



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Kosovo Government Committed to Building a Multi-Ethnic Society

The Government of Kosovo publically reinforced its commitment to building a common vision for a stable multi-ethnic nation at the signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USAID and the Prime Minister's Office for Community Affairs (PMOCA).

The MOU formalizes the cooperation between signing parties to work on identification and implementation of projects that benefit minority communities. According to the MOU each of the parties will commit 250,000 euros (for a combined total of 500,000 euros) to be used for projects in non-majority communities to improve living standards and create incentives for minorities to remain in Kosovo. The projects selected will address one of the following areas: economic security, freedom of movement and quality of life.



Tina Kaidanow, departing US Ambassador to Kosovo along Hashim Thaci, Prime Minister of Kosovo sign the Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister Hashim Thaci, US Ambassador Kaidanow and USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader attended the signing, which garnered widespread media coverage.

The projects identified through this cooperation will be implemented by USAID's Initiating Positive Change Program administered by the Academy for Educational Development (AED). USAID's Initiating Positive Change Program is a three-year activity to work with non-majority citizen groups on identification and prioritization of projects in their communities.

Kosovo Policy Action Network Established

The Kosovo Policy Action Network (KPAN), a network to advocate for policy change on issues important to non-majority communities was establi -

lished at a two-day conference held in Brezovica [Sterpce/Shterpce].

This national network aims to engage Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities to advocate for policy change on three identified priority issues for non-majority communities: freedom of movement, economic insecurity, and quality of life.

KPAN will operate through three different task groups formed to address the three identified priority areas. The task groups will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to develop a platform for policy change and in the following years will move forward, in cooperation with government institutions, to fund and implement actions from this policy platform. The task groups will be brought together periodically throughout the program to network, share experiences, and where appropriate, build on the ongoing initiatives of the other groups.

The conference that took place on June 13 and 14 gathered 62 representatives from 58 different NGOs across Kosovo involved in a broad range of sectors including health, education, cultural heritage, social work, human rights, handicapped and disabled rights, and media and business.

KPAN will invest genuine efforts in advocating for needed policy change in cooperation with the recently re-established Association of Serbian Journalists of Kosovo and the main Kosovo-Albanian media based in Pristina. Participating KPAN member organizations have expressed their intention for KPAN to become a leading lobby group in Kosovo for the Kosovo-Serb and other affiliated non-majority communities on issues affecting their quality of life, as well as the protection of non-majority rights guaranteed under existing Kosovo laws and regulations.

The work of the Kosovo Policy Action Network (KPAN) will be supported by USAID's Initiating Positive Change Program through its partner organization the Center for Civil Society and Development (CCSD).

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW

Executive Representative of the American Bar Association Shares Her Experience with Kosovo Lawyers

Former President of the American Bar Association and current Chair of the ABA CEELI Executive Board, Martha Barnett, joined Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, to address the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates (KCA) at a roundtable on June 22.

The roundtable was organized to explore the new role of the KCA as envisioned by the Constitution, and stressed the importance of the legal profession in upholding and protecting the Constitution. The President of the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates described the new role of the KCA in the justice system as mandated by the Constitution and KCA's role in supporting the constitution. Barnett drew lessons from the American experience and highlighted the importance of a strong, independent judiciary in a democratic society. She particularly stressed the responsibility of the KCA in upholding the new Kosovo Constitution. Her remarks sparked lively discussion about younger and more diverse membership in the KCA and its role in supporting human rights.

The ABA Rule of Law initiative is USAID's partner for the Legal Professional Development Initiative, a three year activity to help develop and institutionalize legal education elements that have been piloted. The initiative further strengthens the ethical and competent performance of legal professionals through the work with the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Carpentry Job Fair Organized in Peja/Pec

The conference room of the Hotel Dukagjini in Pejë/Pec was buzzing with conversations and expectations of many students attending the Carpentry Job Fair on June 25. The purpose of this event, organized by USAID's Kosovo Private Enterprise Program was twofold, a job fair and an exhibition.

The exhibition of woodwork by students of the Technical High School in Pejë/Pec introduced students of the 8th and 9th grades to the skills they can earn by enrolling at this school. The job fair, on the other hand, enabled students of the 12th and 13th grades to find an internship or employment.

"This is a great event as it will enable students to find employment. I have already hired one student, and will offer an internship with the possibility of employment following successful performance to another student," said Gani Lajqi, owner of Shpendi wood processing company in Pejë/Pec. In addition to creating employment opportunities for students, helping wood processing companies hire skilled workers, enabling the Association of Wood Processors of Kosova (AWPK) establish new linkages, and the Regional Environment Center to gather information and contacts, the event had a positive impact on the image of the Technical High School. "Our school is developing on a safe ground, hand in hand with market changes and requirements. We offer students the opportunity to learn the right skills for their future," said Syzana Matoshi, School Director in Pejë/Pec, at the press conference concluding the job fair.

However, students were not the only beneficiaries of the job fair. Arieta Vula, the Executive Director of the AWPK met with all participants at the event and as a result three new companies expressed their interest to become members of the AWPK. In addition, Ms. Vula announced that they will add a database to the AWPK website with information on graduates of the Carpentry Technical High School of Pejë/Pec, which will enable wood processing companies to search for and contact potential candidates with the right skills for employment.

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USAID Director Presented with Certificate of Appreciation

Excited students joined the administration of the Vëllezërit Frashëri High School in Decan/Decane, to present USAID/Kosovo Mission Director Patricia Rader with a certificate of appreciation. One of the students made a short speech about the importance of American friendship and thanked USAID on behalf of his group.



Students of the Vëllezërit Frashëri school organized a competition of Computer Knowledge

This symbolic ceremony took place on June 19 during Ms. Rader's visit to the school where she learned about USAID-funded computer classes and had the opportunity to speak with students and the director about on-going classes and the students' impressive results. The computer classes are part of an extracurricular activities initiative, administered by USAID's Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacities Across Sectors program, that provides supplementary computer and English classes at 13 schools around the country.

80 students have been following the classes in Decan/Decane since the program began there in September 2008, while throughout Kosovo the program has reached approximately 1,500 students so far.

USAID's Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacities Across Sectors program is implemented by World Learning.

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