



COUNTRY PROFILE

JUNE 2006



Macedonian students from opposite ends of the country chat using a USAID supported computer lab and high speed wireless internet connectivity.

MACEDONIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1991
Population: 2 million
Annual income per person: \$2,350

For more information visit:
<http://macedonia.usaid.gov>

OVERVIEW



The U.S. is interested in maintaining peace and stability in Macedonia due to the country's strategic location in the Balkans. The U.S. was a signatory to the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement, which brought an end to conflict between ethnic Albanian insurgents and government security forces. Macedonia's main challenges are to reduce poverty, revive the economy and create jobs, and ease inter-ethnic tensions. In December 2005, the European Council granted Macedonia European Union (EU) candidate status (but did not set a date for the start of accession negotiations).

The U.S. supports Macedonia's entry into the EU and NATO, and towards this end USAID focuses on economic growth, good governance, and education.

PROGRAMS

REVIVE MACEDONIA'S ECONOMY

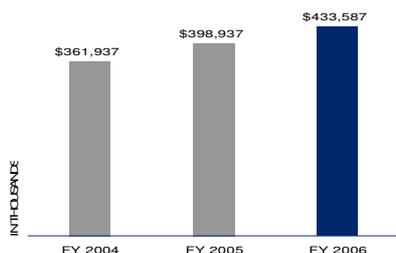
High unemployment, which reached 38.6% in 2005, is an important issue for Macedonia. The security crisis in 2001 negatively affected the economy. Slow privatization, low investment and productivity in the private sector, and a low-skilled workforce worsen the problem. USAID's assistance aims to improve the business environment, make private firms more competitive and increase foreign direct investment. USAID is supporting policy reforms to make it easier to do business in Macedonia, with the aim of growing new businesses and expanding existing ones. In the agri-business sector, USAID supports meat, dairy, and fruit and vegetable producers, processors, and retailers to become more profitable in domestic and international markets. Emphasis is placed on quality control and food safety, technological advances, adding value, and improving marketing. USAID is also helping the National Meat and Dairy Association, the Quality Control Laboratory, and the Seal of Quality program to become leaders advocating their industries' interests.

MACEDONIA GOES WIRELESS

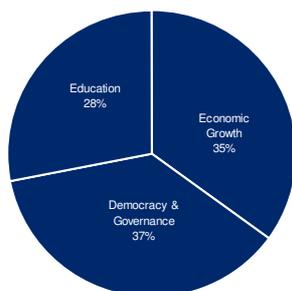
In 2005, with help from USAID, Macedonia became the first completely "wireless" country of its size in the world. The wireless network blankets almost every corner of the country. USAID is providing broadband wireless internet access to every primary and secondary school in Macedonia and to the offices of 50 local governments and 30 non-governmental organizations. The wireless network has increased competition and has already resulted in lower prices for broadband access.

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO MACEDONIA



Percent of FY 2006 Budget for Each Area



Democracy & Governance: \$10,161,600
 Economic Growth: \$9,720,915
 Education: \$7,563,924

PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE

Macedonia's journey to membership in the EU is progressing. However, the public's trust in the government is low. A 2005 public opinion survey found that only 34% of Macedonians believe their government is effective. To promote better governance, USAID focuses on increasing citizens' participation in all levels of government decision-making. USAID's Civil Society Strengthening Project helps Macedonian non-governmental organizations become more effective in representing citizens' interests and holding their government accountable. USAID works with the Parliament to support its development as an independent and professional branch of government, and to develop quality legislation in a way that maximizes public participation. USAID is building the capacity of local governments to take on increased responsibilities within the process of decentralization, and to effectively engage citizens in decision-making. USAID is also strengthening the rule of law by helping the government implement its plan for judicial reform, which includes increasing the efficiency of courts and bringing its laws to a European standard.

PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION TO ALL CITIZENS

As Macedonia prepares to enter the EU, it must continue to improve its education system, increase access for minorities and disadvantaged people, and ensure that curricula are relevant to the needs of the 21st century economy. USAID focuses on providing students with employable skills to compete in the job market. All primary and secondary schools in Macedonia now have computer labs and USAID is training teachers to use computers as learning tools in the classroom as well as how to use interactive and student-centered teaching methodologies. USAID assistance to vocational high schools has succeeded in building employment linkages between schools and businesses. USAID helped establish the private, accredited, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual South East European University (SEEU). USAID now works with students at SEEU to improve their business management, communications, and computer skills. To improve the status of the Roma, USAID provides scholarships, tutoring, and peer-to-peer training for Roma students in pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dick Goldman
 Mission Director
 Tel: (011-389-2) 308-0446

Local address:
 USAID/Macedonia
 Jurij Gagarin 15/III
 1000 Skopje
 Republic of Macedonia

U.S. contact details:
 Ed Dickens
 Macedonia Desk Officer
 Tel: (202) 712-1633

Department of State - USAID
 7120 Skopje Place
 Wash. DC 20521-7120

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need around the world since the Marshall Plan.