



## 2009/September NEWSLETTER



Students using Pippin in their class

### “PIPPIN” Makes Mathematics Fun

Zaklina Ristevska and Fatima Ali, teachers at the Zivko Brajkovski Primary School in Skopje, were struggling to introduce new technologies into their classroom. They would often spend their evenings at home on their computers trying to identify activities that they could use with their lower grade students. But this changed after the USAID Primary Education Project (PEP) donated a Pippin educational robot to their school. As experienced teachers, they quickly saw the educational value that Pippin had to offer.

Pippin is an educational robot that is just 10 centimeters long, but has the capabilities of a more sophisticated robot. It is a tool for teaching basic math concepts. Pippin adds a simple music capability to graphics commands (such as forwards, backwards, left, right and pause). It comes with a range of covers that allow it to have many

personalities. In addition, Pippin has built-in rechargeable batteries which make it a perfect technological tool for primary school teachers.

“My students love when we use the Pippin. They love how we can use the Pippin to tell a story.” said Ms. Ristevska. “It has significantly changed my approach to teaching. The Pippin helps the students develop higher level thinking skills and helps them find alternative solutions to the problem.” Zivko Brajkovski Primary School is one of 131 schools that received a variety of educational equipment from PEP.

“With the younger children we can integrate different subjects together. The Pippin has helped us make such integration more interesting and appealing to younger students.” said Ms. Ali.

Marina Vasileva, a teacher from the Kiril and Metodij Primary School in Skopje, has had similar positive experiences in using Pippin and computers. “Our school uses modern technology in teaching. Six years ago, ‘His Excellency the Computer’ arrived in our classroom and immediately raised the interest and motivation of the students. They were eager to learn and explore; motivated to work and design their own activity or product. And there is no need, of course, to explain the satisfaction of their parents when they see the impact of the computer on the students’ achievements at the end of the day.” Marina concluded.

The goal of the USAID’s PEP, which is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development, is to improve the quality of instruction and to increase employment skills in youth. Their activities include working to reform math and science education, and increasing access to and use of Information Technology.



### Op-Ed Piece for Education by U.S. Ambassador Philip T. Reeker September 2, 2009

**Ambassador Reeker:** “The United States has been working with the people of Macedonia for over 15 years to support improvements in education. Through USAID, we are partnering with the Government of Macedonia to renovate over 120 schools to create quality and energy-efficient learning environments. We are training thousands of teachers from the pre-school through university level in new student-centered methodologies and use of computers in the classroom.”...[full text](#)

Ambassador [Philip T. Reeker](#)



Jasmina Siskovska as a court coordinator for USAID Macedonia Court Modernization Project

## Former USAID Project Participants Become Judges

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, during a ceremony at the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia, fifteen individuals were sworn in as new judges. Among them were Jasmina Siskovska and Srecko Mitovski, who, as young lawyers, had worked as pilot court coordinators for the USAID Macedonia Court Modernization Project (MCMP).

Judges Siskovska and Mitovski will start their careers on the bench in the Basic Court in Prilep. But these two already have extensive experience and knowledge of court practices due to their involvement in the MCMP. From October 2003 until March 2007, they worked as court coordinators in the basic courts in Bitola and Kriva Palanka. Through an innovative approach, the Project imbedded court coordinators in the pilot courts where

USAID helped introduce modern court practices. The coordinators were young lawyers who did not have much experience but who did have a great deal of enthusiasm to pursue careers in the judicial branch. They were the vital link between the Project and the pilot courts in helping them to adopt international standards in court administration, improve their performance, reduce the backlog of cases and improve public users' satisfaction.

Through the MCMP, Judges Siskovska and Mitovski had the opportunity to work directly with the courts and contribute to the process of modernization of the judiciary in Macedonia. At the same time, they developed their personal professional capacities and improved their skills and knowledge in court management. In May 2005, they both accompanied a group of Macedonian court personnel on a USAID funded study visit to the US, where they gained a firsthand experience in modern court administration and case management.

"MCMP was a unique and valuable experience for me and my fellow colleagues." said Judge Mitovski. "For almost four years, we worked with the courts to help them modernize and improve their performance. At the same time, we developed our capacities. I am now ready to deliver justice and will proudly wear a judge's robe."

After the MCMP ended, Judge Mitovski worked in the Administrative Office of the Court Budget Council. Both he and Judge Siskovska were enrolled with the first generation of students at the Judicial Training Academy. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, they successfully completed their Academy training, and became eligible for judges' positions. Now that they have officially become members of the judiciary, they will continue to work to improve its efficiency and promote a positive image of the judiciary to the public.

