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FORECAST 
Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity
Across Sectors in Transition

**WORLD LEARNING
SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT:
April – September 2008**

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Strategic Objective 4.1 (Cross-Cutting)

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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

I. April – September 2008 Programming Highlights

U.S. Training

World Learning trained 16 participants in six US training programs during the period. To ensure that effective training takes place, World Learning continues to encourage training providers to use a combination of training methodologies, including classroom instruction, job shadowing, internships, and site visits. Here is a description of several of these programs:

Higher Education Summit for Global Development

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings convened The Higher Education Summit for Global Development in Washington, DC on April 29-30. Extending the vision of the 2006 University Presidents Higher Education Summit, the 2008 Summit was initiated to expand the role and impact of U.S. and foreign higher education institutions in worldwide social and economic development. The summit brought together education presidents from around the world with leaders from the government, philanthropy and business sectors. Dhori Kule, Rector of the University of Tirana, was selected to attend from Albania.

The goals of the summit were to showcase innovative and emerging approaches to educational interactions that go beyond current practices; provide a platform to discuss obstacles to higher education involvement in developing countries; and develop strategies to promote collaborative partnerships that take advantage of communications technology. The summit opened with an evening reception, dinner, and keynote speaker, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, on Tuesday, April 29. On Wednesday, April 30, the day began with a keynote speech by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and then moved on to presentations on innovative partnerships and networks related to higher education. In addition to attending presentations, Mr. Khule participated in the breakout groups, which considered strategies to expand or broaden new approaches to partnerships and networks, and how best to facilitate new kinds of linkages. A closing session summarized the new strategies and focused on determining the next steps.

MIUSA Disabilities Leadership Course Support

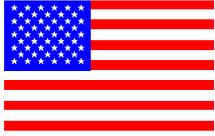
Anisa Proda, a blind liberal arts student, was selected to attend a course offered by Mobility International USA, called the *Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability* (WILD). Taking place in Eugene, Oregon, August 12 – September 2, the course was designed to give participants knowledge and skills that will enable them to develop innovative strategies for increasing the capacity of women with disabilities for leadership and employment. Ms. Proda was able to

participate in a full and intensive curriculum of workshops, site visits, and community based enrichment activities. She visited inclusive workplaces, observed vocational rehabilitation programs, met students with disabilities, and professionals who are involved in public schools and universities. Participants were instructed in education and employment policies and practices that promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the U.S. and the diverse countries represented by participants. In workshops on project development, effective use of the media, and fund-raising, Ms. Proda and her fellow participants developed practical action plans to educate the public and bring awareness to the disabled of the services available to them.

Judicial Reform

In September, six members of Albania's High Council of Justice, including its Deputy Chairman, and one member of the Ministry of Justice traveled to Boston to observe the system of evaluation of judges and internal investigation procedures within the US court system. Because judicial reform is a high priority within the Albanian system, the participants needed to understand the system by which judges in US courts are evaluated, by what criteria, with what frequency, and understand how complaints against judges are investigated, and when and how disciplinary actions can or should be taken against judges found guilty of professional misconduct.

Gabrielle Gropman, the former Administrative Director of the Harvard Mediation Program, a clinical program of the Harvard Law School, designed a week-long program that ensured these objectives were met through meetings at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and Superior Court to explore such topics as how to choose excellence; instituting ethical standards; the role of education for judges; the function of an evaluation committee; and the relationship between evaluation and discipline, presented by Supreme Judicial Court Justices, Superior Court Judges, and administrators and officials with various judicial committees. Once the participants return to Albania, they plan to establish a database with data protection to ensure a secure system that will provide confidentiality that will elicit more trust in the system of evaluation.



II. Washington, D.C.

A. Meetings, Conferences, and Presentations

- May 12–17, Colin Davies traveled to Macedonia, Kosovo and Croatia. In Macedonia and Kosovo he met with World Learning staff and with USAID Mission staff to discuss this year's and the two extension years' programs. In Croatia he also met with World Learning and USAID staff, and attended the USAID Mission close-out ceremony.
- May 24-30, Colin Davies and Dorothea Antonio presented at the NAFSA (Association of International Educators) national conference in Washington, D.C. Ms. Antonio presented at the poster session on Sponsoring and Programming Agencies and collaborated on the session entitled "Planning Highly Effective Washington, D.C. Trips to Recruit Sponsored Students."
- July 17, Colin Davies met with the Julie Stagliano, director of Heartland International, a long-time FORECAST training provider and Community Connections host.
- August 6, Colin Davies and Lisa Posner Olocco met with Richard MacLean, president of Global Education Services, a long-time FORECAST training provider and Community Connections host.
- September 12, Colin Davies attended the advisory board meeting for Mobility International, an organization that World Learning works closely with to ensure the proper provision of services for participants with disabilities.

B. Solution Provider Outreach

- The Resource Center coordinated visits to the FORECAST office from twenty-six training providers. The substantive meetings focused on training capabilities, proposal writing guidance, and issues of training program management. Visits were made by the following organizations: Foundation for Russian American Economic Cooperation; International House of Metrolina; International Health Programs; International House of Davis; Montana State University; Global Education Services; Heartland International; Tulsa Global Alliance;

World Services La Crosse, Inc.; Public Health Institute; American University; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; Colorado State University Office of International Programs; East Tennessee State University; Elizabethtown College; Florida Institute of Technology; Fresno Pacific University; Humboldt State University; Illinois State University; Indiana University School of Journalism; Minnesota State University – Mankato; North Dakota State University; Rochester Institute of Technology; University of California, Santa Cruz; University of Missouri – Columbia; University of North Alabama.

C. Washington, D.C. Cost Saving Measures

During this period an estimated \$9,363 in US training costs was saved as a result of the FORECAST competitive procurement process.

Total Cost Savings.....\$9,363

Field Offices

III. FORECAST/Albania

For information regarding the most recent training/HICD activities for participants from Albania please refer to the status chart in the Appendix.

Success Stories

Please see the Appendix for full details on the following Success Stories:

- **Off the Streets and Into School**

A small grant, following a training program, helped establish a Drop-In Center for street children in Tirana. One of the children says, “Thanks to this center, I am going to school, and I wish to be a teacher in order to help all the other children of my community.”

- **USAID-Funded Study Basis for Blood Disease Screening Center in Albania**

A blood screening project was conducted in the city of Lushnja among 1,820 students to determine the prevalence of thalassemia carriers, an inherited blood disease requiring monthly transfusions. As a result of the research that showed that over 7.5% of the students were carriers, the Ministry of Health and an international NGO have established a permanent screening center in the city, and the Ministry of Health is now developing a national thalassemia strategy.

