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PRESS RELEASE

Better Assessment Systems Mean Better Education

Use of the results of external assessments is vital for developing educational policy, for improving schools and for raising student achievement. This is the message of a two-day regional conference on external student assessment that began today in Skopje, organized by the USAID Primary Education Project (PEP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and the World Bank Project for Modernization of Education.

The event gathered together 70 representatives from educational institutions, schools and examination centers in Macedonia as well as international experts involved in assessment reforms from neighboring and EU countries.

"Through the USAID Primary Education Project, we have developed agreed-upon standards and a Code of Ethics for school-based assessment " said USAID Mission Director, Michael Fritz. "PEP has trained approximately 6,000 teachers from all primary schools in Macedonia in these standards... But the long term impact and sustainability of this work will only be assured if the regulations are part of a fully comprehensive assessment system."

PEP works to improve the existing school-based assessment in Macedonia's primary schools to increase the quality of both teaching and learning, and to contribute to optimal individual student progress. The project helps develop national standards for school-based assessment, trains teachers to meet those standards, creates resources to support formative assessment, and introduces a code of assessment ethics to schools.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

PEP is implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) in cooperation with Indiana University and the Macedonian Civic Education Center, works with all public primary schools in Macedonia. The project seeks to improve the quality of instruction and increase employment skills of students. The overall goal of the USAID Education Program is to strengthen education in Macedonia and to support decentralization efforts, as Macedonia seeks entrance to the European Union.

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.