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PRESS RELEASE

Presentation of USAID Youth Employability Skills Network in Stip

Today the USAID Youth Employability Skills (YES) Network project launched new activities in Stip to enhance the employability skills of youth. The project is working with the municipality to help people aged 15-27 become more competitive in the labor market and ultimately secure employment.

"The skills young people have do not correspond with demands from the labor market," said Dr. Jan Karpowicz, Chief of Party of the USAID YES Network project. "Employers repeatedly highlight their need for young people with skills in communication, team work and problem solving, as well as some direct practical experience of the work place. This project is helping young people develop these skills."

The USAID YES Network project will begin in Prilep and Gostivar as well as Stip this year, in partnership with the municipalities, the Employment Service Agency, educational institutions, the business sector and youth-oriented NGOs. In collaboration with local governments, the project is helping to create local Economic and Social councils that will bring together municipal representatives with employers, educators, workers representatives, members of civil society and others to address youth unemployment.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The project initiated its activities **last year** in Bitola, Strumica and Tetovo. Eleven career centers were opened in secondary schools, three job clubs were revitalized in the **centers of the Employment Service Agency in these towns**, and a Local Economic and Social Council was fully established **in Strumica**. More than 170 teachers, 15 ESA staff and 17 local NGO representatives were trained in how to deliver work readiness skills training and advice to youth. A total of 850 young people, including secondary school students and registered and unregistered unemployed youth, were provided an important opportunity to become better prepared for finding and staying in a job. The USAID YES Network is implemented by the Education Development Center, a global nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing learning and promoting health.

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>.