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FORECAST 
Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity
Across Sectors in Transition

**WORLD LEARNING
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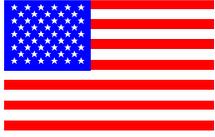
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DISCLAIMER

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. Washington, D.C.

A. Travel

- June 20-June 27, Thomas Bruey traveled to Belgrade, Serbia to attend and assist with facilitation of the pre-departure orientation seminar for participants of the 2009-2010 FORECAST Exchange Program.
- July 28, Dorothea Antonio visited Arizona State University to discuss their potential as hosts for FORECAST Exchange students from Serbia and Montenegro in Fall 2010.

B. Meetings, Conferences, and Presentations

- May 5, Dorothea Antonio spoke on a panel at a Linden Educational Services Workshop on International Recruitment and Sponsoring Organizations.
- May 26-28, Colin Davies and Dorothea Antonio attended the NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference in Los Angeles. Dorothea presented on a panel about Sponsored Students and Programming Agencies.
- July 13, Eric Corens visited the Azeri Economic Think Tank Program hosted by Valbin International in Washington, DC.
- July 22, Lisa Posner Olocco attended the Visa Compliance and Hands-On TraiNet and VCS training at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC.
- August 13, Eric Corens met with Deborah and Geoffrey Lindemer, to discuss how their firm, L2 Training & Consulting, can provide training and HICD services to World Learning.
- August 17-20, project staff attended the USAID EGAT/ED Worldwide Education and Training Workshop in Arlington, VA.

- September 1, Colin Davies met with representatives from the General Accounting Office (GAO) to discuss procedures involved in the management of FORECAST.

C. Solution Provider Outreach

- The Resource Center coordinated visits to the FORECAST office from seven training providers. The meetings focused on institutions' academic majors and programs including English language training, international student services, international communities on and off-campus, experience America activities, issues with international students, training capabilities, proposal writing guidance, and issues of training program management. Visits were made by the following institutions: Rutgers University; Willamette University; University of Alabama, Huntsville; Florida Institute of Technology; University of Mississippi; CIP Loyola; and L2 Training & Consulting.

Field Offices

II. 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:

- Dumpsters Make Albanian Town Smile
A small grant has been used to purchase garbage dumpsters, as part of a new city-wide clean-up program. As the mayor put it, “This was hugely important because it changed the attitude of our citizens.”
- Parallel Vote Count Results Enhance Credibility of Elections in Albania
With support from World Learning, the Albanian organization “Election Conduct Agency” used state-of-the-art technology to conduct an independent parallel vote count for the June 2009 parliamentary elections. All private TV channels based their reporting on this independent system of ballot results.
- Documentaries About Albanian Women Challenge Old Mentalities
World Learning helped with the production of video documentaries featuring 6 Albanian women, each of whom has overcome adversity and made an enormous contribution in her field. One, for example, is a policewoman who assists victims of domestic violence; another is a woman in a wheelchair who is a powerful advocate for people with disabilities. The documentaries have been broadcast twice on national TV, to great acclaim.

Staffing

- Ketli Bashllari, a third year economics major, served as an unpaid intern from May through July to assist with office administration.
- Mirgjind Tefiku retired from World Learning at the end of July after more than eleven years of serving as training advisor and consultant.

Media Coverage

- On April 15, a short article regarding a third country training program on Wheel Chair Factory Sustainability was printed in the major daily newspaper *Shqip*.
- Major news media carried information regarding the National Conference of Nurses held May 12 where the Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, addressed participants.
- Major news media covered stories about media monitoring for electoral bias on May 30-31.
- Findings of a poll conducted May 7-19 were released June 8, which showed that as of May 20, 90 percent (+/-3 percent) of all adult Albanians reported they were likely to vote on June 28. The poll also showed that Albanians nationwide who reported they were likely to vote would vote 43 percent for the Democratic Party and 34 percent for the Socialist Party. All news media commented on the findings, especially since they were different from two other polls. The US Embassy was somehow portrayed as supporting the Democratic Party rather than opinion polling.
- Major news media carried news of a press conference launching the Parallel Vote Count project held June 10.
- News media carried news of the accreditation ceremony held June 23 in which the US Ambassador John L. Withers and OSCE Ambassador Robert Bosch spoke about upholding international election standards and in which Central Elections Commission Chairman Arben Ristani conferred accreditation on the monitors of the two Albanian organizations that worked together to carry out the first Parallel Vote Count ever conducted in an Albanian general election.
- All news media except TVSH (national public TV) carried news of the box by box election results provided by ECA-KRIIK through the Parallel Vote Count project June 28 – July 1. Even Prime Minister Berisha mentioned following the results given by ‘an NGO’. In addition to the news media coverage which used the election results provided by the USAID-funded Parallel Vote Count project implemented by the local organizations ECA-KRIIK, the www.eca.al website received 120,000 simultaneous clicks June 29-30, far above any other website with Albanian news clicked in Albania.
- An article regarding the training of a delegation of high level health officials including the Minister of Health in the Czech Republic was published in the newspaper *Shqip* May 30. Mention was made of USAID financing and the expected results of improved contracts and reimbursements between the Health Insurance Institute and the University Hospital Center.
- News of the Junior Achievement Titan Competition in Tirana on July 15 was broadcast on some TV channels and carried by some newspapers.
- Findings of the six week USAID-funded media monitoring project were covered in an article in the newspaper *Sot* on July 17.
- Six 15 minute documentaries produced for the Women’s Empowerment Project were aired two at a time twice weekly on the widely viewed Top Channel July 5-25.

- News of the Best Practices in Local Governance Conference held September 17-18 was broadcast on all the major TV channels.
- News of the Agribusiness Fair held Sept. 24-26 in Tirana was broadcast on major TV channels.

Third Country Training

- Nine Albanians attended a four day technical training April 5-10 in Wheelchair Factory Sustainability in Romania.
- May 26-29, seven high level health officials including the Minister of Health attended a short technical training in the Czech Republic to observe the relationship between University Hospital Management and the health insurance system.
- June 21-24, two Albanian specialists attended the 17th European Social Services Conference in Prague.
- June 20-23, seven Albanians attended the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IAMA) Conference in Budapest, Hungary. This program was co-sponsored by the University of Hawaii's project for the Agricultural University of Tirana.

In-Country Training and Technical Assistance

- The 2008 Albanian Trade Report was launched April 27 by the Albanian Center for Competitiveness and International Trade with the presence of 65 participants including USAID Mission Director Roberta Mahoney and Minister of Economy, Trade and Economy Genc Ruli.
- Pre-Electoral Opinion Polling: The field work for the first wave of pre-electoral polling started the end of March and continued through early April. The results were not released to the public. The field work for the second wave of polling took place with findings to be released early June. Preparation continued for the third wave.
- The local organization engaged for the parallel vote count, Elections to Conduct Agency, continued preparations, identifying specialized equipment and hiring staff. The equipment was purchased by World Learning for the organization. Public relations work continued with preparation of a TV spot and finalization of shirt/cap, banner and poster design.
- Results of media monitoring for political bias were reported May 29 and received considerable media coverage.
- Pre-Electoral Opinion Polling:
 - Findings of the poll conducted May 7-19 were released June 8. They showed that as of May 20, 90 percent (+/-3 percent) of all adult Albanians reported they were likely to vote on June 28 and Albanians nationwide who reported that they were likely to vote, would vote 43 percent for the Democratic Party and 34 percent for the Social Party. All news

media commented on the findings, with the opposition Social Party criticizing the US Embassy for what to them seemed to be support for the Democratic Party.

