



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ACTIVITY BRIEF

The American University in Bulgaria

Skaptopara Campus



The University is home of one of the most extraordinary multinational communities in the world. Students from 35 countries live, learn, and grow together at the Skaptopara campus.

The new facilities, pictured above, were constructed in 2008 with financial support from USAID.

Partners:

Republic of Bulgaria, City of Blagoevgrad, Open Society Institute

Geographic Targets:

Bulgaria

Project Duration:

2002-2012

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The American University in Bulgaria

The American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) was founded in 1991 as a cooperative venture between the Republic of Bulgaria, USAID, the City of Blagoevgrad, and the Open Society Institute, with the mission to educate future leaders for the historically troubled Balkan region – leaders committed to promoting mutual understanding and the core values of an open, democratic society. Located in a region at the crossroads of East and West, the Christian and the Muslim worlds, AUBG's mission is ambitious and its approach distinctly different for the region. AUBG offers students an American-style education steeped in the tradition of liberal learning and characterized by close student-faculty engagement, English-language instruction, a residential-life experience in U.S.-style residence halls, and the opportunity to interact with a diverse student body. The collaborative, interactive teaching fosters the development of intellectual reflection, critical thinking, and problem solving, and encourages personal initiative individual self-expression and civic responsibility.

The University opened in September 1991 with a first-year class of 208 students and 16 full-time faculty members. From that time to 2009, the average enrollment reached 1100 students, while the number of full-time faculty members grew to 54; and app. 2600 students have graduated from AUBG between 1991 and 2009.

Students graduate AUBG highly qualified to pursue productive careers and/or masters and doctoral degrees. The University has a significant impact on the region through the performance of its graduates, but what is more important about AUBG graduates is their capacity to adapt to change, think critically, and encounter new situations and problems with confidence. They have a firm foundation in the knowledge, skills and values that are essential to their professions as well as to their role as citizens and future leaders of the region.

Skaptopara Campus

Connecting living and learning is an essential feature of the AUBG education. The majority of students live on campus in the Skaptopara campus, which features three residence halls, an academic building, a library, a sports field, and a tree-lined footpath running alongside the Bistritsa River. The new academic building provides modern facilities: all classrooms incorporate the newest trends in information technologies and information resources. Students have access to fully equipped computer labs with high-speed Internet access and advanced software. AUBG has the largest English language library in Southeastern Europe with over 100,000 volumes and electronic subscriptions to 18,000 journals. The construction of this new, state of the art addition to AUBG's facilities was supported by USAID financial resources.

The AUBG Endowment Fund

In June 2002, USAID entered into a cooperative agreement with AUBG to provide funding for a sinking endowment of \$20 million that would help AUBG achieve financial sustainability, which was loosely defined as financially sustainable without U.S. Government assistance by FY 2008. Prior to 2002, AUBG received over \$38 million from USAID, including another sinking endowment established in 1997 which was exhausted by 2001. In June 2006, AUBG was 2 years ahead in the schedule for achieving sustainability, with the first balanced budget in its history. The University generates revenues through student loans, educational outreach programming, fundraising efforts, and student tuitions.

The Endowment Fund is currently in post-oversight period, which began on June 30, 2007 and extends for 5 years. During this period, USAID does not actively monitor the management of the Endowment or implementation of its program, but does retain certain residual refund and termination rights.