



U.S. OFFICE PRISTINA

Dragoclan, N. Hikmet 30
Pristina, Kosovo

December 2007

Monthly Newsletter



PAO Posner-Mullen (left), ELF Michelle Foshee (third from left – first row) and the Director of the Public Library in Mitrovica North, Milena Tepavcevic (right) with the English Class students. Photo: Burim Pllana, USOP, 12/19/07

NEW AMERICAN CORNER SPACE OPENING IN NORTH MITROVICA

English Language Fellow Michelle Foshee and 12 of her English Class students organized a small party to celebrate the construction of the New American Corner Space in Mitrovica North, which is a Serb inhabited area. PAO Pristina Karyn Posner-Mullen and some of her local staff attended the gathering to congratulate and share the joy of the students and the library employees for their new space.

The construction of the new space was made possible largely by a donation of the USAID in Kosovo while the furniture and materials for the American Corner are being purchased through a USOP grant of \$30,000. The old American Corner space was significantly smaller and could not accommodate all the interested students of the northern part of Mitrovica to attend the English Language Fellow's Classes.

The English Class students will now be able to gather and have the English conversation classes in a much more comfortable space that meets all their needs. These English classes represent USOP's base work to reach out to Kosovo Serbs, to promote mutual understanding and economic opportunity through English language instruction.



Candidates for the KUSA Board answer questions from voting members. Photo: Burim Pllana, USOP, 12/8/2007

ASSOCIATION OF USG ALUMNI CELEBRATES FIRST MEETING

Kosovo U.S. Alumni (KUSA) held its first General Assembly on December 8th. Over 150 former participants in USG educational exchange programs (such as International Visitors, Fulbright, and others) from all over Kosovo gathered in Pristina's Red Hall to network, vote for the first operational Board of Directors, and to approve the organization's bylaws and strategic plan. COM Kaidanow addressed the group, stressing their roles as leaders in Kosovo's development.

USOP PD staff and KUSA "Founding Board" members sat for TV interviews with the three major networks in advance of the General Assembly, to advertise the event.

Media coverage helped to attract alumni from as far back as the 1970s who had lost contact with the USG because of the breakup of Yugoslavia. All Kosovo-wide print and broadcast media, including VOA Albanian, covered the event, with PD staff and newly-elected KUSA Board members giving several interviews. With its monthly e-newsletter and broad membership base, KUSA could be an excellent model for creating more USG program alumni associations worldwide. KUSA provides a new forum in Kosovo where a cross section of political, intellectual and business interests can pool resources and "mobilize the power of the alumni for positive change."



USOP Chief of Mission, Tina Kaidanow (far right) commends KUSA's Founding Board members for their work. Photo: Burim Pllana, USOP, 12/8/2007.



KUSA Board members, Mentor Agani (center) and AmCham Director, Mimoza Kusari-Lila on an interview for TV 21. Photo: Lumi Shala, USOP, 12/5/07

KOSOVO U.S. ALUMNI (KUSA) PUBLICIZES ITS FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In advance of its December 8th General Assembly, KUSA board members sat for TV interviews with major, Kosovo-wide broadcasters to encourage former participants in U.S. government-sponsored educational exchanges to attend the event and become KUSA members.

With over 100 members since its inception in the summer of 2007, KUSA is emerging as a leader in Kosovo civil society.



DPO Alex Laskaris (center), ELF Michelle Foshee (third from left) & APAO Laura Hochla (far right) with students from N. Mitrovica.
Photo: Rob Silverstein, 12/5/2007.

NORTH MITROVICA STUDENTS VISIT PRISTINA - MANY FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER

English Language Fellow Michelle Foshee accompanied 8 of her students from North Mitrovica to Pristina for a lunch with DPO Alex Laskaris at his residence. For many of the students this was their first time in Pristina since the 1999 conflict or their first visit ever. Ranging in age from 14 to 30, the students had a candid chat with the DPO about Kosovo's future status and their critical role as Kosovo Serbs. While expressing their frustrations with the process, many were determined to stay in Kosovo regardless of its status. This English class and visit to Pristina represent USOP's grassroots work to reach out to Kosovo Serbs, to promote mutual understanding with a group that largely opposes U.S. policies in Kosovo, and to promote economic opportunity through English language instruction.



PAO Posner-Mullen (right) with Roma students at the Education Center in Gracanica.
Photo: Burim Pllana, USOP, 12/4/07

OPENING OF KOSOVO ROMA EDUCATION CENTER CHEERED BY YOUNGSTERS

PAO Pristina Karyn Posner-Mullen helped inaugurate the opening of the new Roma Education Center in the mixed-ethnic area of Gracanica, a city about 20 minutes from Pristina. Along with the Municipality, the Kosovo Roma community, Finnish KFOR (Kosovo Forces) that funded the building itself and Irish KFOR that protects the area, the US Office (USOP) celebrated the learning center for Roma children ages 3 to 16. The energy was kinetic as the 3 and 4 year olds cheered the opening and sang for the visitors. The goal is to help young Roma integrate into overall society starting from a very young age. Contributing 6 computers, education materials for an enhanced computer literacy program, maintenance and salaries for two teachers for a year with a grant totaling \$13,500, the Public Affairs office demonstrated its commitment to aligning its activities with the Mission goal of outreach to all ethnic and religious groups in Kosovo.



Peja youth learn about AIDS awareness and prevention.
Photo: Women's Wellness Center, 12/1/2007

USOP & USAID RAISE YOUTH AWARENESS ON WORLD AIDS DAY

USOP grantee, Women's Wellness Center in Peja (50 miles west of Pristina) held workshops for Peja youth on AIDS prevention. The \$20,800 grant funded brochures and workshops to teach Kosovo youth how to protect themselves and to dispel misinformation about the disease. At a USAID-sponsored concert in Peja on World AIDS Day, USOP-sponsored jazz musician, Clay Ross played for volunteers who distributed information to Kosovo youth on AIDS prevention.



American jazz guitarist Clay Ross performs for USAID-sponsored AIDS awareness volunteers.
Photo: Laura Hochla, USOP, 12/1/2007