- The field work was completed for the third wave but after extensive consultation, the project was terminated by the US and UK Embassies on June 13.
- The local organization engaged for the parallel vote count, Elections to Conduct Agency, in partnership with KRIIK deployed over 450 monitors to the 66 counting centers to report on the ballot counting box by box June 28-July 1. The results, updated every ten minutes or so, were then posted on the www.eca.al website and reported on all the major news channels. The ECA-KRIIK results came considerably before the official results and therefore were greatly followed. The website received so many hits/second (at one point over 4000/second) that the host had to be changed to the US in order to handle the elevated traffic.
- Results of weekly media monitoring for political bias were released June 4, 11, 18 and 25 but did not receive any media coverage. A final event analyzing the results was held in July.
- The public relations for the parallel vote count produced a TV spot informing people of the project and encouraging them to vote. The spot was aired 245 times in the run up to the elections. Radio announcements and half or full page newspaper ads also encouraged people to vote because ‘your vote counts’.
- Technical Assistance support to the Council of Ministers, Dept. of Strategy and Donor Coordination to assist with the implementation the Integrated Planning System continued implementation with the final ten days of assistance in country as well as some off-site. During this trip the consultant completed the IPS implementation strategy for 2009-2011, including the introduction of sector strategy monitoring and policy impact assessment.
- Implementation continued for a large in-country Women’s Empowerment Project with the scenario writing, filming and review for the third and fourth documentaries as well as a remake of the second documentary. The subject of the sixth documentary was changed. Preparations for a large conference to be held in October are being made.
- Implementation continued for a religious harmony publication with the translation into English of the Albanian articles and USAID/Embassy review of the English version.
- The Order of Nurses organized a very successful national conference May 12, where the Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, addressed the audience of more than 260 participants.
- The Mission’s Environmental Management and Compliance Workshop took place in Durres May 19-21, with the Regional Environmental Center providing support.
- June 13, a Community Outreach program to provide a small neighborhood park and playground to neighborhood February 8 in Fier was celebrated with an event during which Mission Director Roberta Mahoney spoke, soccer balls, school backpacks and other items with USAID logos were distributed and a tree was planted. USAID/Albania organized the event while FORECAST built the park and playground, planted trees and put in sidewalks and benches with the help of volunteers from Fier.
- Two US experts provided training in assets hiding and conflict of interest investigation for two groups of prosecutors and investigators June 17-19 and June 22-23.
- Implementation was completed for the Best Practices in Local Governance Conference held September 17-18 with well over 225 participants. The conference was organized by the Local

Government Project in Albania with FORECAST supporting the attendance of participants from the 55 cities not support by LGPA and some communes.

Small Grants and Other Follow-On Activities

- A grant to support the Agricultural Fair in Berat was approved and implemented April 24-25 for approximately 100 farmers and agro-businessmen from the region.
- A grant to support entrepreneurial training and employment among marginalized youth in Korca completed implementation.
- A grant to renovate a building as a museum in the village of Rehova in order to attract tourist completed implementation of the renovation in July. Efforts continue to display articles of interest to tourists and an inauguration in the fall.
- A grant to support an anti-trafficking organization to work with women and girls traversing the border with Greece to reduce the risk of being trafficked continued implementation.
- A grant to refurbish the city council room of Rreshen was submitted to the Mission for consideration.
- A grant to support the efforts of the disabilities and development coalition continued implementation.
- A grant to support a Junior Achievement business skills and enterprise competition among eight university faculties continued implementation and completed implementation with a final competition.
- A grant to provide Internet connection in Xarre in the district of Saranda was approved and began implementation. It continued implementation with the request for a new offer since the first offer proved technically impossible. The grant completed implementation during September.
- A grant to support entrepreneurial training and employment among marginalized youth in Korca continued implementation.
- A grant to provide Information Technology to the Agricultural University of Tirana continued implementation and was completed.
- A grant to support the work of the anti-trafficking shelter in Vlore, VATRA, began implementation and was completed.
- A fifth grant to ARSIS for the Street Children Center in Tirana to assist vulnerable children to attend and succeed in school and develop other life skills especially by focusing on community outreach completed implementation. The project reached out of 78 children and 36 mothers and 21 fathers.
- A grant to support the efforts of the disabilities and development coalition continued implementation.
- A grant to support entrepreneurial training and employment among marginalized youth in Korca continued implementation.

- A grant to renovate a building as a museum in the village of Rehova in order to attract tourist completed implementation of the renovation. Efforts continue to display articles of interest to tourists.
- A grant to improve mother and child health in rural communities of Elbasan was under consideration at the Mission.
- Guidance was offered to participants interested in applying for a grant for a city council room refurbishment in Rreshen, pain management, marginalized children in Tirana, community playground in Korch, youth employment in Puke, anti-trafficking shelter activities, chestnut processing in the north, nurses training in rural Elbasan, actuarial training, anti-trafficking shelter activities, Internet connection in Xare in the district of Sarande, promotion of proper wild herb collection in Elbasan, an event for the Inter Religious Council of Albania and a cultural newspaper in Fier..

Noteworthy Events

- May 20, Country Director Matty Thimm and Program Officer Jugera Ibrahimimi visited the town of Rubik to meet the mayor and see the dumpsters that were provided through a training-related small grant.
- May 23, Matty Thimm was invited to judge the Students in Free Enterprise National Competition final round.
- June 26-27, Country Director Matty Thimm was an official election observer delegated by the US Embassy for the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) delegation.
- Matty Thimm attended the twice monthly and then weekly elections donor coordination meetings from February to June 2009.
- July 21, Matty Thimm presented the Women's Empowerment Project to the NEXUS meeting of USAID staff and USAID-funded implementers. The Mission and implementers were impressed with the quality of the documentary shown. The USAID desk officer for Albania requested copies to show at USAID in DC.
- August 10, Matty Thimm visited village Rehova near the town of Erseke in southeastern Albania to inspect the renovation of the museum supported through a small grant. The large community room intended to house the museum was fully renovated according to plan, although some building materials and tools were still to be found in the room. A plaque purchased with grant funding and made in Tirana with the USAID logo acknowledging USAID support was presented to Paskal Vogli, a key member of the local tourism committee. The committee is now working on collecting and displaying the museum items.

Cost-Saving Measures

- \$5,200 was saved through negotiations for the program in Parallel Vote Count Public Relations.
- \$28,655 was saved through competitive procurement and negotiations for the program on Media Monitoring for Political Bias.
- \$539 was recovered in returned Value-Added Taxes (VAT) on office expenses and \$25,214 on program expenses.
- \$3,900 was saved through negotiations with the hotel for lower costs for the Environmental Management Conference.
- \$1,300 was saved by negotiation hotel and other costs for the University Hospital Management third country training program.
- \$4,700 was saved by negotiating conference venue fees for the Order of Nurses conference.
- \$4,497 was saved in hotel expenses for the Best Practices in Local Governance Conference.
- \$1,305 was saved by negotiating with the television station regarding the broadcasting of the women's empowerment documentaries.

Total Cost Savings.....\$75,310

III. 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:

- Kosovo High School Students Present AIDS and Drugs Awareness Seminars
Students at a Prishtina high school recently organized a drug awareness seminar, which included students from the American University in Kosovo. This was part of a 10-month English proficiency tutoring initiative managed by World Learning that paired undergraduates with high school students. In the words of the university coordinator: "it benefited the students at both institutions in a myriad of ways."
- USAID Support for Students in Moot Court Competition Leads to Three International Scholarships

In spring 2008 and 2009 World Learning helped University of Prishtina law students prepare to take part in a Moot Court Competition in Vienna. Three of the students were subsequently offered master's scholarships – two at the University of Pittsburgh and one at Leiden University. They all consider the preparation and the competition to have been critical to their academic success.

Media Coverage

- Radio advertisements began in May on several Serbian language radio stations to publicize the FORECAST-funded minority scholarship program.
- September 17, the national TV station RTK broadcast a special round table interview on prime time television with 5 beneficiaries of USAID programs to discuss the impact of 10 years of USAID support in Kosovo. 3 of the 5 interviewees have been directly involved in FORECAST/World Learning interventions and referred to these in their interview responses.
 - Agim Krasniqi, the Budget Director at the Ministry of Economy and Finance, who was trained in “Budgeting Best Practices” in West Virginia and Washington DC, mentioned that the training has helped him personally and his whole institution.
 - Valbona Dermaku, Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is currently in a FORECAST-funded master's program for civil servants at the American University in Kosovo; she mentioned that the program is helping her and her work as the Ministry is going through changes, and said that the program is helping her to upgrade her own skills.
 - Myzafere Limani, Dean of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Prishtina, has been involved with several USAID initiatives, including the FORECAST digitalization project at the University. She spoke broadly about the impact of USAID's assistance at the University.

Third Country Training

- WL supported the participation of 4 law students and 2 professor-assistants on the 16th International Moot Court Competition that was held in Vienna, Austria, April 1-10. The goal of the VIS Arbitral Moot was to foster the study of international commercial law and arbitration for resolution of international business disputes through its application to a concrete problem of a client. Through their 10-day participation in the competition, participants were able to put the theory of law into practice. The competition was organized by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law at Vienna International Center.