- **Learning English Abroad, Overcoming Disability, Inspiring Change at Home**

A wheelchair-bound member of the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation won a scholarship to the American Language Institute in Eugene, Oregon. Encouraged by the amenities for the disabled that she saw, she is now bringing similar opportunities to students with disabilities in Albania. As she puts it, “I am trying to show my students that through awareness, tolerance, advocacy, and learning English, lives, laws, and communities can change.”

Staffing

- Project Director Matty Thimm worked part time until May while she recovered her health.
- Edi Bregu was hired as the new Finance/Admin Officer in September. She will overlap with Elona Behari through mid October, when Elona leaves Albania.
- Ms. Brittany Lynk started a two-month part-time internship in September.

Media Coverage

- News of the Rural Finance Workshop funded by USAID through FORECAST was broadcast on April 24 on Top Channel, Klan TV, Vizion Plus, and UFO. Articles were also printed in *Rilindja Demokratik*, *Tema*, *Sot* and *Standard*.
- News of the Telemedicine Assessment was broadcast on major TV stations via Voice of America reports on May 10, as well as in the newspaper *Metropol*.
- News of MEDPAK's successful workshop on June 7-8 in Librazhd to strengthen the voice of relatives of people with mental disabilities was broadcast on TV Egnatia of Elbasan.
- News of USAID's contribution to a new Reception Room at the Maternity Hospital I and comments by US Ambassador John L. Withers made during the inauguration June 10 were broadcast on most major TV channels including national public TV, News24, Koha TV, and Klan TV. Coverage was carried in many dailies.
- On June 26 in the Netherlands, during the training program of the school psychologist, the director of training provider International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) was interviewed in a local radio programme about the training/exchange programme during which the support of USAID was mentioned.
- News of the publication of the Guide to Services supported by a small grant from USAID appeared in the newspapers *Tirana Observer* on July 2 and *Standard* on July 14.

Third Country Training

- May 11–18, 12 Albanians involved in running shelters for victims of trafficking attended a training program in Turin, Italy organized by ASSOCIAZIONE IROKO ONLUS.
- May 21-22, 3 Albanian leaders of opinion attended a conference in Sofia, Bulgaria organized by USAID called Democracy that Delivers.
- June 4-8, two leading Albanian businesswomen attended the 2008 Global Summit for Women in Hanoi, Vietnam.
- June 15-21, a group of 13 Albanian municipal officials attended a one week technical training in Local Economic Growth and Development in Bulgaria implemented by Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency.

- June 22-29, a group of 12 school psychologists/child protection specialists attended a one week technical training in Leiden, The Netherlands implemented by International Child Development Initiatives.
- July 24-27, five participants attended the Junior Achievement European Company Competition in Stockholm, Sweden.
- Eight Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) attended the SIFE World Cup in Singapore September 29-October 4.

In-Country Training and Technical Assistance

- A one day Rural Finance Workshop took place April 23 with about 70 participants. USAID Mission Director Edward Landau and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Consumer Protection as well as others addressed the workshop.
- A technical assistance program to ensure the successful decree of the regulations on local borrowing was completed.
- The first of two trips for a technical assistance program to assess the needs of 14 hospitals in Albania in order to establish a telemedicine program was implemented in May.
- Support for an Integrated Planning System training program for Advanced Strategic Management with the trainer provided by Georgetown University's East Central European Scholarship Program for 25 General Secretaries and Directors of various Albanian governmental institutions took place May 6-9 in Llogora.
- The second of two trips for a technical assistance program to assess the needs of 14 hospitals in Albania in order to establish a telemedicine program was implemented June 22-30.
- Efforts continued to publish pediatric clinical practice guidelines as a follow-up aspect of the Annual Pediatric Conference held in November.
- A third trip for the main implementer to meet and inform the new Minister of Health regarding the preliminary results of a technical assistance program to assess the needs of 14 hospitals in Albania in order to establish a telemedicine program was carried out the last days of August.
- Three hundred and fifty copies of pediatric clinical practice guidelines were printed as a follow up aspect of the Annual Pediatric Conference held in November 2007.

Small Grants and Other Follow-On Activities

- Guidance was offered to participants interested in applying for grants for a reproductive health project in villages of Elbasan, for training municipal officials in Lezhe in freedom of information, for the disabilities coalition, for support for a visitor's room at the maternity hospital, regarding new and different support for the street children drop in center, an agricultural fair, village tourism infrastructure, income generation for vulnerable populations, school child protection units and regarding local economic growth in Durres (tourism guide) and Librazhd.
- A third grant to ARSIS for the Street Children Center in Tirana to assist children to succeed in school and provide emergency shelter was completed early.
- A small grant for the local NGO, MEDPAK, to empower parents of children with disabilities throughout Albania to raise their voices for support completed implementation with a workshop of representatives of all parents groups primarily in Librazhd.
- A grant application to assist the Maternity Hospital I to equip and furnish a new day Reception Room was submitted and approved by the mission and completed.
- A grant application to set up community based citizens groups in Shkoder to ensure that local government and institutions better take into account the needs of citizens completed implementation.
- A grant to the Center for Transparency and Free Information to publish a guide to fees and tariffs in government offices in order to reduce corruption completed implementation with the publishing of the guide.
- A small grant to train Red Cross volunteers in the districts of Lezhe and Fier to encourage child and maternal health best practices completed implementation.
- A grant from the city of Kucove to refurbish a school completed implementation.
- A grant to the Center for Civil Legal Initiatives to train university law students to assist vulnerable women and girls to have better access to justice completed implementation with the finalization of a TV spot.
- A grant to assist with upgrading technology for herbs and spices completed implementation.

Noteworthy Events

- April 19, Project Director Director Matty Thimm participated as a judge in the final round of the Students in Free Enterprise National Competition in Tirana. The student team from the University of Shkodra came in first, winning the right to compete in Singapore this fall.
- April 23, USAID through FORECAST hosted a workshop in Rural Finance for approximately 70 participants. USAID Mission Director Edward Landau and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Consumer Protection as well as others addressed

the workshop. This was followed by a discussion to find the best way to assist farmers with credit.

- In June, Administrative/Financial Assistant Elona Behari attended an educational session in Mbrostar, Fier for about 15 mothers and mothers-to-be to monitor a small grant implemented by the Albanian Red Cross.
- July 31, Economic Growth Team Leader Son Nguyen, SNV officer responsible for the Korca region, USAID's Enterprise Development and Export Market Services (EDEM) Chief of Party, Cynthia Steen, EDEM's tourism expert, Nevilla Popa and FORECAST Project Director Matty Thimm discussed the possibility of using FORECAST funding as USAID's contribution to a Global Development Alliance (GDA) effort to assist village tourism in the southeast of Albania, starting with the village of Rehova near Erseke. This GDA would not require World Learning to contribute any funds but would allow local partners to buy into the effort.

