



GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS

Second class of praktikants finishes internships and new group starts

Five judicial praktikant (internships) graduates of the Judicial Praktikant Program, joined by 20 law graduates who will start their internships, were honored at a ceremony on May 18 in Pristina.

The Judicial Praktikant Program is a one-year internship led by the Kosovo Judges Association (KJA) to help new law graduates gain experience and fill a growing need for legal professionals. Though the legal community dedicated and hard working, Kosovo's judiciary is still fragile, noted Heather Goldman USAID/Kosovo's Deputy Mission Director, saying "The job (as a praktikant and a judge) brings many responsibilities, such as preserving independence and impartiality."

The ceremony was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Justice Syle Hoxha, Rexhep Haxhimusa, president of the Kosovo Judicial Council, and Martha McEntee, American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) Program Director, also spoke at the ceremony. Ymer Huruglica, KJA president, expressed his great appreciation to American people for their support in building an independent and advanced judiciary with international standards in Kosovo.

USAID project trains northern Kosovo municipalities and UN staff on program budgeting

Following a program budgeting training session with municipality officials in April, USAID's Local Government Initiative (LGI) conducted training for municipal representatives and United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) staff in northern Kosovo.

Representatives from Zvecan, Zubin Potok, and Leposavic/q, and north Mitrovice/a attended.

LGI is playing a central role in assisting the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE) introduce "Program Budgeting" and the "Medium Term Budget Framework" into the municipal government budget process for the 2007-2009 budget cycle. With program budgeting, decisions and responsibilities are focused at the municipal department level and citizens' needs are more clearly measured. The medium term budget framework mandates a three-year planning horizon for municipal governments, which will assist local governments in making and achieving their strategic plans.

Participants in the program included representatives of UNMIK and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as budget directors, heads of accounting, and finance directors from the municipalities. LGI has scheduled follow-up training and technical assistance to help all municipalities in Kosovo develop their municipal budgets for 2007-2009.

LGI is a three-year program implemented by RTI International to help municipalities develop and implement procedures that facilitate a more transparent and accountable local government.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

Civil society's contributions important, states Rockefeller Brothers Fund president

On May 18, as a part of its public debate cycle, the Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC), Pristina, hosted a discussion with Stephen Heintz, president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and local NGO representatives.

Heintz focused on recent developments with the negotiations on the future status of Kosovo, interethnic relations and confidence building, and the importance of civil society contributing to dialogue. "The Rockefeller Brothers Fund will continue to focus primarily on Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, while reserving flexibility to support exceptional regional and cross-boundary efforts," said Heintz.

The Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC) and Foundation for Democratic Initiatives (FDI) are partners of International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) in implementing the Kosovo Civil Society Project, a three-year USAID-funded project designed to support strengthening of civil society in Kosovo.

Media reporting on courts improves following training

A series of five workshops held in April and May for journalists helped reporters improve their reporting on legal issues, according to an analysis conducted by USAID's Media Assistance Project.

Mid-point during the workshop period, the Media Assistance Program analyzed print coverage, and determined usage of court terminology improved, length of stories increased and how the story was used by the newspaper. Seven print journalists attended all of the first four workshops, along with broadcast journalists, but only print reporting was analyzed as it was possible to develop simple measuring techniques. The workshops included guest speakers, arranged by the USAID's Justice System Reform Activity, such as judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, explaining terminology, procedures and laws. Over 20 journalists attended one or more session.

Dr. Maureen Taylor developed the analysis using a random sampling of papers, pre- and post-workshops, for the Media Assistance Program. "Approximately 65% of the stories cited more (post-workshops) than one source in their story. There appears to be fewer protocol journalism stories in this time period. Additionally, more than half (82%) of the stories relied on facts rather than opinions of the key players," according to Taylor's report. "The reporters continue to use key legal terminology correctly (90%) and there appears to be an increase in the number of stories that actually cite the law (paragraph and article) in the story.

This practice of citing the articles and explaining the

law to readers makes a story informative, educational, and interesting."

The Media Assistance Program is implemented for USAID by International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX); the Justice System Reform Activity, by National Center for State Courts (NCSC).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Livestock fair elects Miss Cow

The Ministry's of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development annual livestock fair was held in Gjakova on May 20. Sixteen members of Kosovo Association of Milk Producers (KAMP) brought approximately 50 milking cows and heifers to the livestock fair.

In addition to organizing the fair, KAMP issued awards for the best kept cattle. Awards included technical equipment for the farmers. The highest prize was the title "Miss Cow 2006", which went to a Simental cow. KAMP members won 13 rewards, including the title for Miss Cow. KAMP is an association that was founded and continues to be supported by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support Project.

The contest is designed as a fun and innovative way of educating farmers about appropriate cattle breeding and veterinary practices.

Upcoming Events

May 31 - USAID's Mission Director, Dr. Ken Yamashita will address the graduates of the American University Kosovo.

June 3- 7, USAID's Support to Peace and Security in Kosovo will conduct public screening of three documentaries, a total of six stories. The screening will take place in Mitrovica, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Shterpce/Sterpce, Gjilan/Gnjilane region and Pristina.

June 9, Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director will visit Ferizaj/Urosevac courthouse



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