HICD and Other Activities

- Excellence in Public Service Master's Scholarship

During the week of April 14, WL received 155 nominations from 16 Kosovo government institutions for the next cohort of students. WL and USAID worked closely with the Prime Minister's Office to confirm that nominated candidates are civil servants. Two were removed from the list and the others were invited to take a TOEFL test to help determine selection. The test was held on May 16 at the American University in Kosovo for candidates.

Twenty-six candidates from 12 Kosovo institutions earned high enough TOEFL scores to be admitted to the second group of Master's scholarship participants at the American University in Kosovo to start classes in July. Several other candidates with scores below the cutoff point were invited to work on their English skills in USAID-funded courses at AUK and take the test again for possible admission to future cohorts.

During July Cohort 2 for the Master's scholarship program started with the first class. 47 students are currently part of the program in two overlapping cohorts. It is expected that the program will accommodate around 100 civil servants in all. Classes accommodating a total of 47 students in 2 groups are continuing in the Master's scholarship program. (See Appendix for related article in *USAID Kosovo E-News*, July 20 issue)

- Performance Improvement & Digitalization Project at University of Prishtina

As part of the tender process for the university software, WL responded in April to more than 40 questions from prospective suppliers. On May 21, three offers were received for the university software and on May 29 WL met with the University digitalization committee to distribute the proposals and discuss the evaluation process.

There was much progress in June on evaluation of proposals received for procurement and implementation of administrative software for the University. Formal evaluations were received from a locally contracted company, a US consultant, and the University committee.

During July many meetings with all stakeholders took place to identify finalists in the procurement of goods and services for the project "Higher Education Administrative Software and Related Services for the University of Prishtina." Two companies were invited to Prishtina to present their proposals. The revised proposals will be the basis of final selection.

In September the first choice supplier for the procurement of goods and services for "Higher Education Administrative Software and Related Services for the University of Prishtina" was selected.

- Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Program

During April and May, extracurricular classes in computers and English continued in 13 Serbian and Albanian high schools reaching more than 900 students. Final activities for academic year 2008-2009 were completed in June and World Learning submitted a comprehensive review of the initiative and recommendations for continued funding.

USAID has asked that this program continue for the academic year 2009/2010, and WL prepared the final year's details during July. Preliminary work took place in August for the anticipated continuation of the program for the next academic year. As of September, the project has officially been extended for a final school year (2009/2010) and a contract has been executed with the 14th school that is to be supported– in the small Kosovo Serb town of Gusterica.

- Education for Peace Scholarship Program

During April, the Toni Bislimi Foundation (TBF) and the Education for Peace Scholarship Program (EFP) continued to hold info sessions at several schools throughout Kosovo – in Pristina, Viti, Kamenica, etc. The aim of these info sessions was to inform current seniors at high schools about the possibilities and requirements of studying abroad. At the same time the Foundation is working toward fulfilling the requirements to become a licensed TOEFL test center.

During May, the Toni Bislimi Foundation and the EFP held info sessions at several schools throughout Kosovo – in Ferizaj, Prizren, Peja and Gjakova with almost 50 students in each of the sessions. Also during May, the TBF launched a call for applications for 2009-10 scholarship at Texas Lutheran University.

June was the deadline for applications to the Toni Bislimi Foundation's Education for Peace Scholarship Program, whose activities are supported by FORECAST. Nine (9) applicants were short listed and interviewed by the TBG Foundation representatives and other education specialists. The top three candidates were recommended for admission to Texas Lutheran University for admission in academic year 2009/2010 with full scholarships; it is expected that they will begin studies in the fall.

June was the end of the Education for Peace Scholarship Program. During July WL finalized the budget and reporting with the Tony Bislimi Foundation.

- Minority Scholarship Program

World Learning continues to support 8 minority students with scholarships for undergraduate studies at the American University of Kosovo. Per USAID request WL will expand the program and support 4 more minority scholars in the coming academic year. Outreach and recruitment took place in April and May. Outreach efforts included distribution of advertising material and also advertisement of the program on several local radio stations.

Meetings with school representatives and community centers took place in Lapje Selo, Verbovc, Strpce, Partes, Ropotovo, Gracanica, Susica, Kamenica, etc.

Final applications were received in July for the 4 places allotted to join the 8 already-enrolled students. During August students who ranked highest for the undergraduate scholarships were selected and letters of acceptance were sent by USAID.

On September 4, four new scholars started classes at AUK with USAID/World Learning support. Three (3) other finalists who had been recruited by WL also enrolled, with separate funding arranged directly by the University.

Noteworthy Events

- April 17, WL staff Aferdita Mekuli and Fatmir Salihu met with USAID Project Management Specialist Ms. Lejla Kolenovic to discuss current WL projects related to minorities, including outreach/recruitment for the Minority Scholarship program.
- April 18, a Multiethnic Soccer Tournament was organized for approximately 150 primary school students from 12 different schools, under the FORECAST Community Service through Extracurricular Activity Project. The tournament took place at the Jazince/Brezovica primary school in Strpce/Shtërpce Municipality with a mix of Kosovo Serb and Roma children, ranging in age from 7 to 14 years. There were several winning teams that received special trophies. All of the participants received a tournament T-shirt and some sweets.
- April 19– 22, World Learning Director Matt Brown participated in a Performance Improvement Conference in Orlando, Florida. The conference was organized by ISPI (International Society for Performance Improvement) and the topic was Performance Improvement Technology.
- April 22, WL staff Aferdita Mekuli met with Mr. Eric Butler, the team leader of a USAID Kosovo Work Force Development Assessment team, to brief him on current and past WL projects in the education sector. The briefing covered the University of Pristina project, AUK Minority scholarship, AUK Masters scholarship, Ministry of Education website redesign, and the Community Service through Extracurricular Activities Project.
- April 29, WL staff Hamide Gashi participated in a workshop on “Close-out Procedures for USAID Contracts and Agreements” at USAID. The presenters were Peter Sule and Esztella Fazekas from the USAID Regional Contracting Office in Budapest.
- April 30, as a part of regular monitoring visits to schools in our portfolio, WL staff Fatmir Salihu met with computer instructor Jelena Maksimovic at Susice School. They discussed concerns about student attendance and the possibility of inviting students from the primary school to join the classes.
- May 8, Matt Brown, Aferdita Mekuli and Hyrije Rashiti (from WL) and Antigona Mustafa (USAID) attended a presentation in English by American University in Kosovo students and Eqrem Qabëj high school pupils on drug use in Kosovo and the US. This was the culmination

of a FORECAST-funded tutoring program that paired 10 AUK students with English language pupils at the high school (in Prishtina). The audience included some 100 students and pupils and the presentation covered types of drugs, statistics, symptoms of abuse etc. (See Appendix for related article in *USAID Kosovo E-News*, May 8 issue)

- May 12, WL staff Fatmir Salihu met with staff of the USAID Initiating Positive Change program (which works with minorities) to discuss outreach/recruitment for the FORECAST Minority Scholarship Program. He also met with billboard leasers and representatives of the Kosovo Serb radio association Kosma to discuss advertising. Numerous additional site visits to Kosovo Serb schools took place in May as part of recruitment for the FORECAST-funded minority scholarship program.
- May 21, Matt Brown and Aferdita Mekuli (WL) met with members of a USAID Education Assessment team to discuss World Learning work in the education sector.
- May 26, WL Kosovo staff and Antigona Mustafa of USAID Kosovo traveled to the WL Macedonia Office to discuss ongoing HICD work there with staff and consultant Steve Kelly. The primary purpose was to learn about the early stages of a current HICD Macedonia intervention from the point of view of an experienced performance improvement practitioner.
- June 4, WL organized a small reception to recognize the support of USAID for the Library of the Law Faculty of the University of Prishtina. Those present included the USAID Mission Director and Training Officer; WL representatives, the Rector of the University, a Vice Rector, several deans, and other senior faculty and library personnel. The Dean of the Law Faculty expressed gratitude to USAID for the assistance provided to the Faculty of Law. (See Appendix for related article in *USAID Kosovo E-News*, June 9 issue)
- June 19, USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader and Training Officer Antigona Mustafa visited the “Vellezerit Frasheri” high school in Decan with WL staff to see a computer class under FORECAST’s Community Service Through Extra Curricular Activities program and talk with students. During the visit the principal of the school Mr. Rexhe Sadrijaj expressed appreciation for USAID support and presented Ms. Rader with a Certificate of Appreciation. (See Appendix for related article in *USAID Kosovo E-News*, July 6 issue)
- June 30, WL staff Matt Brown and Hamide Gashi attended a fraud awareness presentation by a USAID Inspector General officer at USAID.
- July 28, Matt Brown and Aferdita Mekuli attended a meeting at USAID for an update on USAID activities – and for Matt Brown to make a presentation for all partners about training opportunities under FORECAST in anticipation of a training planning process at the end of the summer.
- August 12, Matt Brown and Mehrije Nagavci met with a representative of the USAID Kosovo Private Enterprise Program (KPEP) regarding the training planning process that is expected to begin during September.
- September 15, as part of USAID’s campaign to celebrate 10 years of USAID in Kosovo, the US Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Murphy and USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader visited a school that WL supports in Ferizaj through the Community Service through Extracurricular Education project. The visit included discussions with the school director and

