The Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC) conducted training workshops on project cycle management; project proposal writing; and introduction to advocacy and coalition building; attended by local NGO representatives on Sept. 6-8; 20-21; and Oct. 4-5.

The workshop on project cycle management covered key components of project management such as idea development, need for analysis, proposal writing, project implementation, monitoring, evaluation, budgeting and sustainability. Participants were exposed to the methodologies and tools used in successful project management.

Project proposal writing workshop covered general overview of writing project proposal including all elements of the project proposal. The methodology was based in Logical Framework Approach and it enabled participants to develop projects from initial ideas on a problem or issue.

Whereas workshop on introduction to advocacy and coalition building informed participants about important skills necessary for advocacy work. The sessions were part of this year’s workshop series.

In 2006 ATRC will offer additional training services (as listed below). Services are free of charge to Kosovo NGOs registered with ATRC. To register, NGOs should download and complete the NGO Client Registration Form available on www.advocacy-center.org.

Upcoming 2006 ATRC training workshops are:
- 24-26 Oct.: NGO Management
- 29-30 Nov.: Project Proposal Writing

The workshops will take place at ATRC: St. Agim Ramadani, Nr.15, Pristina.

For more information, contact 038 244 810 or e-mail training@advocacy-center.org.

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The role of civil society

"Civil Society Can Influence Government Decisions"

NGOs and citizens can influence decisions made by governments in administrating their countries, EU experts on civil society comment. According to them, societies aware of the influence they can have over decision-making can steer their countries away from mismanagement and curb the spread of corruption. "Any government that does not recognize that [the people’s power] is doomed to fail sooner or later."

Igballe Rogova and Alban Krasniqi lead two of the largest NGO networks in Kosovo. Rogova, director of the Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN), said KWN works toward the development of a strong, transparent and effective civil society to advocate at the local and national level. She considers a new election system with open lists a new opportunity for society to influence decisions made by the government in Kosovo. "The representatives we [citizens] elect will be held responsible for their work."

KWN together with women politicians and international organizations drafted and then advocated for the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality, which was adopted by the government on April 2004.

Another example is "Epoka e Re" a NGO from Deçan, which advocated for the adoption of Regulation for Public Participation and Consultation in Decision-Making at the local level. It was adopted by the Municipality Assembly on May 2003.

The Kosovo Women’s Network serves, protects and promotes the rights of women and girls in Kosovo. It advocates on behalf of women at the local, regional and international level; and has 85 member organizations of all ethnicities from throughout Kosovo, making it one of the largest functioning networks in the region.

The Kosovo Youth Network is an independent, multiethnic network that represents 124 youth centers and youth organizations throughout Kosovo.

KYN has attempted to promote an active citizenship among the youth so they may play an important role in Kosovo’s future developments, Krasniqi said. Despite the limitations, numerous NGOs have influenced the government at the local and national level, especially by advocating for new laws.

For the full letter, visit: www.womensnetwork.org

For more information, see: www.kosyouth.net
Municipality officials and representatives of international and local organizations discussed the advancement of local governance in Kosovo and EU integration during a two-day conference in Prishtina on 7-8 Sept. entitled "EU financial assistance for the Western Balkans - opportunities for Local Governments."

Representatives from the governments of Slovenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania and Macedonia, participated as well, sharing experiences from their countries' EU integration processes.

Linda Bunjaku from the Community Development Fund stressed the importance of discussing European integration. "The EU has opened its doors to the Western Balkans, and this is a big step toward the whole region integrating into a high standard union," she said.

Through regular dialogue and financial support from the EU, Kosovo is gradually advancing on the European agenda, Aziz Lila, deputy minister of local government, said.

The Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) organized this conference in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government and with support from the Community Development Fund (CDF), the European Commission Liaison Office to Kosovo and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

For further information, contact office@kcsfoundation.org

The Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI) organized a roundtable discussion about the work of the Municipality of Prishtina, which brought representatives from the municipality, political parties and civil society to ATRC on Aug. 30.

Through the meeting, organizers hoped to discuss ways to improve cooperation between legislative and executive bodies in Prishtina municipality.

Representing the political opposition Shemsi Veseli, a municipal councilor from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) criticized the executive body's lack of accountability to the legislature. "The Municipal Assembly does not monitor the work of the executive body," he said.

Civil society representatives also complained that the Municipality of Prishtina does not organize public debates about issues affecting its citizens.

The Kosovo Democratic Institute is a NGO that monitors the work of the legislature and uses this information to advocate on specific issues.

For more information, contact kdi.kosova@gmail.com
Civil Society Discusses Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development at UN 59th Annual NGO Conference

More than 2,500 representatives of NGOs and other civil society activists from more than 90 countries gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York to discuss the unfinished business of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. They met from 6 to 8 September at the annual three-day gathering, organized by the UN Department of Public Information in partnership with associated NGOs. The conference focused on Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development.

As an annual meeting of NGOs, civil society and the private sector with UN representatives, the conference provided a forum for networking and exchange of best-practices on relevant issues. It has supported strategic partnership-building by inviting representatives of member states to engage in dialogues with conference participants. This year it provided a policy-building forum for NGO collaboration with the UN.

A website dedicated to the conference is available at http://2006.undpingoconference.org.

Source: UN Department of Public Information

New UN Guidelines Put Civil Society on the World’s Economic Map

Early results from the adoption of new United Nations reporting guidelines reveal that the worldwide nonprofit sector is far larger and more dynamic than previously recognized, a Johns Hopkins University professor reported on Sept. 6 at the 59th Annual UN NGO Conference.

Issued in 2003, the new UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts calls on national statistical agencies to document explicitly the size and economic importance of civil society, philanthropy, and volunteering for the first time, and countries are responding energetically to this call, professor Lester Salamon said.

Salamon is director of the Center for Civil Society Studies at the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, which developed the Handbook in collaboration with the UN Statistics Division and is now spearheading implementation efforts.

"Thanks to new data, nonprofit organizations are gaining new visibility and credibility around the world," Salamon said.

The UN Nonprofit Handbook Project

The UN Nonprofit Handbook Project seeks to improve the treatment of nonprofit, or civil society, organizations in national economic statistics. A major barrier to improved understanding of the nonprofit sector is the lack of basic statistics on the scope, structure, financing, and activities of this set of organizations.

National economic statistics do not now count the work of most volunteers. This makes it difficult to gain a comprehensive view of the scale and contributions of nonprofit organizations.

For further information on the UN Nonprofit Institutions Handbook and on the results of implementation to date, visit http://www.jhu.edu/ccss/unhandbook.

Source: Center for Civil Society Studies at the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies