors attending a June 20 meeting in Peja/Pec. The meeting was part of a series of meetings arranged by USAID/Kosovo's Justice System Reform project, implemented by the National Center for States' Courts.

John N. Fields, a U.S. judge and the main speaker at the meeting, emphasized that professional ethics in judiciary is the most important requirement, and is the basis for true justice.

Ethics in the judiciary is closely connected with the behavior of each judge and prosecutor, said Mejreme Halili, the national coordinator of the Kosovo Judicial Institute, who emphasized that members of the judiciary are trained so their behavior is the same during and after working hours, as a reflection of true justice.

New Structure of Judicial System Discussed

The Law on Courts Working Group, supported by USAID's Justice System Reform Project, held a three-day session in June in Ohrid, Macedonia.

The working group met to discuss the new structure of Kosovo's Judicial System, in view of the approaching transfer of powers from United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG).

The working group is a joint effort of UNMIK/Department of Justice (DOJ) and Kosovar representatives, including representatives from UNMIK/DOJ, PISG/Prime Minister's legal office, representatives of the judicial committee in Kosovo's Assembly, Chamber of Advocates, judges, Kosovo Judicial and Prosecutors Council and Department of Justice Affairs.

Other stakeholders, such as USAID, OSCE, Council of Europe and US Office in Pristina, were observers during the sessions of the working group. This was the second session of the working group to discuss and agree on the recommended new structure of the judiciary in Kosovo.

The new Law on Courts will be drafted by DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary, a US-based international law firm, as part of their pro-bono legal assistance in Kosovo.

Kosovo's Court Management

On June 27 through July 1, USAID's Justice Reform Project in Kosovo facilitated the Court Management Seminar, an introductory seminar for court staff in Kosovo, including judges and administrators. The seminar dealt with a variety of topics encountered by the court system on daily basis, such as human resources and hiring processes, financing courts, and information technology systems.

The week-long seminar was led by legal experts with broad experience in the U.S. state courts' systems. Information obtained through the seminar evaluations collected from 40 participants of the seminar at the completion showed very favorable opinions of all segments of the seminar. USAID's Justice Reform Project in Kosovo is implemented by the National Center for States' Courts.

Upcoming Events

July 15, Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will tour the projects funded by the Property Tax Division in Prizren Municipality.



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