a visit with approximately 20 students in our computer lab. The school director presented Mr. Murphy with a Certificate of Appreciation for USAID support.

- September 18, as part of USAID 10 years in Kosovo celebration, an exhibition was organized at which most USAID partners presented their programs through pictures, brochures, posters etc. World Learning participated as well. The US Ambassador gave a short speech for journalists, USAID partners, and beneficiaries.
- An annual training planning process began in September, coordinated by World Learning, and WL met individually with several USAID implementing partners to discuss concept proposals.

IV. FORECAST/Serbia and Montenegro

Success Stories

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

- Budding Serbian Architect Brings Home New Perspectives
A student who spent a year at the University of Missouri has been working on cultural heritage management in Novi Sad, the town where she now attends university. She and her colleagues have already published a booklet, curated a museum exhibit, and organized a one day seminar. The next step was to design an exhibit at the Mixer Design Expo 2009 in Belgrade, promoting environmentally-friendly architectural renovation. She will be presenting her research at an international congress later this year.

Staffing

- Natalija Ostojic, consultant, ended her contract on April 15.
- Nadja Bulat Mirkovic, Program Coordinator, returned to work from maternity leave on April 16.
- Nevena Drakulic, Program Assistant, was promoted to Program Development Specialist in June.

Media Coverage

- Print and broadcast media in Montenegro covered the FORECAST Exchange re-entry workshop in June (see FORECAST Exchange section below).

FORECAST Exchange

- During April, all 2009-2010 students were placed in US universities, accepted their placements, and passed the TOEFL exam. After budget research and a clearer picture of cost savings realized by World Learning, it was determined that 2 additional Montenegrin students and 4 additional Serbian students could be supported and that all of them could be placed in time, bringing the total to 28 Serbian and 8 Montenegrin students. All SRFI clearances, medicals, and Conditions of Sponsorship forms were completed in May.
- The FORECAST Exchange students from 2008-2009 returned home in May and a re-entry seminar was held in Belgrade for all the 2008-2009 students from Serbia and Montenegro on May 27 and 28. A separate event was held for Montenegrin alumni and new students on June 3 in Podgorica. Conrad Turner and Susan Delja and other staff from the PAO office of the Embassy attended and talked with the students. There was a press conference held in conjunction with this event where the Ambassador and World Learning Country Director Mary Fran Doyle spoke and several students were interviewed. It received considerable TV and some other media coverage including a spot on VOA. WL staff Snezana Mijatovic and Nevena Drakulic travelled to Montenegro to make this event possible and to finish medical exam and other details. A separate report on these events has been sent to Ethel Brooks, the CTO.
- June 23-25, World Learning held the Pre-Departure Orientation for the 2009-2010 students from both Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade and Sremska Karlovci. All students from Serbia completed their J-1 visa procedures and the Montenegrins received theirs the following week and were the first citizens to ever receive U.S. visas issued in Montenegro. The Serbian students were addressed by the Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy, Jennifer Brush, in the US Consulate when they appeared for their visas. Thomas Bruey, World Learning/Washington Program Officer, attended the PDO in Belgrade, and his participation for the second year has been a critical feature to the program. A separate report about the PDO has also been submitted to CTO Ethel Brooks.
- In June, Mary Fran Doyle attended a special EXPO program featuring among others the work of alumna Vedrana Boskovic (2007-2008), with a special architectural and art collaborative poster project called A3. Vedrana and a professor from the Drama School in Belgrade visited the WL/Belgrade office to hear more about the FORECAST Exchange Program and how more drama students can get involved.
- All FORECAST Exchange students from Serbia (28) and Montenegro (8) departed to the US during August and arrived and settled at their US universities. WL staff have continued to work with returning students from 2008-2009 to help them with course accreditation and to gather information about possible success stories from alumni. They have also worked on the possibility of a workshop for alumni related to graduate schools in Montenegro for the

- In September, Mary Fran Doyle, Snezana Mijatovic, and Nevena Drakulic met with Tijana Waterson from the Cultural Affairs Office of the US Embassy to discuss possible follow-on activities and mentoring with Serbian FORECAST Exchange students and other US government alumni. Snezana Mijatovic and Nevena Drakulic and five FORECAST Exchange alumni attended an environmental clean-up event sponsored by the US Embassy and American Councils for their A-Smyle high school alumni to network with A-Smyle youth.
- FORECAST Exchange staff continued to work on accrediting issues with returning students during September. They also sent letters to all faculties, university administrators, and university career centers about the upcoming program for 2010-2011 and prepared publicity materials for recruitment, updated all materials for 2010-2011 and posted them on websites. WL scheduled presentations for both Serbia and Montenegro to publicize the program.
- USAID/World Learning now have two alumni who after graduating with their Masters at their Serbian home university have been accepted in PhD programs in engineering with fellowships in the US at the university which they attended as FORECAST Exchange students. Both Dunja Pavlovic and Milos Stanic (2007-2008) will be at the University of Alabama at Huntsville and will begin in January 2010. Another alumna, Nina Milosavljevic (2007-2008), after completing her Masters in bio-medicine has been accepted for a PhD program at the University of Nice in France. She said her program in the US and the research skills that she gained in her internship there were definitely factors in her obtaining the scholarship. The same is true for Pavle Vujosevic (2007-2008) with a TEMPUS EU scholarship that will involve graduate work in engineering in Germany, Spain, and England. Several returned students in Serbia and Montenegro who have been awarded EU scholarships and research opportunities have felt they were possible because of their US experience.
- At the request of the Public Affairs Department in Montenegro, World Learning organized an alumni workshop for Montenegrin FORECAST Exchange alumni (2007-2009) who would like to consider applying for graduate school in the United States. The workshop has been coordinated with Elizabeth Chung of the International Academic Center in Belgrade October 16-18 in Montenegro to include preparation for the GRE, etc. The PAO will fund this activity separately out of a small grant.

Noteworthy Events

- In April, Mary Fran Doyle and Nadja Bulat Mirkovic met with 9 of the USAID contractor staff of the new Separation of Powers Project and told them about USAID training

processing procedures at USAID/Serbia and gave them the forms and other materials they will need.

- In May, Mary Fran Doyle and Snezana Mijatovic and one of our alumni, Milos Stanic, made a presentation on the FORECAST Exchange Program during American Week in Sremska Karlovci at the request of the Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy.
- In June, Mary Fran Doyle attended a reception welcoming VP Joseph Biden to Serbia at the US Ambassador's residence.
- In June, Mary Fran Doyle attended a Youth and Employment Task Force meeting that represents most international groups involved in activities related to youth in Serbia.
- FORECAST Exchange students (5), Community Connections alumni (5) and World Learning staff for these programs were invited to the US Ambassador's 4th of July celebration in Serbia (held on July 2 by the Charge d'Affaire in the Ambassador's absence).
- In September, Nadja Mirkovic and Mary Fran Doyle met with IREX staff to discuss the problems they were having implementing training procedures and to clarify the requirements with them. A second meeting took place later in the month with IREX and the participants going to the UK for their pre-departure orientation.
- Mary Fran Doyle met with the Youth and Employment Task Force to talk about all youth related activities in our projects and to hear about such activities in other youth related projects in Serbia from various donors and implementers.
- Mary Fran Doyle attended a reception for the new US Embassy Press Attaché Brian Stimmler.
- Najda Mirkovic and Mary Fran Doyle had a meeting with Jim Herne and Sasa Marusic from the Agrobusiness Project about third country training programs they are planning for next spring.