Cost-Saving Measures

- \$4,200 was saved in program funds due to claiming additional VAT reimbursement for in-country expenses related to the Telemedicine Conference. Another \$77 was saved due to VAT reimbursement for administrative expenses.
- \$24,600 was saved on the third country training for School Psychologists/Child Protection Specialists by negotiating significantly lower costs training costs, identifying an interpreter in Albania and other measures.
- Approximately \$3220 was saved in program funds due to claiming VAT reimbursement for in-country expenses related to the Telemedicine Conference and the Technical Advisor to the Albanian Association of Municipalities. Another \$288 was saved due to VAT reimbursement for administrative expenses.
- \$18,389 was saved on the third country training on Shelters for Victims of Trafficking by negotiating significantly lower training costs, identifying an interpreter ourselves and other measures.
- \$77 was saved in September with the current internet provider doubling its speed and halving its monthly price.

Total Cost Savings.....\$50,851

IV. FORECAST/Croatia

For information regarding the most recent training/HICD activities for participants from Croatia please refer to the status chart in the Appendix.

Staffing

- The following staff, all of whom were hired between 1999 and 2003, ended their contracts with World Learning in June when the office closed: Cynthia Rogers, Viktorija Roncevic, Ondina Obradovic, Violeta Novoselec, and Morana Kovacevic.

Third Country Training

- Three participants attended a USAID-sponsored conference in Sofia, Bulgaria entitled “Democracy that Delivers – Unlocking the Potential of Transition,” May 20-22. The conference covered the role of international assistance in democratic transition and how lessons learned in Bulgaria could help guide other countries in the Balkans currently working towards developing effective democracies. Also, it encouraged greater civic participation in democratic processes and reforms in the region, and increased awareness of how international coordination between government and civil society could enhance the effectiveness of democratic transition.

In-Country Training and Follow-On Activities

- April 28-May 9, Technical Assistance: Specialized EFQM Trainings and Licensing for the Association of Management Consultants was held in Zagreb for four participants. Through USAID’s Legacy Program, World Learning has provided technical assistance to the Association of Management Consultants (AMC). In this final stage of assistance, AMC went through the process of becoming established as the EFQM (European Foundation of Quality Management) authorized center for delivery of seminars on business excellence. The EFQM branding and certification constitutes proof of the highest level of consulting expertise and quality. After successfully completing the initial program, the AMC became a regional EFQM partner for the Croatian and regional business community. Being an authorized institution, the AMC has an opportunity to increase its financial sustainability through delivering seminars recognized by the EFQM.
- Technical Assistance for Rijeka Twinning Project with Tacoma/Seattle was held May 10-16 in Rijeka. This training provided an opportunity for the City of Rijeka to benefit from Tacoma / Seattle experience and knowledge. The exchange showed how Rijeka could benefit

from the Tacoma-Seattle experience of transforming former industrial areas into potential cultural/tourist destinations while preserving its industrial heritage. It also provided Tacoma-Seattle experience on how to implement new, desirable waterfront development. The additional goals of the exchange were to establish an exchange between the University of Rijeka and its counterpart in Tacoma-Seattle for faculty and students, and to develop methods of motivating the citizens of Rijeka to be actively involved in the decision-making processes.

- Over 450 people attended the Celebrating 15 Years of Partnership – USAID Close-out Ceremony on May 15 in Zagreb. The purpose of the USAID/Croatia Mission closing ceremony was to celebrate the partnership between USAID and Croatia and to highlight results achieved. Over the years, the American people supported social, political and economic transition in Croatia, providing more than \$320 million to build a better future for all Croatian citizens. Key objectives achieved during USAID's time in Croatia were addressed by the following speakers: Mr. Menarchik, USAID Assistant Administrator; Ms Jadranka Kosor, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity; Mr. Robert Bradtke, U.S. Ambassador; Prof. Josip Kregar, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb; and former USAID Mission Director, Mr. William A. Jeffers. WL addressed all facets of the event related to the venue, including invitations, program material, equipment, translators, moderator, photographer, stage setup and refreshments.
- Technical Assistance in Establishing an Effective Employee Evaluation System took place in Zagreb on January 18 and May 26. This consultancy represents a follow-up activity to the consultancy provided by MAP Savjetovanja during late 2006 and 2007 that focused on the development of the strategic plan for human resource management in SDF. The establishment of an effective employee evaluation system was part of the Activities Plan, developed within the consultancy. The coaching of SDF's employee evaluation coordinator, Ms. Nevenka Pezerović, took place in two steps. On January 18, the consultant met with Ms Pezerović and described in detail the purpose and procedures that need to take place during the employee evaluation process. The second coaching day in May was devoted to the analysis of the evaluation findings and developing recommendations for future employee evaluations. The next section of the report gives an overview of key findings and lessons learned. TA goals and objectives were adequately met. Ms. Pezerović was provided with basic theoretical and practical knowledge of an Effective Employee Evaluation System. The analysis of the baseline employee evaluation will be presented at the next Executive Board meeting and it is expected that the Board will confirm the recommendations from the analysis and the draft professional development plan for 2008–2009.

Noteworthy Events

- June 20, the World Learning office in Zagreb closed its doors after 14 years of supporting USAID in Croatia through organizing training for over 4,000 Croatians and touching over 500 communities across the country. World Learning’s work in Croatia has been at all levels of society – from Parliament and ministries, to business and agribusiness, judiciary, media, civil society, local government, universities, regulatory agencies, and many others. In addition to training, the project has provided technical assistance and small grants to many individuals and organizations.

Cost Saving Measures

- \$145 was saved by applying reduced M&IE rates for third country training.

Total Cost Savings.....\$145

V. FORECAST/Kosovo

For information regarding the most recent training/HICD activities for participants from Kosovo please refer to the status chart in the Appendix.

Success Stories

Please see the Appendix for full details on the following Success Stories:

- Building Minority Education Through Inclusion

Through the Minority Scholars Program, five students from minority communities have been awarded full four-year scholarships at the American University in Kosovo. In the words of one student, “Becoming a student at AUK has changed my life. This education is my visa to a shiny future in Kosovo.”