The goal of the MCMP, which operated in Macedonia from 2002 until 2007, was to further the development of the rule of law in Macedonia by assisting the Macedonian judiciary to develop into stronger, more effective and independent branch of government and to improve the efficiency and performance of the Macedonian courts. Since October 2007, this mission has been continued by the USAID Judicial Reform Implementation Project



Members of the Macedonian IRG study tour meet with Congressman Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA) and Rep. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

## Macedonian Members of Parliament Participate in Study Tour to the United States.

Six Macedonian elected officials were able to observe first-hand how the federal, state and local governments operate in the United States during a study tour arranged through the USAID Political Party Strengthening Project. The Project brought these young members of the Macedonian Parliament (MPs) to the U.S. from July 7 to 17<sup>th</sup> to explore the deliberative process of making public policy in the U.S. The participants had opportunities to engage with U.S. Members of Congress, witness how public opinion is considered at every step of the legislative process, and observe how citizens are involved at each level of government.

Currently in Macedonia, government ministries formulate legislation while the Parliament generally serves a secondary role in formulating public policy. Therefore, the study tour provided an invaluable opportunity for the legislators to personally see how legislation is proposed and debated in the U.S. Congress, and how the Congress provides an open forum for testimony and informed discussion about topics of public interest. They observed how respective committees conduct investigations and solicit citizen input, evaluate and oversee activities of government agencies,

and oversee the implementation of Federal laws.

The MPs spent the first week of the study tour in Washington, D.C., where they met with representatives of the U.S. State Department, the National Security Council, the media, congressional staff and various non-governmental organizations. They also met with a number of elected officials, including several members of the House of Representatives from both the Republican and the Democratic Party. The Macedonian legislators also observed their U.S. Senate counterparts conducting a committee hearing in which witnesses delivered testimonies on a matter of public interest. Another highlight of the program in D.C. included a visit with the Macedonian Diaspora at a luncheon on Capitol Hill hosted by the Macedonian Embassy and several members of the U.S. Congress.

During the second week of the program, the MPs traveled to Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina, where they met with representatives from a variety of offices, including those of Governor Mark Sanford, Senator Lindsay Graham, Congressman Joe Wilson, the Comptroller General and the South Carolina branches of the Republican and Democratic parties. The MPs, all of whom are currently in the process of establishing their own district offices, were particularly interested in learning more about constituent services and voter outreach at the state level.

Through this study tour, first time MPs not only gained insight into the American system of government, but they also had an opportunity to bond with their parliamentary colleagues from other parties and ethnic groups, and to forge friendships that may positively affect their parliamentary and committee work in the future.

The USAID Political Party Strengthening Project, implemented by the International Republican Institute, has worked to increase the responsiveness and accountability of political parties and government institutions in Macedonia since 2002. The U.S. State Department's Institute for Representative Government provided additional funding for this tour.



Deputy Chief of Mission, Tom Navratil gives opening remarks at the launching ceremony of the Macedonian HR Association

## People Above All

To keep up with today's rapid technological changes, organizations must become more adaptive, quicker to change and more customer-focused in order to be successful. The role of human resources (HR) professionals has therefore become more important in helping organizations to meet these needs. Recently, HR professionals in Macedonia took a significant step to promote their efforts by establishing the Macedonian HR Association (MHRA) with support from two USAID projects: the Business Environment Activity (BEA) and the Human and Institutional Development Project (HIDP).

At the ceremony to launch the Association on June 18, Darko Madzosi, President of the MHRA, said "This is a very big step for us. Although we've been in the profession for a long time, we have just succeeded to join in our efforts to address the issue of HR development in an organized manner. Thanks to the commitment of the USAID BEA and their generous support, we are starting a very challenging activity that will positively impact all organizations in the country."

The MHRA will help HR professionals to advance the quality and standards of their profession, and increase HR career opportunities. But the Association will also play a vital role in helping assure that Macedonian firms better meet the challenges of the global market

place, by facilitating an exchange of ideas and strategies on key management issues, and providing an important platform for actively assisting in the development of the key leaders of business and other organizations.

"With the support of the USAID projects, we will orient our work primarily to organize specialized educational programs for professional development of HR practitioners. Making them aware of the important role they have in strengthening the competitiveness of their organizations, we expect them to feel motivated to spread the concept of life-long learning and permanent education at all organization levels," said Darko Petrovski, HR Manager at Macedonia's main electricity distributor, Austrian-owned EVN Macedonia.

The launch ceremony promoted the Association's slogan "People Above All." The event, which attracted more than 180 people, was not only intended to inform people of the association's plans and activities, it was designed to encourage networking. And their next major event is already planned: on 11 and 12 September in Ohrid, the MHRA will hold an international conference and expo on "How HR Contributes to the Success of Your Company."

USAID's BEA, implemented by Booz Allen Hamilton, works to encourage business formation and growth through such means as activating social dialogue and facilitating the shift from passive to active labor policy measures. The main focus of the HIDP, implemented by World Learning, is to improve the performance of established institutions and to build capacity at start-up institutions deemed key to the future of Macedonia. The HIDP will be assessing the needs of the MHRA within the HR context in Macedonia, and then both projects will support the association through implementation of a tailored intervention package.

For more information about USAID programs on economic growth, education, democracy and governance please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>