Cost Savings

- \$2,460 was saved by reductions from Value-Added Tax (VAT).
- \$300 was saved by using the American Corner for re-entry and PDO meetings in April instead of renting meeting space.

- \$3,000 was saved by holding the pre-departure orientation workshops in Sremska Karlovci instead of in Belgrade.

Total Cost Savings.....\$5,760

V. APPENDIX

- A. Intervention Status Report – April-September 2009
- B. Success Stories for April-September 2009
- C. USAID Kosovo E-News, May 8, 2009 issue, “Kosovo High School Students Present AIDS Awareness Program in English”
- D. USAID Kosovo E-News, June 9, 2009 issue, “USAID Assistance Recognized by Law Faculty”
- E. USAID Kosovo E-News, July 6, 2009 issue, “USAID Director Presented with Certificate of Appreciation”
- F. USAID Kosovo E-News, July 20, 2009 issue, “New Round of Scholarships for Public Servants and Minorities”

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2009

	UST	TCT	ICT	TA	Small Grants	EMT	Academic	Partnerships	HICD Activities	TOTALS
Number of Interventions										
Albania - period	1	4	2	5	7	0	0	0	0	19
cumulative	22	26	17	28	39	0	0	0	0	132
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	0	0	0	0	0					0
cumulative	4	6	3	10	0					23
Kosovo - period	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	4
cumulative	2	18	8	33	0	0	5	0	16	82
Montenegro - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
cumulative	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	0	0	27
Serbia - period	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	28
cumulative	0	0	0	0	0	0	85	0	0	85
Regional - period	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
cumulative	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS - period	1	5	2	7	7	0	38	0	0	60
cumulative	34	77	33	73	42	0	117	0	18	394
Number of Participants (if applicable)										
Albania - period	5	26	25	470	n/a					526
cumulative	135	195	1692	1154	n/a					3176
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	0	0	0	n/a	n/a					0
cumulative	9	40	110	n/a	n/a					159
Kosovo - period	0	6	0	n/a			30		n/a	36
cumulative	21	151	67	n/a			53		n/a	292
Montenegro - period	0	0	0	0			8			8
cumulative	0	0	0	0			27			27
Serbia - period	0	0	0	0			28			28
cumulative	0	0	0	0			85			85
Regional - period	0	0	0	0						0
cumulative	0	58	0	0						58
TOTALS - period	5	32	25	470			66			598
cumulative	194	708	3787	1154			165			6008

APPENDIX A: INTERVENTION STATUS - NEW STARTS - APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2009

Appendix B
FORECAST Semi-Annual Report
April-September 2009
World Learning Success Stories

Albania

Dumpsters Make Albanian Town Smile

Old-fashioned, immovable, concrete containers for trash were frequent eye-sores as trash gathered in and around them. The Municipality of Rubik in northern Albania sought to spruce up the town by using modern dumpsters that could be emptied mechanically and the trash trucked to a new landfill. The Municipality arranged to rent a truck twice a week from a nearby town but it needed some help with the dumpsters. USAID agreed to provide a small grant to purchase 23 dumpsters if the municipality would construct concrete platforms and ensure proper emptying.

USAID also provided signs for the dumpsters to encourage citizens to keep their town clean. The public announcement signs include a drawing of a smiling child on a crushed can produced by the artist Charles Kaufman and used with permission. The Albanian sign reads "A clean city is a happy city. Help Rubik smile."

"Although this might seem like a small project," explains Rubik Mayor Mark Ruci. "But actually it [placing dumpsters] was hugely important because it changed the attitude of our citizens."

Albania

Parallel Vote Count Results Enhance Credibility of Elections in Albania

Election results transmitted by independent monitors most used information source for media/web-users.

Challenge: Credibility regarding election results is vital to avoid post election protests and the smooth functioning of democracy, whether elections result in a change of government or a repeat mandate for the government in power. This is especially true if the results are close and the society highly polarized. Voting may be according to standards, but voters may suspect that their ballots are not counted properly, especially if there are delays in showing the results. To improve ballot counting standards, Albania instituted central ballot counting with 66 centers with five-ten counting teams responsible for counting and transmitting the results to the Central Election Commission (CEC). For the June 28, 2009 parliamentary elections, the CEC also installed cameras in all vote counting centers to record each ballot and the general situation. Considering how polarized Albania is politically, verification of the vote counting by independent observers seemed essential.

Initiative: USAID/Albania decided to ensure an independent parallel vote count for the June 28, 2009 parliamentary elections. The “Elections to Conduct Agency” (ECA) run by Ilirjan Celibashi, a former head of the Central Election Commission was contracted to use state-of-the-art technology and an army of independent monitors to transmit the results of the ballot count, box by box. Partnering with KRIIK, a youth organization that fielded the more than 450 monitors, ECA purchased personal digital assistants (PDAs) and programmed them especially so that monitors could transmit the results from the 66 counting centers after each box was counted. A media center was set up in a prominent hotel and visualization computers provided to the main television stations transmitted the results as they were updated every few minutes directly. The box-by-box results were also posted on the www.eca.al website.

Results: As results of the ballot counting started to arrive from the parallel vote count monitors, traffic on the ECA website started to climb, reaching 120,000 simultaneous hits, considerably higher than any other Albanian website including the Central Election Commission website. All the television channels except the state-run television used these ECA-KRIIK results instead of the results announced periodically by the CEC because ECA results were posted sooner. The accuracy of the ECA results when later compared to the official CEC results was amazing, a testimony to the careful work of monitors and ECA’s quality control systems. Although the results of this close election were not officially announced until more than a month later, head of the winning party, Prime Minister Sali Berisha, announced his victory two days after the elections based on the real time ECA results with roughly 80 per cent of the polling stations accounted for.

Quote: “The Parallel Vote Count project was widely accepted as a success of Albanian civil society” explains Ilirjan Celibashi, head of ECA, “because it fulfilled the need and the desire of public opinion for fast, complete and credible information on the election results.”

Albania

Documentaries about Albanian Women Challenge Old Mentalities

Six documentaries showing ordinary women who have done extraordinary things inspire the next generation of women

As Albania strives to gain entry into the European Union, a number of issues of gender equality and the inclusiveness of the social decision-making process remain unresolved. Old-fashioned fixed ideas of what a woman can and can’t do abound, creating mental obstacles in the minds of men and women alike. Women with sound business plans can’t get credit as easily as men. Women may be well educated and hard-working, but few of them are promoted to decision-making positions. Rural families sometimes prevent teenage girls from continuing school, depriving them of future opportunities. Even within the family, traditional views of the role of the woman may prevent her from putting remittances to the best use for the family. Unable to find paid employment outside the home, many women and girls suffer economically and socially. Shame, lack of information or lack of accessible services prevent many women from

obtaining adequate and timely health care. Vulnerable populations, from the disabled to ethnic minorities, face discrimination and lack the political voice of others.

To address these issues, USAID/Albania decided to carry out a multi-part program to identify key issues during a series of roundtables, produce six documentaries to raise awareness, discuss the issues in a national forum, and finally, financially support key civic actors to directly address/remedy issues of gender equality and inclusiveness in the political system.

Six very special documentaries on women in Albania were produced with the support of USAID as part of a grant from USAID's Office for Women in Development. These inspiring stories showcase strong Albanian women who have overcome adversities and challenged old mentalities in order to improve their livelihoods, fight for the protection and rights of others, and inspire the next generation of women to strive for equal opportunities. They are the stories of ordinary women who have done extraordinary things, stories that will empower thousands of women across Albania! One documentary tells the story of a woman from the north, a wife, mother and physician, who is an important decision-maker in Albania's health sector. Another portrays the story of a courageous woman in a wheelchair who works as a strong voice for the inclusion of people with disabilities. A successful businesswoman who has accessed credit and is helping other aspiring business women in her community is the central figure of another. To highlight the lives of rural women, another documentary relates the story of a middle-aged village woman who dared to work in a male-dominated sector and when unfairly dismissed, turns to the courts for justice. The story of a policewoman who assists victims of domestic violence inspires others to beyond the call of duty. To encourage education and young women, a documentary featured a young woman who studied in Tirana and abroad but returned to her provincial town to contribute in the field of higher education.

