



DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The First Class of Judicial Interns Honored

A ceremony was recently held to honor the first group of judicial "praktikants" (interns) who successfully completed a one-year apprenticeship in the Kosovo Courts. The event that took place on October 21 was organized through a cooperative effort of USAID's Legal Professional Development project implemented through the American Bar Association Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) and the Kosovo Judges Association (KJA).

Participants in the event included many well-known judges and lawyers, representatives of Municipal Courts, judges who served as mentors for praktikants, members of the KJA Board and Intern Committee, and representatives of the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates.

"The Kosovo Judges Association considers its Judicial Intern project to be one of the most important projects", said Ymer Huruglica, president of KJA, at the ceremony. He continued, "we thank American people for their support".

The justice system in Kosovo faces many problems, beginning with long administrative procedures, lack of proper regulations, and very often, a lack of trust by Kosovars in the court system after decades of mismanagement. Therefore, support for the professional development of legal practitioners will help address some of the above-mentioned issues. "As Kosovo's legal system increases in complexity and use, we will need all of your skills and energy. The development of Kosovo, its economic growth, is, in part, dependent on consistency and impartiality of legal processes", said Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Director, at the ceremony.

The Judicial Praktikant (Intern) Project followed a previous successful model of Advocates' Praktikant Project supported by USAID implemented by ABA/CEELI in cooperation with the Kosovo Chamber of Advocates.

Thinking of future

Zallq/Zac, a small community of Albanian and Egyptian Kosovars in Istog/Istok Municipality, celebrated the opening of a kindergarten on October



Children of Zallq/Zac enjoying the first day in the new kindergarten

Renovation of the kindergarten was provided through USAID's Municipal Infrastructure and Support Initiative (MISI), an activity designed to support municipalities in creating conditions for returns and reintegration. Municipal officials, members of the Community Working Group, children and students participated in the opening event.

"You made children your priority ... you made serving children of all ethnicities, of serving children from neighboring villages, a priority", said Philip Goldberg, U.S. Chief of Mission in Kosovo who, along with Dr. Ken Yamashita, USAID/Kosovo Mission Director, and Mr. Fadil Ferataj, Mayor of Istog/Istok, unveiled the inaugural plaque.

The kindergarten will be used also by residents of Dreje/Drenja, Zabllaq/Zablace, Rudice/Rudica, Prekalle/Prekala and Oprashke/Opraška, neighboring villages totaling approximately 2000 residents.

Assisted with training by MISI, the Community Working Group advocated for the project which cost 55,274 euros: 17,000 euros from the municipal budget, 8,230 euros from United States Department of State's 2005 Ambassador's Fund for Refugees 8,230 euros, 28,000 euros from USAID, and 2,044 euros from the community.

MISI program has worked with 42 communities in nine Kosovo municipalities.

Reporting on parliament

A one-day roundtable to discuss reporting on Parliament brought together representatives of media and Kosovo's Assembly. The roundtable that took place on October 27th was organized by USAID's Media Assistance Project (MAP).

The aim of the roundtable was to initiate constructive discussions between media and Kosovo Assembly representatives to improve media reporting skills in this crucial sector for journalism, as well as help journalists in preparing a plan for Assembly coverage on issues of interest for their audience. The roundtable was designed to inform journalists and members of the Assembly about opportunities to report on the Parliament, what are problems to avoid, and how best to improve reporting on the Assembly.

USAID's Media Assistance Project implemented through International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) provides training to strengthen the skills of Kosovo's journalists. The project is a continuation of USAID's support in developing and strengthening Kosovar print and broadcast media, through training and cooperating with journalists through the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo, a local organization which recently held its regular General Assembly meeting.

The last General Assembly meeting addressed the role of journalism in a democratic society. Mr. Miles Toder, USAID's Senior Democracy Officer and a guest speaker at the meeting spoke of the need for education of the audience and public institutions about the role of journalism in a democratic society.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Harvesting Results

The results of the final harvest of maize, soya-bean, alfalfa and sunflowers were presented at a one-day conference on October 25th. Apart from presenting the final harvest results in Kosovo, the conference provided participants with economic analyses for the crops tested in the demonstration plots, as well as recommendations for the farmers about variety selection and cropping techniques and technologies.

The conference is one of many activities implemented under USAID's Kosovo Cluster Business Support project- Dairy cluster support, part of which assistance is provided through the Kosovo Development Center (KDC), a local non-governmental organization (NGO) committed to improving agricultural standards in Kosovo

As Timothy Hammann, USAID's private sector advisor, said at the conference, "this program has made important progress towards building a vibrant, sustainable, private sector-led animal feed sector in Kosovo, which is known for a large domestic demand for animal feed

that domestic production is not meeting." He continued by saying, "wide-scale adoption of proven yield-enhancing crop production will bring numerous benefits that result in the Kosovar consumer having access to quality products at a more reasonable cost and will increase the overall competitiveness of the domestic livestock sector relative to other regional players".

Over 100 participants representing different institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Agriculture Departments within municipalities, farmers' associations, the Agriculture Faculty of the University of Prishtina, Agriculture Institute in Peja, farmers, and input suppliers all participated in the conference.

KDC was supported by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support (KCBS) project in organizing of the demonstration plots.

Motivating Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) Staff for Challenges Ahead

The entire KTA staff gathered on October 20 for a day-long meeting on privatization progress and challenges ahead. USAID/Kosovo Mission Director Dr. Ken Yamashita was one of the guest speakers, along with KTA's Josh Dick and Ahmet Shala.

Yamashita spoke of the tremendous progress made by KTA staff, and while the task ahead looks big, he suggested that staff think of it "like the joke about how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." Yamashita reviewed the task ahead for staff, summarizing that roughly, of the 500-some socially owned enterprises (SOEs) that can be privatized, KTA staff has successfully taken care of approximately 140 (sold or in process). Of the 360 remaining SOEs, perhaps 250 will be liquidated, leaving approximately 110 SOEs for sale in the next waves. He congratulated KTA staff for raising 151 million euros from these companies in paid and pending contracts. "Celebrate that you are doing something concrete for Kosovo - generating real income, real jobs, real success, real turnaround," Yamashita said.

Upcoming Events

November 1, Mitrovica City Wide Youth Council (CWYC) representatives will present their work to USAID staff. CWYC, is a US funded mixed Albanian and Serbian Kosovar NGO.

November 9, Kosovo Finance Fair supported by USAID's Kosovo Cluster and Business Support project.



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