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PRESS RELEASE

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USAID support for more inclusive schools

Today, the USAID Roma Education Project, together with partner primary schools from Skopje, Prilep and Kumanovo, organized an event to mark the successful completion of the first round of small school intercultural initiatives. These activities were designed as part of school extracurricular activities where students from mixed ethnic origin worked together in learning more about customs and traditions in different cultures. Such activities enabled greater student interaction and inclusive school environment. As result of this activity the students from these schools prepared a cook-book from the cuisines of different ethnic groups, recorded stories from senior citizens of different ethnic groups; prepared presentation of national dresses, learned songs, dances and poems from their schoolmates with different ethnic background.

"Today we are here to celebrate diversity. All of our children live in a world that is increasingly diverse and we need to prepare them for that world. By engaging with and experiencing other cultures, children can learn from each other, enrich their personal experiences, and foster skills and attitudes crucial later in life," said LeAnna Marr, USAID, Education Office Director.

The USAID Roma Education Project, implemented by the Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, is a \$4.5 million initiative that assists over 1,500 Roma students annually to improve their completion and achievement rates. From its start in 2004 to date, 298 secondary and 84 Roma university students completed their secondary and university education with the USAID support; over 300 primary and 157 secondary school teachers received training in education for social justice and interactive teaching methods.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested over \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is working with the people of Macedonia to create jobs, strengthen democratic institutions and practices, enhance integrated education, and prepare 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> and USAID FB page <http://www.facebook.com/USAIDMacedonia>