The documentaries were broadcast on Albania's most watched TV channel during July and again on national public television in October. Comments were extremely positive.

Quote: "We guys are often surprised when girls try to change their position in the family, society," says a Tirana law student. "We even feel threatened, especially about sharing power. But when you learn about [these] women, you feel respect, pride."

Kosovo

Kosovo High School Students Present AIDS and Drugs Awareness Seminars

High school students from the Eqrem Qabej High School in Pristina organized a drug awareness seminar on May 8, 2009. The audience included their schoolmates and students from the American University in Kosovo (AUK), as well as faculty, USAID representatives and others. The seminar, conducted in English, was a follow-up to an AIDS awareness presentation that took place several weeks earlier. Both presentations were the result of a 10-month tutoring initiative supported by USAID's Focus on Results – Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) Program, which is implemented by World Learning.

The tutoring initiative paired 10 AUK undergraduates with 10 high school students for tutoring on English proficiency, writing and study skills. Kathy Schneider, coordinator of the program for AUK, explains that “tutors and tutees took responsibility for planning, scheduling, and documenting learning activities. English was used as the language of instruction and communication.” She reports that the tutoring program “benefitted students at both learning institutions in a myriad of ways!”

Training and guidance were provided to the AUK tutors by AUK’s Academic Support Center. The high school students decided on their own to conduct the two presentations, which served not only to educate their peers on issues of importance to them, but also to develop their presentation skills.

Kosovo

USAID Support for Students in Moot Court Competition Leads to Three International Scholarships

In March 2008 and April 2009, USAID supported the participation of student teams from the University of Prishtina in the Annual Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot, a week-long event in which law students from around the world demonstrate their litigation skills in a hypothetical commercial law case. The event takes place at the Law Faculty of the University of Vienna. The Kosovo teams, under their lead coach Vjosa Osmani (an Assistant Law Professor), prepared for the events for months in advance – including final training in a model courtroom constructed by the US Justice Department and USAID at the University Law Faculty. In all, USAID covered expenses for 7 students and their coaches to participate in the competition. All of them consider the experience of preparation and competition to have been highly valuable. Three of the students went on to receive international masters scholarships, a fact they attribute directly to the contacts and impressions they made in Vienna. Ms. Donikë Qerimi has already completed a one-year masters degree in International and Comparative Law at the University of Pittsburgh, with a full scholarship. Now, she says, “I plan to get involved in projects connected with improving the legislative and judicial climate in Kosovo.” Ms. Kujtesa Nezaj has been offered the same scholarship and plans to begin studies in Pittsburgh in the fall of 2009. Ms. Anjezë Gojani has accepted a scholarship for a year-long masters program in International and European Business Law at Leiden University in Holland. Ms. Gojani hopes to work for the Kosovo government when she completes her studies in 2010.

Participation was funded through USAID’s program Focus on Results – Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition, which is implemented by World Learning.

Pullout quote: “Participating in the Vis competition was a major advantage in my application,” Anjezë Gojani, law student, recipient of a full masters scholarship to Leiden University in Holland.

Serbia

Budding Serbian Architect Brings Home New Perspectives

Mobilizing to Preserve the Best of the Past with Environmentally Conscious Design

Challenge: Since returning from her undergraduate year 2007-2008 at the University of Missouri, FORECAST Exchange alumni Vedrana Boskovic, an architectural student at the University of Novi Sad, has been on the move. Vedrana feels her U.S. experience led her to approach her work from different angles, giving her new questions and a search for new answers about her profession and her love: combining culture and architecture to create new forms of expression and space, preserving the beauty of the past and helping it speak to the present and the future. As Vedrana mused, “Upon my return home, I felt encouraged to continue my research by enlarging my team and motivating my colleagues to join my collaboration with a wider network of people.” She and her colleagues had been involved in preserving and identifying new cultural uses for abandoned historic buildings in Novi Sad, one of Serbia’s oldest cultural and political centers.

Initiative: Now with renewed efforts, they mapped, photographed, collected archive materials, and did architectural analyses of each building from a cultural management point of view. Their findings, highlighted in a booklet: *iDNS vol: 1, The Role of Cultural and Historic Heritage towards Defining the Brand of a City*, sought to illuminate the hidden potentials of Novi Sad’s cultural heritage and activate their society in preserving it. They launched *iDNS* (“Identity Novi Sad”) at an exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art, done by the URBANDESIGN organization and other local and international partners, followed by a one day seminar with architectural professionals about preserving cultural heritage in Novi Sad (<http://www.urbandesign.rs/>).

Result: Collaborating with graphic designers, they took *iDNS* to wider audiences. They designed and built an exhibit at the Mixer Design Expo 2009 in Belgrade that featured *iDNS* and included an international competition in poster design. Their idea was to popularize “cultural boxes,” modular, multifunctional, mobile structures where posters could be hung without polluting environmentally or visually. They seek to promote alternative, low budget, and self-sustainable ways of reanimating the architectural cultural heritage mapped in *iDNS vol.1* and other architectural renovations. Their search led them to investigate environmentally-friendly, straw bale architecture and construction. At her mentor’s urging, Vedrana will present this research “Straw Bale Architecture-Identity of Vojvodina in the 21st Century” at the international INDIS (Architecture and Civil Engineering) Congress in Novi Sad. They are hopeful that the City of Novi Sad and others will accept and use their ideas and designs.

Quote: “It wasn’t until my studies in the U.S. that I realized the importance of publishing this research paper and raising awareness within my society,” Vedrana said.



USAID/Kosovo Mission Director Tours Prizren Area Projects

On May 15, Patricia Rader, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, visited various USAID projects in the Prizren region as part of the Mission's effort to meet beneficiaries across Kosovo.

Rader visited a school construction site in the town of Prizren. The school annex, now under construction, will help reduce the number of shifts from three to two thus providing more quality time for students at the school. The annex is part of the USAID-supported Small Infrastructure for Education Project implemented by CHF.



A \$10,000 planting machine donated by USAID to the Perdrini Fruit and Vegetable Association uses only six people to do work that previously required 24 people. The equipment is part of USAID's assistance to the business sector.

Two businesses were also visited, Rudina Dairy Farm, near Prizren, and Perdrini Fruit and Vegetable Association, Krushe e Madhe/Velika Krusa. USAID's Director heard about the challenges facing members of the association and how they are addressing these issues. USAID has been cooperating closely with the association's 150 members, of which 30 are women.

Last year, with USAID assistance, the association exported 400 tons of peppers to Macedonia and Albania. This year, it has an agreement in place to export 1,650 tons to the same markets, and the farmers are working hard to meet the terms of the contract.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Encouraging Municipal Services Improvements

Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, a small municipality southeast of Pristina, received 25 new solid waste containers in support of a new environment protection program for the municipality. Novobërdë/Novo Brdo Municipality is undertaking efforts to improve services for the

residents of the municipality, including initiating a solid waste collection and billing project.

USAID, through its Incentive Fund Program, part of the Effective Municipalities Initiative, supported this initiative following an open competition with all municipalities in Kosovo in November 2008. The municipality received an incentive fund award of \$15,000, and an additional \$11,500 was matched by the municipality.

"Some neighborhoods have not had a simple trash container and had to travel a long distance and spend money just to dispose of their garbage. Now, more families can rely on regular garbage collection," said an older resident of Novobërdë/Novo Brdo.

The initiative provided the entire municipality with new solid waste containers and introduced a new billing system that will help the municipality increase its own-source revenue collection. In the months ahead, the municipality intends to establish a local Public Utility Company to manage solid waste collection that will employ several people.

Novobërdë/Novo Brdo is a small, rural and multi-ethnic municipality. Although one of the poorest in Kosovo, the municipality believes tourism could be developed, but without proper environmental protection practices, tourism will not grow.

USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative will continue to encourage and support the municipalities that strive to improve their performance in delivering municipal services. The initiative is implemented by RTI International.

STRENGTHENING MEDIA

News Gathering Capacity Increases in Serbian Language Media in Kosovo

The first phase of re-equipping a group of Serbian language TV stations has been completed, an important step in increasing the access to information from Kosovo for Serbian language speakers.

The stations were provided with news-gathering equipment, video servers and studio lights to improve the technical quality of their output under the Strengthening Independent Minority Media Project, being implemented by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) with support from USAID.

These local stations compete with powerful stations from Serbia, widely distributed in Kosovo through cable and satellite. TV audiences are sensitive to technical standards and tend to avoid stations whose picture and sound quality are poor.

The new equipment enables the stations, which reach most of the Kosovo Serb population, to report local news more effectively. It will also help them source their news about Kosovo from within Kosovo, rather than using Belgrade-based wire services. The stations are supported in their use of the new equipment by the USAID project's technical experts.

"With these new cameras our picture quality is now better than [Serbia based channels] RTS and B92," says the Executive Director of TV Most, Zvonko Miladinovic. "They will also help us in our efforts to cover more local news, which is what our viewers want from us."



IREX trainers Martha Dixon (left) and Dejan Vuksanovic, work on the new equipment with cameraman Nikola Lazovic and reporter Radica Milanovic from TV Mir.

The next phase of the Strengthening Independent Minority Media Project's support for these stations will be establishment of an internet-based network for the stations. This network will allow them to exchange news items and other program material, boosting their coverage of the often-isolated Kosovo Serb communities in Kosovo. The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of information about life in Kosovo available in the Kosovo Serb communities, working with a group of four local TV stations and five local radio stations.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Kosovo High School Students Present AIDS Awareness Program in English

High school students from the Eqrem Qabej High School in Pristina organized a drug awareness presentation for their classmates, American University in Kosovo (AUK) students and others on May 8, conducting the entire presentation in English.

The presentation was a follow-up project of a previous AIDS awareness presentation, also conducted in English. Both presentations were part of a 10-month tutoring initiative supported by USAID's Focus on Results - Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) Program.

The initiative paired 10 AUK undergraduates with 10 high school students for tutoring on English proficiency, writing and study skills. Training and guidance were provided to the AUK tutors by AUK's Academic Support Center. The high school students decided on their own to conduct the two presentations, which served not only to educate their peers on issues of importance to them, but also to develop their presentation skills.

USAID's FORECAST Program is a five-year activity administered by World Learning.

Camp Bondsteel Donates Mattresses to Caritas for Needy Kosovo Institutions and Individuals

Over 2,000 mattresses are being distributed by Caritas Kosova, thanks to American soldiers at Camp Bondsteel. The mattresses were donated by the Department of Defense, with assistance from USAID/Kosovo and Washington in facilitating the "grant-in-aid" paperwork.



Major Otto Emme, MNTF(E), talks with the recipient of the first delivery of mattresses, the University of Prishtina Psychiatric Hospital, and its director Dr. Jusuf Ulaj along with Jakup Sabedini from Caritas.

"We've taken excess mattresses from Camp Bondsteel, and through Caritas, been able to move these out to many needy organizations," said Col. Phil Butch of KFOR Multi-National Task Force (EAST) Brigade in Camp Bondsteel. The mattresses have been delivered by Caritas to many individuals, organizations and institutions with need for these items, such as many departments at the Pristina Hospital, the Shtime/Stimlje Hospital, and individuals across Kosovo. Lt. Col. Jeff Antone coordinated the donation process, along with many soldiers who helped with the pick-up by Caritas.

"Caritas must thank everyone -- very much -- for the contribution," says Jakup Sabedin of Caritas. He notes that after they made the first donation, more people have come forward asking if they could receive some of the mattresses. Caritas will also be receiving wooden tables and chairs from Camp Bondsteel through USAID for distribution to previously identified needy organizations.

U.S. Agency for International Development
 Arbëria (Dragodan), Ismail Qemali st., nr. 1
 Phone: ++ 381 38 243 673
 Fax: ++ 381 38 249 493

For more information visit www.usaid.gov/missions/kosovo and <http://pristina.usembassy.gov/> or contact us at kosovousaidinfo@usaid.gov



USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

KOSOVO

PROGRAM E-NEWS

JUNE 16, 2009

WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipalities Improve Services

Improving municipal services was the theme of a visit on June 3 by Susan Fritz, USAID/Kosovo Deputy Director, to Suharekë/Suva Reka and Prizren municipalities. These two municipalities have been successful in applying methods that help improve services to benefit the citizens.

During her visit in Prizren, Fritz presented the Mayor of Prizren with a certificate for the Pedestrian Street Lighting and Signalization Project, a project that installed lights in crossing areas close to a few schools and markets. The street lighting will use solar energy, so funds for electricity won't be required. USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative (EMI) awarded a \$15,000 grant to Prizren, based on improvements made by the municipality in the collection of taxes and fines. This grant was matched by \$11,520 from the municipality.



A satisfied user (far left) of the Citizens Service Center talks about his experience with Susan Fritz, USAID/Kosovo Deputy Director (far right).

In Suhareka/Suva Reka, USAID's Deputy Director met with the Mayor and discussed challenges facing this municipality. The visit included a tour of the Business Service Center and Citizens Service Center, a "one-stop shop" for citizens established in 2007. The Center was a joint project of USAID and Suhareka/Suva Reka. It provides citizens with easier access to municipal services such as obtaining birth, wedding and death certificates, construction permits, or paying property taxes.

The Business Service Center, housed on the second floor of the building, is supported by the business community and the municipality, with the aim of furthering economic development. The construction of the Center totaled \$300,000, co-funded by USAID, the municipality and the Ministry of Local Government Administration. The project was part of USAID's Local Government Initiative, an earlier project that partnered with six Kosovo municipalities, of which Suharekë/Suva Reka was one.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Kosovo Serb Businesses Learn about Expansion Opportunities

Kosovo Serb-owned businesses recently learned about USAID's Strategic Activities Fund (SAF) for businesses. The May 26 presentation marked the launch of an initiative to reach out to minority areas in Kosovo.

Seventeen business organizations and NGOs attended the presentation at the USAID partner office in Gračanica/Gračanicë in early June, and learned about the funding mechanisms and types of awards, as well as the application requirements for grant funds.

The Strategic Activities Fund (SAF) is part of USAID's Kosovo Private Enterprise Program, designed to complement core activities and contribute to achieving the project's objectives. The SFA will fund or cost-share specific discretionary projects that can lead to improvements in the overall competitiveness of a sector, sub-sector or value chain production supported by USAID.

Jovica Aksic, Director of the Cooperative "Agroseme" in Livadje, Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, said, "This was a very positive presentation. We know now that there is a place where local people can apply for assistance. I think that funds for strategic activities represent a possibility for those already in operation to get benefits to improve their business." The minority outreach initiative will continue with similar meetings in Leposavic/Leposaviq, Dragash/Dragaš, and Shtërpce/Štrpce.

The Kosovo Private Enterprise Program is a four-year initiative that aims to stimulate the competitiveness of Kosovo's private sector. The program, implemented by Booz Allen Hamilton, provides technical assistance to targeted sectors through grants and consulting, supports business enabling reform efforts, expands workforce development and training, and strengthens business services and associations.

Processors Produce More Cheese and Better -- at No Additional Cost

Mer Berisha, Bylmeti Dairy's owner, and Islam Islami, Alpina's owner, are proud of the new soft white cheese they are producing. Bylmeti and Alpina dairy processors can now produce 182 kilograms (kg) of soft white cheese out of 1000 liters of raw milk instead of 133 kg they were previously producing.

The success followed a two-week training of dairy technologists at both plants on how to use innovative produc-

tion techniques that resulted in improved final dairy products.

USAID's Kosovo Private Enterprise Program brought an experienced regional dairy technologist to Kosovo to introduce the new soft white cheese production techniques to Bylmeti and Alpina dairy plants. Proper pasteurization, separation, cheese maturation, as well as packaging practices, led to development of the new product, which requires a lower milk/cheese conversion ratio, while also improving the quality.

"The current market price for one kilogram of white cheese is 3 Euro. With the new techniques, our revenue increased by about 150 Euro a day at no additional cost," said Alpina's Islami. Increased quality at lower cost will make locally produced cheese more competitive with the imported brands sold in Kosovo. But there are additional benefits. Increased cheese production efficiency means that cheese producers will make more cheese. "Even though each kilo of cheese product uses less milk, we anticipate there will be a net increase in demand for raw milk. This is a sign of hope and beginning of better life for local farmers," says Bylmeti's Berisha.

