



USAID | BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Winners of USAID/BiH country-wide children's essay contest to raise public awareness of children's rights in BiH. The theme of the essay contest was:

Why every child in BiH – regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity, mobility and mental development – deserves the same rights, opportunities and access to food, shelter, education, sports, health services, and protection from harm.

From left, Haruna Bandic (15), Isidora Kopanja (13), Indra Rudic (13) and Sofija Miljatovic (15).

Photo credit: USAID

Country Profile

The Dayton Peace Accords brought an end to the 1992-95 war and began the transition to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Nearly two decades later, however, the country is still struggling to overcome the effects of conflict. Physically, the country is largely rebuilt and shows signs of economic growth. BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union in 2008, the first step in the process of becoming a candidate for EU membership. Yet development continues to be hindered by ethnic tensions and a largely dysfunctional, multi-layered governance structure geared toward safeguarding the rights of the various ethnic groups.

Continued U.S. engagement and support is necessary for long-term stability and development. The country needs to continue pushing forward with reforms to establish strong government institutions, fight corruption and uphold the rule of law, strengthen the private sector and improve competitiveness, and motivate citizens to engage in the democratic process. To date, the U.S. Government, primarily through USAID, has provided more than \$1.6 billion in assistance to support economic, democratic, and social progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OUR WORK

ACCELERATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH

USAID's economic development program promotes a competitive, market-oriented economy, with private sector-led job growth and improved governance for business activity. This includes support to targeted sectors in the economy—agriculture, wood and metal processing, textile, logistics/transport and tourism—as well as loan guarantee programs with commercial banks to unlock much-needed financial capital. On economic governance, USAID helps BiH improve fiscal coordination and compliance at all levels of government. USAID has assisted BiH to establish a more transparent, modern system of direct taxation and collection of social benefits to create a more business-friendly environment. In addition, USAID is assisting host country partners to advance reforms in the financial sector and strengthen audit capacity.

USAID helps municipal governments and private businesses capitalize on economic potential and opportunities at the local level; the assistance will result in domestic and foreign direct investment, more competitive local industry and new sustainable jobs, especially in the targeted sectors, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. USAID projects help connect producers to markets and introduce new technologies along the entire value chain. This includes assistance in marketing BiH as a tourist destination and helping local producers meet EU quality and safety standards in agriculture, wood processing, and light manufacturing. USAID works on energy efficiency and energy policy to help BiH maximize its potential as a net energy exporter.

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

USAID's democracy and governance assistance helps BiH develop more functional and accountable institutions that meet citizens' needs. USAID helps increase citizen participation in political and social decision-making. USAID assists civil society to engage with a wide array of stakeholders and form issue-based networks to work on matters of concern to citizens and broader constituencies. Civil society programs strengthen local efforts to influence policy-making and develop indigenous initiatives to advocate for better governance and transparency.

USAID projects provide assistance to all levels of governments—ministries, lawmakers and parliamentary committees—to enhance engagement on policy development and improve accountability in budget planning, implementation and oversight. USAID assists elected representatives to develop, draft, advocate and implement legislation and improve their responsiveness and accountability to their constituents. USAID strengthens legal systems to provide transparent access to justice for all citizens. Finally, USAID provides several small grants for community reconciliation and conflict mitigation.

CROSSCUTTING PRIORITIES

Youth, reconciliation, and women's empowerment are priorities across all USAID programs. USAID supports BiH youth and women to increase their civic and economic opportunities, to become responsible and productive citizens involved in and integral part of the country's future. Reconciliation is a sub-component of many USAID programs in BiH, bringing together different ethnic communities to work on shared economic and democratic objectives.

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USAID's "Fair Play, Fair Childhood" campaign promoted fair play and equal access to education as a way to embrace and support children of all ethnicities and all levels of ability. *Photo: USAID*



USAID Mission Director David Barth helps promote and celebrate International Peace Day in Sarajevo. *Photo: Klix.ba*



BiH agricultural lab technicians participate in training in Prague to bring BiH safety standards in line with those of the EU. *Photo: USAID*