ELECTORAL REFORM 2012

The aim to inform the citizens of the municipalities of Kosovo correlated with the process of Electoral Reform in Kosovo, in particular the discussion of recommendations, proposals and demands of citizens, ATRC in partnership with KIPRED, during February-March 2012, organized and led informative meetings with citizens from 7 largest municipalities of Kosovo: Gjilan, Gjakovë, Pejë, Mitrovicë, Prishtinë, Prizren and Ferizaj.

Representatives of political parties, representatives from Municipal Election Commission, representatives from non-governmental organizations, representatives of local media, election experts and citizens, who participated in all meetings organized, discussed in detail the processes of elections in Kosovo, while focused more on the flaws and weaknesses identified and providing of other alternatives to improve the reform process of 2012 elections.

The Kosovo’s disjunction in electoral areas has been prominent in public meetings, since in opinion were various proposals that were discussed for the division of Kosovo in more than one election region.

Recommendations and citizens concerns were being focused almost in all the election system, with the particular emphasis on preventing the misuse of the vote and also increased transparency in vote counting process.

Recommendations, suggestions and remarks of citizens from the seven meetings organized have been settled in a document and then were discussed with the Commission for Electoral Reform of the Kosovo’s Assembly for incorporation into the final draft.
PICTURES FROM PUBLIC INFORMATIVE MEETINGS ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Photo 1. public meeting in Gjilane, March 1, 2012

Photo 2. public meeting in Gjakove, March 28, 2012

Photo 3. public meeting in Mitrovica, March 14, 2012

Photo 4. public meeting in Pristina, March 15, 2012
INFORMATIVE PUBLIC MEETINGS – COMPLAINTS MECHANISM IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

During March, Justice and citizens Campaign which is coordinated by ATRC in cooperation with Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), delivered the first series of workshops for public information, the purpose of which was to inform all citizens about complaints mechanism in justice system for: judges, prosecutors, police, and lawyers. The first series of these workshops was held in 10 municipalities of Kosovo: Obiliq, Podujevë, Lipjan, Suharekë, Novobërdë, Deçan, Istog, Malishevë, Viti and Shtërpe.

ATRC has secured the participation from relevant institutions, such as: The Kosovo Judicial Council, Municipal Courts, Municipal Courts for Minor Offenses, The Office of Disciplinary Counsel, Chamber of Advocates, Lawyer for Victims, Local Advice for Community Safety, Clard Organization and Representatives from Justice and Citizens Campaign in order to clarify the existing legal infrastructure in Kosovo, giving special emphasis on grievance mechanisms granted by law.

Almost in all meetings organized, the citizens praised the ideas of organizing such informative meetings, as often in the absence of information and knowledge, people who are faced with not very well treatment in the entire justice system, they did not use the complaints mechanisms. It was also estimated in almost all the meetings organized, that this is the first time to participate court representatives together, prosecutors, police, lawyers, NGOs, etc...

So far Justice and Citizens Campaign have developed important activities in Kosovo, such as: workshops on advocacy, meeting of working groups on various issues, roundtables with experts. In activities organized so far attended by eminent representatives from public sector and civil society. In the last meeting of experts called “Justice in Justice” it was our honor to open the ceremony with an introductory word from Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga.
PICTURES FROM THE INFORMATIVE PUBLIC MEETINGS - COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Lipjan, March 09, 2012

Suharekë, March 13, 2012

Novobërdë, March 16, 2012

Deçan, March 20, 2012

Istog, March 21, 2012

Malishevë, March 23, 2012
WORKSHOP ON ADVOCACY – GJAKOVE AND PRIZREN

Justice and the People Campaign that is coordinated by ATRC in cooperation with the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG) by March 28th and 29th organized two training sessions; one in Gjakova and the other one in Prizren. The purpose of these workshops was to increase the advocacy capacity of CSO’s representatives from the region of Gjakova and Prizren in matters related to the rule of law in general, developing policy recommendations, negotiating with government officials and exchanging ideas and experiences upon advocacy issues in Kosovo.