- Improving Student Services at the University of Prishtina

The University of Prishtina has completely redesigned its system of admissions, semester registration and exam registration, with a view to having students complete the processes in less time and with fewer visits to the university. As one fourth-year student says, “I can now find whatever I need on-line, rather than having to go to my faculty in person and wait in line.”

Media Coverage

- The Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, highlighted the support and cooperation provided by USAID/World Learning for the University of Prishtina digitalization project in a televised interview on RTK on April 15.
- TV station TV21 covered the Awards Ceremony held for the second group of Ministry of Justice interns on May 8. The newspaper *Lajm* published an article covering the ceremony on May 9.
- An article about the annual Participant Awards Ceremony that was held in March was featured as a May news item on the USAID Europe and Eurasia web page (http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/press/success/2008-05-04.html)
- TV station TV21 reported on the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program, filming live from the Economic and Trade High School in Shtërpe. The program was aired on May 23.
- On August 26, USAID Mission Director Mike Farbman and University of Prishtina Rector Enver Hasani signed a memorandum of understanding for the Performance Improvement and Digitalization project. The event was covered on August 26 by TV stations RTV 21, RTK and KTV; and on August 27 in the newspapers *Koha Ditore*, *Zeri*, *Kosovo Sot* and *Bota Sot*.

Third Country Training

- Five participants attended a program in Market Value-Based Taxation of Real Property: Lessons from International Experience, April 14-18. Participants are Kosovar civil servants working on taxation issues at the central and municipal government level. The goal of the Seminar is to expose the participants to best practices in market-value based taxation of land and property. The Seminar was conducted by the Center of Excellence in Finance, in Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- May 25–26, two officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and an official from the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications traveled to Cairo, Egypt, to take part in the workshop “Public-Private Partnerships: A Transformational Development Tool to Improve Access to Reliable and Affordable Infrastructure Services”. The goal of the workshop was to provide tools and an approach to setting up and implementing basic infrastructure services through public-private partnerships. The workshop was organized by BearingPoint, with funding from USAID as part of the TAPRII Project.

In-Country Training and Follow-On Activities

- Eight IT staff from the Tax Administration of Kosovo (Ministry of Finance and Economy) participated in an in-country 5-day training program on the Oracle 10g Platform “Forms Developer and Internet Applications,” June 30–July 4. Two of the group (TAK database administrators) will later take part in two, 5 day-courses on Oracle 10g Platform Database Administration in Albania in the fall (dates to be determined). The goal of the training modules is to train Tax Administration IT staff in the new, Oracle 10g Platform. The training modules will be delivered by Cactus, a licensed Oracle training provider.

HICD and Other Activities

- Performance Improvement & Digitalization Project at University of Prishtina
Five companies submitted bids to help guide the tender development, proposal selection and project implementation process for the selection and implementation of a university administration software system at University of Prishtina. The IT solutions company Pronet was awarded the contract. During June, Pronet began work on developing the tender, specifically Task 1: Identify the University’s Functional and Technical Requirements. During July, Pronet worked on: Task 1; Task 2: Assess Options for Outsourcing Hosting of New Software System; and Task 3: Write the Technical Section of the Tender. During August, Pronet finalized Task 2 and submitted a draft report for Task 1.

Consultant Dr. Jaime Hermann traveled to Kosovo April 21-25. Dr. Hermann worked with World Learning Kosovo staff in conducting a process assessment of the University’s HR processes. Consultant Dr. Justus Meier traveled to Kosovo May 5-9. Dr. Meier worked with World Learning Kosovo staff in conducting a process assessment of the University’s student administration and administration of teaching processes.

The new University of Prishtina web site was launched on June 2 (<http://www.uni-pr.edu/up/>). The new site focuses on students as the University’s main target group, and provides clear and easy to access information about the admissions and registration processes and information about faculties, the University’s libraries and other resources.

June 23-25, 38 University of Prishtina staff (3 from central administration, 35 from the University’s 17 faculties) were trained in how to update and maintain their sections of the new web site in Ohrid, Macedonia. The training was conducted by the firm Rrota (the firm selected to design the new site), with assistance from World Learning Kosovo staff.

Consultant Klaus Wittkuhn was in Kosovo June 18-20 and consultant Dr. Gregor Biletzki was in Kosovo June 20. The purpose of their visit was to advise the University on how financial independence from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology might be best organized within the University. Meetings with faculty deans and vice deans on June 18-19 went well, with key faculty and staff agreeing that decision making should be

decentralized down to the faculty level, while execution of decisions should be centralized. However, in a meeting with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on June 19, the Ministry requested that we hold on advising the University further until the Ministry has had time to work out its own position regarding financial independence of the University. Thus, performance improvement project activities at the University are again on hold, this time until further notice from the Ministry.

On August 26, USAID Mission Director Mike Farbman and University of Pristhina Rector Enver Hasani signed a memorandum of understanding for the Performance Improvement and Digitalization project. The MoU is for two years in length and covers redesign of the University's web site to make University services easily accessible to students and staff; streamlining the University's administrative systems and business practices; and procurement and implementation of a university administration software system, known as "digitalization".

On September 12, a first meeting of the Performance Improvement and Digitalization Project Commission was held. World Learning staff, USAID, representatives from Pronet and Rrota discussed with the Commission members issues concerning donated equipment from the US embassy; web site development; and data transfer, hosting options and staffing issues related to digitalization. Commission members agreed to meet monthly.

During September, began work on Task 3: Write the Technical Section of the Tender for the digitalization component of the project.

- Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program

World Learning continues to administer the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program, which offers English language and computer instruction to approximately 600 students.

During June, day-camp activities for students and instructors from The Kuvendi i Luzhes High School, the Pjetër Bogdani High School, Gymnasium Ulpiana and Gymnasium Skenderbeu were held to mark the end of instruction for the 2007-2008 school year. During July, a day-camp outing was held for students and instructors from the Technical High School (Vrbovac), Gimnazija Prishtina (Laplje Selo), Ekonomaska Trgovinska Skola (Shtpce) and the Partes Community Center) to mark the successful completion of study for the school year.

During July, USAID informed World Learning Kosovo that they would like to add an additional five schools to the program for the 2008-2009 school year. World Learning staff met with NGO partners Qendra Qiriazhi and the Center for Migration Studies to discuss the program expansion. Geographic areas identified for program expansion are Kosovar-Albanian schools in Istok and Kamenica and Kosovar-Serbian schools in Plemetina, Ranilug

and a third, yet-to-be-determined location. World Learning staff developed tender documents for setting up an additional five computer labs in the new schools and collected quotes from printers for printing the necessary curricula for students in 13 locations for the 2008-2009 school year.

