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PRESS RELEASE

Computer Use by Children With Disabilities

Today in Skopje, the USAID Equal Access for Equal Opportunities project presented the findings of the **“Needs Assessment Report on Assistive Technology Use in Mainstream Primary Schools.”** The report will serve as a basis for taking further steps to improve the quality of education for students with special educational needs, enabling their inclusion in regular mainstream classrooms.

“It is critically important that the benefits of these technologies are open and accessible to all students, including those with disabilities,” said U.S. Ambassador, Philip T. Reeker. “This is not only a matter of human rights; it also is a defining feature of an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society.”

The assessment showed that, while 70% of the schools use computers for instruction, provisions aren’t currently made for students with special educational needs. However, teachers and school administrators do understand that students with special needs can benefit from using assistive technology. The nation-wide assessment was conducted in order to select 20 mainstream primary schools to receive equipment and training for the use of assistive technology in instruction through the Equal Access for Equal Opportunities project.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Equal Access for Equal Opportunities project is implemented by the local association Open the Windows. For more information about the program, please visit www.openthewindows.org. **The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$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>.