Gjakovë, March 28, 2012
Prizren, March 29, 2012

ATRC PUBLISHED TWO DOCUMENTS: A HANDBOOK FOR ADVOCACY STRATEGIES AND ADVOCACY IN KOSOVO

In the framework of Justice and the People campaign, ATRC has developed and published two guidelines, for advocacy in general and advocacy in Kosovo in particular. Documents contain important information for advocacy in Kosovo, such as: definition and Advocacy Concepts; development of an Advocacy campaign; information about the three Pillars of the State in Kosovo: Legislative, Executive, Judiciary; information about the Local Governance; participation of individuals and NGOs at the local level. how could citizens have access to a public document; how do you complain when there’s no access to a public document; how may the citizens influence upon the political parties and elected representatives; how may the citizens influence upon the first stage of initiating laws by the government of Kosovo; who are the main legal institutions at central and local levels; importance of the partnerships between NGOs and institutions in the reform process; successful examples of advocacy campaigns in Kosovo, etc…
ACTIVE CITIZEN-TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE MUNICIPALITY

Since January 2012, ATRC has begun implementation of the project "Active citizens-accountable and transparent municipalities", supported by the Olof Palme International Center.

The project will be implemented in four municipalities in the region of Gjilan: Gjilan, Viti, Kamenica and Novobërdë. The first phase of the project will involve the establishment of informal advocacy groups, continuing with the initiation of stable and effective practices between municipalities and their citizens for transparency, responsibility and accountability towards citizens and municipal officials.

During the first phase, which will be implemented by December of this year, ATRC will be committed to establish informal advocacy groups in each municipality, their capacity and organization of joint activities between them and the officers, in order to involve citizens in decision-making processes.

ATRC SIGNED COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH THE FOUR MUNICIPALITIES OF GJILAN REGION

Within the project "Active Citizens- accountable and transparent municipalities" ATRC has signed cooperation agreements with the four municipalities of Gjilan region: Gjilan, Viti, Novobërdë and Kamenicë. These cooperative agreements were made during the meetings ATRC has developed with the Mayors of the regions mentioned above in which the two parties by signing these agreements of understanding agreed to cooperate and coordinate actions to strengthen cooperation between Municipalities and informal community groups.

ATRC also held meetings with municipal officials and informal community groups, in order to inform and support their assurance about the development of joint activities planned in the project also increasing the advocacy initiatives in municipalities.

These activities are part of a project supported by the Olof Palme International Center, which aims to increase citizen participation in local processes of decision-making.

MECHANISM FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Since February 2012, ATRC has started implementing the project "Mechanisms for active citizenship", supported by The Balkan Trust for Democracy. Through this project, ATRC aims to enhance the effectiveness, accountability and responsibility of the municipalities by providing services to citizens.

Due to this fact, ATRC will implement a range of activities, heading from analysis and research functions of municipal structures, continuing with the organization of conferences, establishment of working group, advocacy of institutions responsible for considering recommendations from the citizens about the functioning of municipal structures that serve the citizens.
MISSION OF ATRC

ATRC is a Kosovar non-profit organization, aimed at increasing the participation of citizens in general and the civil society in particular in decision-making through offering services and active collaboration with stakeholders in the country and abroad as one of the basic conditions for a developed and democratic society.

ATRC MAJOR PROGRAMS

1. Capacity Building Program, which aims, through training and consultancy offers, to increase the capacity of NGOs in Kosovo with regards to the general advancement of the organizational development, project management, development of successful advocacy campaigns, etc.
2. Grants management program, which aims to help local non-governmental organizations through small grants primarily in advocacy campaigns at local and national level.
3. Advocacy Program, through various projects ATRC seeks to advocate on national and local institutions for various problems which are preoccupation and concern of the citizens in general.
4. Information, through which the ATRC aims to provide information electronically on the website, about the public discussions and roundtables, construction of coalitions, partnerships and co-mediation. ATRC in this regard also provides a library with 1756 different titles, such as publications on social, political and economic issues related to Kosovo and the region, analysis, studies, research and other important documents on the scope of NGOs in general, generated by non-governmental organizations inside and outside of Kosovo.

ATRC MONITORS THE RETURN OF THE DISPLACED PERSONS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

ATRC, in partnership with UNHCR, this year has continued to monitor the process of the returnees from third countries. ATRC currently engaged four (4) monitors at Prishtina Airport, which in close coordination with the Kosovo Police and the representative of UNHCR in Kosovo and Prishtina Airport, interview and collect the necessary data for all cases of the return of Kosovars from third countries, whether voluntary or forced return. The data collected from ATRC will consistently be given to the UNHCR’s central office.

www.advocacy-center.org