During August, World Learning and USAID staff met with directors of high schools in Istok and Decan to discuss expansion of the program into these areas. Contracts to extend the program for the 2008-2009 school year were signed with school directors in Ferizaj and Kacanik.

World Learning staff issued tender documents for setting up an additional six computer labs in the new schools. Five vendors submitted bids – the company Pronet was selected as the winning bidder.

During September, contracts to extend the program for the 2008-2009 school year were signed with school directors in Partes, Lapje Selo, Lipjan, Strpce and Viti. Contracts to start the program in new schools in Decan, Kamenica and Istog were also signed. Curricula was distributed, the program advertised, students selected and classes started in Kacanik, Viti, Lipjan, Ferizaj, Strpce, Istog, Kamenica, Decan and Partes. As of the end of September, the program provides English language and computer instruction to more than 700 students.

Expansion of the program to Plemetina and Ranilug has been temporarily postponed while USAID clarifies if the administration of these two minority schools will agree to work with the Kosovo government.

- Kosovo Perspectives Weekly Bulletin
World Learning continues to support publication and distribution of the Kosovo Perspectives Weekly Bulletin. The Bulletin provides fact-based, relevant news on important issues surrounding status to 15 news & media outlets in minority areas in Kosovo.
- Supporting Youth in Gracanica
At the request of USAID, during April World Learning signed a MoU with the NGO “Communication for Social Development” in support of a six-month program targeting youth in the minority town of Gracanica. Project activities include English language classes, computer science classes, a course on how to design a CV, training in journalism and development of a youth-lead radio show, excursions for youth, focus groups and round tables on how youth view the integration process, clean-up campaigns, art workshops and sports tournaments. The project will run through October, 2008.

During May, activities included (1) cultural excursions for youth, through which 30 young people had the chance to visit the monasteries of Pecka Patrijarsija and Visoki Decani; (2) a round table which provided youth and media representatives from Gracanica the opportunity

to talk with representatives from the Ministry for Communities and Returns; and (3) free internet and computer access for the public at the Community Development Center in Gracanica.

During June, activities included (1) English language and computer courses with 10 students in each course.; (2) training for 16 participants in CV development/applying for a job; and (3) free internet and computer access for the public at the Community Development Center in Gracanica.

During July, activities included 1) English language and computer courses with 10 students in each course.; (2) a training for 16 participants in CV development/applying for a job; (3) free internet and computer access for the public at the Community Development Center in Gracanica; (4) excursions for youth to visit Pecka Patrijarsija and Decan monasteries; and (5) a round table at which 20 youth were able to ask representatives of the government (Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs) questions about ID cards, dual citizenship, vehicle registration and license plates post-independence.

During August, activities included 1) a training for 16 participants in CV development/applying for a job; (2) a four-day camping excursion for 50 youths from disadvantaged Serbian and Roma families; (3) a clean-up campaign in Gracanica; and (4) an art exhibition displaying works by Roma children and children with disabilities.

During September, activities included 1) English language and computer courses organized twice per week for 10 students; 2) a round table with the Minister of Work and Social Welfare, Mr. Nenad Rasic where participants were able to talk with the Minister about issues concerning disadvantaged groups in the Gracanica area; (3) a series of sports tournaments in which 140 youths from the Gracanica area participated.

- Support for the International Congress for Students of Medicine
At the request of USAID, World Learning supported an International Congress for Students of Medicine which took place May 28-June 1. The Congress brought together over 300 medical students and professors from the University of Prishtina, the University of Tirana and the State University of Tetova to exchange experience on developments in the field of medical study. In addition to the funding provided by USAID/World Learning, the Congress was jointly financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the University of Prishtina. USAID Mission Director Dr. Michael Farbman and the Rector of University of Prishtina both spoke at the opening of the event.
- Minority Scholars Program at AUK
The five minority scholars studying at the American University in Kosovo finished their first year of study in June. The scholarship program covers all tuition, student fees and books for

a four year, undergraduate degree at AUK. USAID informed World Learning that they plan to extend the scholarship awards to five new, incoming minority students in the fall.

- Education for Peace Scholarship Program

At USAID's request, World Learning Kosovo signed a memorandum of understanding with the Tony Beslimi Foundation, to provide support to the Foundation's overall activities in administering scholarships at Texas Lutheran University and in providing information to Kosovar high school graduates about the possibilities for university study in the US. During August, three scholarship winners were identified and paper work for their entry into Texas Lutheran University and for US visas was processed. During September, the Foundation worked to find sponsors to cover the costs of the three scholarship winners' living expenses in the US and met with US and Canadian university representatives to discuss the possibility of expanding the scholarship program to additional universities in 2009.

- Excellence in Public Service Scholarship Program

At USAID's request, World Learning began working with the American University in Kosovo (AUK) on the planning and development for the Excellence in Public Service scholarship program. The Program will provide full scholarships for approximately 100 career civil servants to complete a Master's in Public Administration at AUK. World Learning will design and administer the scholarship program and conduct outreach to publicize the program. USAID is contributing an additional \$2 million to the World Learning-Kosovo budget for the program.

- Politicum

During July, the first of two issues of the Student Political Science Association Magazine "Politicum" was published, with support from World Learning/USAID. On July 1, the Student Political Science Association organized a launch of the magazine, at which the Minister of Education, Science and Technology and the Rector of the University of Prishtina both spoke. The July issue of the Politicum Magazine carries articles on both issues specific to the political situation in Kosovo / in the region and on broader political theory.

- Redesign of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Web Page & Brain Gain Program

A final draft of the new Ministry of Education, Science and Technology web page was completed during July (<http://www.advmediahouse.com/masht/advCms/#id=1>) and went live in August.

- Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication Minority Scholarships

At USAID's request, World Learning signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication (KIJAC) to finance the study of nine minority students at KIJAC over the course of three academic years 2008-09; 2009-10; 2010-2011.

- Support for Kosovo's Constitution
During August, at USAID's request, World Learning ran a tender for printing Kosovo's new constitution in 6 languages. Bids were collected from 4 publishing houses. USAID selected TimeGate as the winning vendor.
- Tutoring Program at Eqrem Qabej High School
In September, World Learning began support of a one-on-one tutoring program for 10 students at Eqrem Qabej high school in Pristina. The 10 students are tutored in English language twice per week by students from the American University in Kosovo.

