



## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### New Playground Opened for Primary and Pre-School Children

Over 300 students are now enjoying their new school playground following its dedication on April 22. The new playground in Gornje Kusce/Kufce e Eperme vilage, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, was built on the school yard's previous parking lot as part of USAID's Municipal Integration and Support Initiative (MISI).

Jelena Paunovic, primary school director in the village, joined USAID/Kosovo Mission Director Michael Farbman in celebrating the construction of the playground for 60 pre-school and over 240 primary school students.



Pre-school children of Kufce [a village in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality] at the opening of the School Playground

"What is provided in this school and its playground is only part of the equation for successful education," said Farbman. "The rest relies on all of you - on students to study hard; on teachers to inspire their students; and on parents to help educate your children to become responsible citizens in a peaceful and democratic Kosovo."

The existing school yard previously was used as a parking lot and children had no space to play. The total cost of this project was 22,211 euros (\$33,210). MISI is implemented by Mercy Corps.

## RULE OF LAW

### Third Judicial Reform Index Shows Kosovo Making Progress

Kosovo's judiciary is gaining strength and overall progress in judicial reforms has been made, according the American Bar Association's (ABA) Rule of Law Initiative's "Judicial Reform Index for Kosovo, Volume III."

The third volume of the Judicial Reform Index (JRI), released on March 12 in Pristina, showed that six factors measured rated as positive, compared to only one in the previous 2004 index. Twelve of the factors measured rated as neutral, compared to 18 in 2004. However, challenges remain in strengthening the judiciary, as 12 factors received negative ratings, compared to 11 in 2004. The index, conducted in 2007, measures the progress of reforms and the challenges that remain for the Kosovo judiciary.

Among the improvements are the transfer of power to independent judicial authorities and legislation related to this step, as well as adoption of a Judicial Ethics Code. However, three factors that measure the quality of judicial buildings, judicial advancement criteria, and the creation of judicial positions demonstrated a decline since 2004. In addition to these concerns, the JRI reflects the judiciary's lack of economic resources, resulting in decaying infrastructure, case backlogs, staff shortages, and low judicial salaries. Kosovo's evolving political status has also created difficulties related to judicial tenure and the passage of conflicting legislation.

"We recognize the problems identified in our judicial system and we are aware that much needs to be done," said Minister of Justice Nekibe Kelmendi, who joined USAID/Kosovo Deputy Mission Director Susan Fritz in the publication's release conference. "We still need to continue in drafting new laws, reforming the selection process of judges, monitoring their work and disciplining them if necessary," the Minister said.

The full text of Volume III of the Kosovo JRI is available in English, Albanian, and Serbian at the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative website ([www.abanet.org/rol](http://www.abanet.org/rol) under "publications"). The JRI was carried by the ABA Rule of Law Initiative team led by the Honorable Evelyn B. Lance, a retired judge and long-term ABA volunteer.

## Legal Clinic Course Gains Official Listing in UP Curriculum

**A** new course providing law students with practical skills now is officially part of the University of Prishtina Law Faculty's curriculum. The "Simulation Legal Clinic" course provides law students with practical skills needed upon becoming practicing lawyers. Students receive training in client interviewing, problem solving, legal analysis and research, client counseling and communication, and legal theory and strategy.

To date, over 300 law students have taken the course. At the end of the most recent course, the 60 students received certificates for completion and participated in a criminal mock trial that was developed during their semester of course work. Dukagjin Abdyli, one of the students in the course, said, "I feel more comfortable in being part of a real trial now. The mock trials that we have been practicing during the semester gave us a glimpse of a real trial and how they develop."



Following the mock trial - recent graduates of the Legal Clinics

The clinic has been offered before but now is officially included in the curriculum of the Law Faculty for credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries. The Simulation Legal Clinic course was developed by the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative as part of the Legal Profession Development Initiative supported by USAID/Kosovo.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

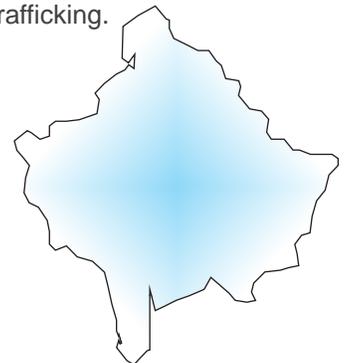
### Kosovo's Plan to Combat Human Trafficking Shows Progress

**T**he implementation of the "Kosovo Action Plan (KAP) to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings 2005-2007" is progressing in most areas, according to a monitoring report released on April 10 in Pristina.

The monitoring report demonstrated that as of the end of the Action Plan in December 2007 all three "pillars" of the plan (prevention of trafficking, protection of victims, and prosecution of traffickers) witnessed successes during the plan's 2005-2007 implementation. The "Final Monitoring Report" was prepared by the Kosovo Law Center and other NGOs participating in the Partnership Against Trafficking in Human Beings (PATH), including community-based associations that developed recommendations for the government based on the report's findings.

Of a total of 67 activities in the KAP, 12 were completed, 14 had advanced substantially, 27 had made limited progress, and 14 activities are yet to be addressed. Overall, 40 percent of the planned activities were completed successfully or had made significant progress during KAP's two-and-a-half years of implementation. Of the seven cross-cutting objectives in the action plan, two demonstrated a high degree of progress, "Research & Standard Setting" and "Awareness Raising & Campaigns." Respectively, 71 percent and 67 percent of activities under these objectives were completed. Two objectives, "Institution Building & Implementation" and "Legislative Review" require concerted attention in future plans of action.

PATH is a USAID-supported activity implemented by Catholic Relief Services in partnership with NGOs and government in support of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group's plans to combat trafficking.



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