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Innovative Advocacy Tools Introduced to Civil Society Activists

Twenty civil society activists from Kosovo attended the Advocacy Fellows Program where they were introduced to advocacy tools and learned how to become resources for a unique approach to advocacy initiatives. The Advocacy Fellows Program, a one-week program held in May, improved the skills of Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb civil society activists on advocacy concepts while also cultivating a core group skilled at advising the civil society sector on advocacy issues.

"The unique teaching methods and exercises developed during the workshop have advanced our knowledge about advocacy," one participant's written evaluation noted. Participants of the Advocacy Fellows Program were selected from the Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program Consulting Network, chosen for their advocacy-related experience. The Advocacy Fellows Program follows the highly acclaimed Consulting Academy, which introduced Network members to a theoretical, practical and innovative approach to consulting. This diverse range of local trainers and experts selected for the Consulting Network (CN) and Advocacy Fellows Program have partnered with the initiative for the life of the program to ensure individualized consulting support to NGOs.

However, their support to Kosovo civil society is expected to continue for many years through high-quality

coaching on advocacy and many other topics.

The Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program is a three-year program, implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Communities and funded by USAID, to ensure that Kosovo civil society is an effective and influential partner to government in making policies and decisions that respond to citizens needs.

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW

USAID Assistance Recognized by Law Faculty

The Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Prishtina, Hava Ismajli-Bujupi, hosted a reception on June 4 to thank USAID for furthering the education of future legal professionals.



Staff at the UP Law Library start registering the new legal reference books that were donated to the library by USAID

USAID's assistance to the Law Faculty included updating the library's database software, arranging personnel training in a variety of library management skills, and providing seven computers for administration and student use. Most recently, the initiative provided nearly 250 new law books in English based on requests from professors and suggestions from USAID rule-of-law projects. All this was part of the Focus on Results -- Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) Program, which is currently assisting with a digitalization effort that will introduce modern software to enhance the University's administrative work and interface with students.

Enver Hasani, Rector of University of Prishtina, and Vice-Rectors Marian Dema and Luan Ahma, attended the event, praising USAID's work with the University of Prishtina. In the past, USAID, through other activities, has supported the Faculty of Law by organizing commercial law classes, legal clinics, trainings and construction of the first Student Moot Courtroom, part of the Faculty of Law at the University of Prishtina.

USAID's Focus on Results -- Enhancing Capacity across Sectors in Transition Program is a five-year activity administered by World Learning.

U.S. Agency for International Development
Arbëria (Dragodan), Ismail Qemali st., nr. 1
Phone: ++ 381 38 243 673
Fax: ++ 381 38 249 493

For more information visit www.usaid.gov/missions/kosovo and <http://pristina.usembassy.gov/> or contact us at kosovousaidinfo@usaid.gov



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.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

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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SPECIAL INITIATIVES

New Rounds of Scholarships for Public Servants and Minorities

The American University in Kosovo hosted on July 1st an orientation session for 26 new students, which represent 12 government institutions.

This is the second class of public servants to begin the USAID supported scholarship program. The first class, consisting of 21 students is halfway through its program. USAID is providing substantial scholarship funding for Kosovo public servants to work toward a Master of Science degree in Professional Studies. Students are nominated by their institutions. Criteria for acceptance to the program include an ability to work at a high academic level in English and a commitment to continue working in the public sector for at least two years after graduation. The Government of Kosovo also contributes a significant portion of the scholarship funding.

This 18-month program, which was developed by the Rochester Institute of Technology and takes place at the American University of Kosovo (AUK), focuses on the management, economics, and policy development goals of Kosovo's public sector.

At the undergraduate level, USAID is currently funding full scholarships for 8 Kosovo minority students at AUK. Recruitment is underway for an additional 4 minority scholars to begin studies in the fall. Both scholarship programs are administered by USAID's Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacities Across Sectors program, which is implemented by World Learning.

WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Enhancing Administration Services in the Municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane

On June 23, USAID/Deputy Director, Mrs. Susan Fritz, and Mayor of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Qemajl Mustafa unveiled a plaque in the new reception area of the General Administration Department in this Municipality.

The establishment of a new and improved reception area, which includes nine new reception desks was part of the Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality efforts to improve services for its citizens. The municipality was awarded a grant of \$15,000 from the Incentive Fund component of the USAID Effective Municipalities Initiative.

The municipality contributed \$33,000 from its own budget and utilized the funds to renovate and equip the new reception area and create a space for an archive and civil chapel at the General Administration Department.

Previously the General Administration Department had only three offices that struggled to meet the needs of more than 100,000 residents. The increased number of modern open booth desks will improve the capacity of the municipal administration to respond to the needs of citizens more efficiently and effectively.

The General Administration Department is responsible for registry office services such as birth, marriage, civil status and death certificates. Locating these services in one facility will result in greater efficiency in the delivery of civil registration services by the Municipality of Gjilan/Gnjilane; will increase transparency and will reduce the wait-time and confusion of citizens in accessing these services.

USAID, through its Effective Municipalities Initiative Program, works with Kosovo municipalities to increase their ability to provide more efficient and effective services for their citizens.

New Sidewalk for Students Make Safer Commute

A new pedestrian sidewalk in the village of Bubavac, dedicated on June 23, ensures a safer commute for students and other pedestrians of this village.



Happy faces of students and teachers of the school in Bubavac

The 800m sidewalk stretches along the main road Malishevë - Kijevë, connecting the village of Bubavac [Malishevë/Malishevo] to the school located on the other side of the village.

This heavily congested road was placing the life of daily commuters -- primarily students -- at risk, therefore, sidewalks became a priority for the municipality of Malishevë/o.

"This sidewalk means a safer life for our students and we would like to thank the two institutions for that," stated Maliq Kryeziu, primary-school principal in his thanks to the Municipality and USAID for this important investment. The sidewalks were constructed as part of an Incentive Fund administered by the USAID Effective Municipalities Initiative to support municipalities on their effort to improve services to their citizens. USAID's contribution to the project was \$15,000, while the municipality of Malishevë/o contributed \$17,140.

USAID's Effective Municipalities Initiative in Kosovo works with the Government of Kosovo as well as local governments to increase their ability to provide better services to their citizens. The Initiative is implemented by RTI International.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities for Kosovo producers to compete in the US

Kosovo agricultural buyers, processors, collectors and government representatives learned about opportunities to compete in the U.S. at the Pre-Harvest Conference for Non-Wood Products (NWFP) held on July 10 in Istog/Istok.

The conference, which was supported by USAID's Kosovo Private Enterprise Program (KPEP), addressed environmentally sound and sustainable collection methods for non-wood forest products. In addition, three Kosovo-based processors presented the lessons they learned from attending the annual Fancy Food Show in New York, one of the largest international food fairs with more than 2,500 participants from all over the world. Participants reported that the U.S. market is looking for dried mushrooms, fruit jam, and pickled vegetables, all of which are produced in Kosovo.

The NWFP sector is an important sector that USAID actively supports, and the conference was part of the effort to address key challenges faced by Kosovo's agriculture sector.

USAID, through Kosovo Private Enterprise Program is working to improve the competitiveness of Kosovo businesses in domestic, regional and EU markets by addressing issues of efficiency, product quality, and commercial production standards, so that they can meet international requirements for product quality and safety.

INVESTING IN YOUTH

Review of the Youth Activity

Some 733 youth trained, 368 youth started internships/apprentices in private, public and civic sectors, and four have found jobs as a result of the USAID funded Support to the Kosovo Young Leaders activity. The results were presented at the One Year in Review conference organized on June 23 in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality.

The conference gathered partners and participants of the program who shared their experience through different presentations. During the break out session participants of the conference spoke about the challenges, successes and future plans of the youth interns.



In between session -- Youth trainees enjoy time together during the training

Support to Kosovo Young Leaders is a three year program implemented in partnership with Mercy Corps aimed to help young Kosovo citizens from diverse ethnic groups to become active participants in the society and provide them with skills that will help them to build their future. The program is active in 14 municipalities - targeting 2,328 youth, including life skills training in negotiation, job skills, entrepreneurship and civic engagement. Follow up internship and apprenticeship placements are expected to lead to suitable employment of 785 youth.

Youth programs are critical as Kosovo half of its population is under the age of 25, thus making it the youngest population in Europe.

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