Noteworthy Events

- May 8, the World Learning Kosovo office held a Certificate Awards Ceremony for 15 interns who recently completed their internship program in the Ministry of Justice. The Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. Arsim Janova, and the Director of the USAID Mission in Kosovo, Dr. Michael Farbman, both spoke at the event.
- May 5 and 7, World Learning staff accompanied USAID staff to the field to film and interview students participating in the Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program.
- May 14, World Learning FORECAST Director Colin Davies visited the World Learning Kosovo office. While in Kosovo, he met with World Learning Kosovo staff and the Director and Deputy Director of the USAID Kosovo Mission.
- FORECAST E&E Regional Task Order CTO Ethel Brooks was in Kosovo May 22-23. During her visit, Ms. Brooks met with World Learning Kosovo staff to discuss project activities and visited the computer club at the high school "Gymnasium Ulpiana" (the computer club is part of the Extracurricular Education & Community Service project).
- May 28, USAID Mission Director Dr. Michael Farbman spoke at the opening of the 1st International Congress for Students of Medicine, which was supported by FORECAST/World Learning.

Cost Saving Measures

- \$300 was saved as a result of translating materials in-house for the Market Value-Based Taxation Seminar and for the Performance Improvement & Digitalization Project at University of Prishtina.

- \$250 was saved as a result of translating materials in-house for the Performance Improvement & Digitalization Project at University of Prishtina.

Total Cost Savings.....\$550

V. FORECAST/Serbia and Montenegro

Staffing

- Ana Kitc, Admin/Finance Assistant, left her position on May 31.
- Marija Nikolic replaced Ana Kitic on June 16 as the Admin/Finance Officer.

Media Coverage

- Two 2008-09 FORECAST Exchange students were interviewed in a local newspaper in May.
- One 2007-08 FORECAST Exchange student was interviewed in a local newspaper in June.
- A 2008-09 FORECAST Exchange student from Montenegro wrote an article for a student publication that was issued in June.
- Two articles in *Dnevnik*, the largest newspaper in Vojvodina and television coverage on a Subotica channel of World Learning's visit to Novi Knezevac with FORECAST alumni Pavle Jovanov (2007-2008) and Susan Delja, Cultural Attaché of the US Embassy resulted from the trip.
- USAID Bulletin appeared in *BLIC*, the largest daily in Serbia, with a full-page article on FORECAST Exchange and students were also on the cover. The text will be posted as a pdf. file on the USAID Serbia/Montenegro website soon.

FORECAST Exchange

- Preparations were completed for the 2008-2009 FORECAST Exchange students to receive their security clearances and J-1 visas as of May. World Learning contacted all the students regarding their university placements and conferred with them regarding their decisions. Four Serbian students decided to withdraw from the program and were replaced by alternates who were placed by the World Learning/Washington office. Two additional students were added

to the program: one each from Serbia and Montenegro. World Learning sent letters to all universities in Serbia and in Montenegro letting them know about their students' scholarships and asking their assistance in facilitating students' status at their home universities while they are in the U.S. and in helping them to select courses that will be accredited by their home universities when they return.

- World Learning successfully completed the Re-entry Workshop for FORECAST Exchange Students 2007-2008 in May. The students were addressed by the U.S. Ambassador to Serbia, Cameron Munter and the workshop was attended by Susan Delja, Cultural Attache for part of the day and by her assistants Tijana Waterson and Ivana Tosic for the whole day. These last three participated in various phases of the workshop providing students with linkages to alumni programs and other PAO resources.
- The pre-departure orientation for the 46 new FORECAST Exchange student for 2008-2009 was conducted in Belgrade July 1-3. Ambassador Cameron Munter addressed the students at this event and brought a cake to celebrate their first American holiday, July 4th (a little early). Cultural Attaché Susan Delja and some of her staff also attended some of the sessions. Several students from 2007-2008 participated in various parts of the workshop and shared their experiences and insights with the new students. Thomas Bruey from WL/DC attended and facilitated several sessions. This was an excellent opportunity for Tom and the students to form their relationship, which will serve them both over the next year. The workshop was highly evaluated by the participants and the staff. All students received their J-1 visas, their advance maintenance allowance, and their plane tickets during the PDO and during the rest of the month most of them received their approved training implementation plans.
- Students from 2007-2008 shared their experiences in getting their courses from the US accredited and most after some initial "red tape" continued to have success in achieving this in many cases. World Learning has asked them to document these efforts.
- World Learning has taken measures to help students from 2007-2008 with the accreditation of their courses in their home universities. Letters were written to all rectors and deans reporting on their achievements and asking for their cooperation and assistance in this matter. Several students have reported that many of their courses will be accepted and accredited by their home universities. We have also helped some students secure their transcripts. We will continue to assist in these efforts as we can.
- During August, all 46 FORECAST Exchange participants left Serbia and arrived safely at their universities in the United States and were validated in TraiNet. Special arrangements were made for Montenegrin students who needed to transit and overnight in Belgrade.
- World Learning staff met with Henry Scott and Kerri Hannon from State Department/DC who were in Belgrade and presented them with information and pictures about the

FORECAST Exchange and Community Connections Program and discussed the funding situation with both programs.

- Snezana Mijatovic, Mary Fran Doyle, Susan Delja, Cultural Attaché and Ivana Totic, Cultural Assistant were invited by the town of Novi Knezevac and the President of their Municipality to visit the town on August 25 and explain all US Embassy related Exchange Programs, especially FORECAST Exchange since their citizen Pavle Jovanov is now an alumni from 2007-2008. The visit featured a tour of the town, lunch with the President and other city officials, and a presentation from Pavle at the town library for town residents that wanted to attend.
- With funding for 2009-10 assured, World Learning prepared publicity for the program and created the website, which can be viewed at www.worldlearning.org.yu. Posters and flyers were printed in advance of the expected recruiting trip to Montenegro in October to meet the new PAO, Alexander Titolo. World Learning sent letters to all faculties in Serbia and Montenegro informing them about the program for next year and asking when presentations at their faculties may be scheduled this fall. Staff made arrangements to be listed again on the largest list serve in Serbia and Montenegro with a banner and article for the next three months. Good and enthusiastic responses have been elicited from alumni when staff have contacted them about the refunding of the program and asked for their support and assistance with presentations and publicizing it at their faculties.

Noteworthy Events

- World Learning conducted a briefing for six new USAID CTOs on participant training procedures in April, May, and June, as well as the staff of some other USAID projects.
- In June, staff attended the Serbian Youth Leadership Program alumni conference in Belgrade with World Learning Delphi and Civic Initiatives and represented FORECAST Exchange and World Learning's local office, meeting with WL colleagues Christina Thomas, Simon Norton, and Melanie Brubacher, and facilitating contacts with the Cultural Attache's office.
- In July, Mary Fran Doyle and Nadja Bulat met with the deputy chiefs of party and their staff from SCOPES and MEGA to clarify procedures for third country training for several workshops they will do in the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009.
- In September, WL staff met with the new COP of ABA/CEELI, Neil Nolan, and some of his staff and oriented them to the training procedures in Serbia. Staff also met with the new COP of the Separation of Powers project in Serbia, Ken Stuart, to explain the procedures for training processing in Serbia.

Cost Savings

- \$488 was saved in May through VAT refunds.
- \$392 was saved in June through VAT refunds.
- \$32 was saved on fuel by registering with the Serbian authorities for gas coupons.
- \$1,690 was saved in July through VAT refunds.
- \$687 was saved in August and September through VAT refunds.

Total Cost Savings.....\$3,289

VII. APPENDIX

A. Intervention Status Report – April-September 2008

B. Success Stories for April-September 2008

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2008

| | UST | TCT | ICT | TA | Small Grants | EMT | Academic | Partnerships | HICD Activities | TOTALS |
|---|-----|-----|------|-----|--------------|-----|----------|--------------|-----------------|--------|
| Number of Interventions | | | | | | | | | | |
| Albania - period | 6 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| cumulative | 21 | 21 | 15 | 13 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 98 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| cumulative | 6 | 26 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 43 |
| Croatia - period | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | | | | | 5 |
| cumulative | 4 | 6 | 3 | 10 | 0 | | | | | 23 |
| Kosovo - period | 0 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 18 |
| cumulative | 2 | 16 | 7 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 72 |
| Montenegro - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| cumulative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Serbia - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| cumulative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 57 | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| Regional - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| cumulative | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTALS - period | 7 | 11 | 4 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 46 | 0 | 4 | 96 |
| cumulative | 33 | 70 | 30 | 54 | 31 | 0 | 77 | 0 | 18 | 313 |
| Number of Participants (if applicable) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Albania - period | 16 | 55 | 74 | 0 | n/a | | | | | 145 |
| cumulative | 129 | 169 | 1667 | 43 | n/a | | | | | 2008 |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | n/a | n/a | | | | n/a | 0 |
| cumulative | 29 | 264 | 1918 | n/a | n/a | | | | n/a | 2211 |
| Croatia - period | 1 | 3 | 0 | n/a | n/a | | | | | 4 |
| cumulative | 9 | 40 | 110 | n/a | n/a | | | | | 159 |
| Kosovo - period | 0 | 8 | 8 | n/a | | | 0 | | n/a | 16 |
| cumulative | 21 | 140 | 67 | n/a | | | 3 | | n/a | 231 |
| Montenegro - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 10 | | | 10 |
| cumulative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 19 | | | 19 |
| Serbia - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 36 | | | 36 |
| cumulative | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | 57 | | | 57 |
| Regional - period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | 0 |
| cumulative | 0 | 58 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | 58 |
| TOTALS - period | 17 | 66 | 82 | 0 | | | 46 | | | 211 |
| cumulative | 188 | 671 | 3762 | 43 | | | 79 | | | 4743 |

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2008

Appendix B to FORECAST Semi-Annual Report
April-September 2008
Success Stories

Albania

Off the Streets and Into School

Day center finds way to help kids trade begging and selling on the streets for school

Challenge: Ilir, a six-year-old boy of Roma origin, was found begging on the streets in the center of Tirana when street workers from the NGO, ARSIS, found him in the summer of 2006. With his parents, he was spending his time either begging or collecting cans from garbage bins. ARSIS organized summer activities for street children, and Ilir, his younger siblings and mother participated. However, in the fall, Ilir didn't start school. His family's travels between Tirana and his city of origin made regular school attendance impossible.

Initiative: In July 2007, USAID approved a small grant to a young social worker who had participated in a weeklong training program on Anti-Trafficking in Italy in May 2004. The grant helped to support the establishment of a Drop-In Center for Street Children in a district of Tirana where children come daily to beg or sell to make money. The center reached out to these children and parents, helping them to get vaccinated, registered with the civil authorities, assisting some to start small businesses, mostly selling second hand clothes. Following on this initial success, USAID approved a second grant to focus this time on supporting successful school participation.

Ilir and his brother participated in many activities at the Drop-In Center, including International Children's Day held June 1, 2007. Professional clowns taught the children stunts and the children had a wonderful time performing. They also learned skills like cooperation, discipline and trustworthiness.

Results: In the fall of 2007, ARSIS facilitated Ilir's registration at school in a suburb of Tirana and assisted him with school materials and clothes. ARSIS also communicated with Shkej, an Albanian NGO focusing on that suburb to integrate him into their school support activities. Ilir hasn't been seen begging or collecting cans on the streets anymore and his younger brother is planning on attending school in the fall.

Like Ilir, dozens of children have been helped to succeed at school.

Pullout Quote: "My parents couldn't buy for me the clothes, the books and everything I need for school. Thanks to Arsis and Shkej I am going to school and I wish to be a teacher in order to help all the other children of my community."

Summary: A small grant, following a training program, helped establish a Drop-In Center for street children in Tirana. One of the children says, “Thanks to this center, I am going to school, and I wish to be a teacher in order to help all the other children of my community.”

Albania

USAID-Funded Study Basis for Blood Disease Screening Center in Albania

Screening enables young people to avoid having children with the debilitating disease, thalassemia

Challenge: Thalassemia, an inherited blood disease, and the respective carrier status are quite common in former malaria prone areas, where the gene mutations developed as a selective advantage against malaria. The debilitating disease requires expensive monthly blood transfusion procedures that carry a high risk of post transfusion viral infections, such as HIV and hepatitis. Sufferers in Albania seldom live past the age of 25-30. Whereas neighboring Italy and Greece have greatly reduced new cases among their own populations through effective screening programs, Albania has 50 new cases annually and no screening program. Screening enables carriers of the defective gene to understand the risks they incur if they have children with another carrier. Twenty-five percent of such children will likely suffer from thalassemia. Carriers who are aware of their condition tend to make informed decisions on how to plan their marriages and families to avoid having children with the disease.

Initiative: About 30 out of the 50 new cases annually have been discovered in Lushnja and Fier. Compared to the incalculable suffering of patients and hardships for their families, not to mention the crushing cost to the health system of treating these patients, the cost of screening, it was reasoned, should more than compensate by reducing the number of new cases. As a result, USAID/Albania decided to pilot a screening project in Lushnja whereby approximately 2000 high school students aged 16-20 would be screened. The program was implemented by the Albanian Society of Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine from May – December 2006. After some orientation for the medical staff in Lushnja and awareness raising presentations in several high schools, 1820 students, plus another 200 teachers and family members volunteered to have blood drawn and tested. Interest was high and many more had to be turned away for this study.

Results: Results showed that of the 1820 students, a little over 7.5% were carriers of thalassemia, and the percentage rose to 10% and more in certain villages. Armed with this new and irrevocable data, the Ministry of Health did not vacillate but together with an international thalassemia NGO agreed to establish a €200,000 screening center in the city of Lushnja, each contributing 50%. The local medical staff trained through this project is involved in the center and many more people in and around Lushnja have gone for screening. The Ministry of Health also established a working group to develop a

national thalassemia strategy. Data from this project helped make this national strategy focused and current. What is needed now is awareness training for the medical staff in health centers in nearby districts so that more at-risk people can take advantage of the screening services offered.

Pullout Quote: “Without this concrete recent data [regarding the percentage of thalassemia carriers]”, explains Dr. Agim Kociraj, former director of the national blood bank, “the Ministry of Health could not have justified the expense of the new screening center.”

Summary: A blood screening project was conducted in the city of Lushnja among 1,820 students to determine the prevalence of thalassemia carriers, an inherited blood disease requiring monthly transfusions. As a result of the research that showed that over 7.5% of the students were carriers, the Ministry of Health and an international NGO have established a permanent screening center in the city, and the Ministry of Health is now developing a national thalassemia strategy.

Albania

Learning English Abroad, Overcoming Disability, Inspiring Change at Home

As Albania improves accessibility for people with disabilities, one woman uses English to empower

Body Text: After an automobile accident several years ago, Teuta Halilaj’s life changed. In a moment, her whole environment became accessible only from a wheelchair; her self-confidence dwindled. Then she realized, “If you want life to smile for you, you must smile first. We women with disabilities must make that first step and change our fate.”

Smile she did, becoming a voice for people with disabilities in Tirana. As an active member of the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, supported by USAID/Albania, Teuta was chosen to represent Albania in the 2006 Women’s Institute on Leadership and Disability, winning a tuition scholarship to the American English Institute in Eugene, Oregon.

While studying in Eugene, she participated in activities like scuba diving and sailing, things she never thought possible for a woman in a wheelchair. She was also encouraged by the accessibility of classrooms and other university amenities for people with disabilities. For the first time, she saw an interactive educational model where she was able to give presentations and actively direct her learning. She became determined to bring that opportunity to Albania. She now teaches private English classes to over fifty students, including some with disabilities. She says, “English is a key that opens a world of possibilities. People with disabilities face seclusion and exclusion. By learning English in combination with access to the Internet, communities can be formed, conversations can begin, voices can merge, and change can happen. Though Albania does

not currently have the infrastructure to allow most people with disabilities access to interactive education, I am trying to show my students that through awareness, tolerance, advocacy, and learning English, lives, laws, and communities can change.”

Teuta recently had a ramp built onto her teaching facility and has been making contact with families who have students with disabilities. With the help of USAID/Albania, Teuta has not only strengthened her own voice and the voice of the disability community, but has also passed on that power to her students.

“I do not limit myself. I am now loud and proud.” That cannot be disputed. Her smile beams, and life smiles back at her.

Pullout Quote: “Learning and teaching English has not only given me a voice, it has allowed me to give others a voice.”

Summary: A wheelchair-bound member of the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation won a scholarship to the American Language Institute in Eugene, Oregon. Encouraged by the amenities for the disabled that she saw, she is now bringing similar opportunities to students with disabilities in Albania. As she puts it, “I am trying to show my students that through awareness, tolerance, advocacy, and learning English, lives, laws, and communities can change.”

Kosovo

BUILDING MINORITY INCLUSION THROUGH EDUCATION

Challenge: While freedom of movement for Kosovo’s minority populations has greatly improved over the course of the past decade, it still remains a real concern for many. The legacy of perceived danger in traveling to Kosovo-Albanian areas -- such as to the capital city of Pristina -- continues to limit minority-population access to services and to hinder ethnic integration.

Initiative: Through the USAID-funded Minority Scholars Program, five students from Kosovo’s minority communities have been awarded full scholarships to study for a four-year, undergraduate degree at the American University in Kosovo (AUK) in Kosovo’s capital city, Pristina. Launched in 2007, the program will award its second round of four-year scholarships to an additional five incoming minority students in 2008.

Results: As a result of this initiative, selected student scholarship-winners from Kosovo’s minority communities have the opportunity to experience student life in Pristina with their Kosovo-Albanian counterparts. The program likewise builds the ethnic diversity of AUK’s campus, representative of the ethnic diversity in Kosovo.

Pullout Quote: Minority student Adrijana Petrovic says: "Becoming a student at AUK has changed my life. This education is my visa to a shiny future in Kosovo.”

Summary: Through the Minority Scholars Program, five students from minority communities have been awarded full four-year scholarships at the American University in Kosovo. In the words of one student, “Becoming a student at AUK has changed my life. This education is my visa to a shiny future in Kosovo.”

Kosovo

Improving Student Services at the University of Prishtina

Challenge: The University of Prishtina is Kosovo’s only public university; it serves the higher-education needs of over 30,000 students. Although the University has made significant progress in meeting the requirements of the Bologna Process (the European university system), student record keeping is still paper-based, meaning that new students must come to the University a minimum of nine times to register for the semester. Each of these visits involves waiting in long lines to submit or collect forms and paper work or to learn of registration-specific information.

Initiative: Through the USAID-funded Performance Improvement and Digitalization project at the University of Prishtina, the University has launched a campaign to better inform students about the admissions, semester registration and exam registration processes. This has included completely redesigning the University’s web site to make it student-focused. The new site provides students with the information and forms they need to complete admissions, semester registration and exam registration processes in less time and with few required visits to the University.

Results: As a result of this initiative, University of Prishtina students can learn about and complete admissions, semester registration and exam registration processes in less time and with few required visits to the University. As Mr. Fatmir Halili, a fourth year student at the University of Prishtina’s Electrical Engineering puts it: “The University’s new site provides the key information that students need concerning their faculty, field of study and registration. The new site makes it much easier to register for the semester – I can now find whatever I need on line, rather than having to go to my faculty in person and wait in line.”

Pullout Quote: "The University of Prishtina’s new web site makes it much easier for students to register for the semester – I can now find whatever I need on line, rather than having to go to my faculty in person and wait in line.”

Summary: The University of Prishtina has completely redesigned its system of admissions, semester registration and exam registration, with a view to having students complete the processes in less time and with fewer visits to the university. As one fourth-year student says, “I can now find whatever I need on-line, rather than having to go to my faculty in person and wait in line.”