

## Programs to Assist Post-Conflict Kosovo

Since opening its office in Kosovo in 1999, the East-West Management Institute (EWMI) has been at the forefront of Kosovo's development by supporting Kosovo's civil society, government and media through mentoring, training, grant-making and networking programs. In June 2008, with support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), EWMI launched the Kosovo Constitutional Justice Initiative—instrumental in the creation and development of Constitutional Court of Kosovo. No other institution will be more important in ensuring that the Constitution of Kosovo is enforced than the Constitutional Court. The new Constitution, which went into effect in June 2008, includes a charter of fundamental human rights and freedoms and provides some of the most far-reaching minority rights protections in Europe. More recently, EWMI received a USAID grant to expand its project to improve security in Kosovo at the municipal level by reactivating and strengthening the Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities (MCSCs). Through its many programs, EWMI is working to help Kosovo meet the unique challenges of a post-conflict and newly independent state. Below is a summary of some of EWMI's key activities in Kosovo since 1999.



President William Clinton speaking at the Developing a Strategy for Kosovo's First 120 Days conference.

### CONSTITUTIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE (2008-2010)

In June 2008, EWMI experts began providing crucial technical assistance to a Kosovo government working group charged with establishing the new Constitutional Court of Kosovo. With its authority to review legislation and individual complaints of rights violations, the Court will be the ultimate check on legislative and executive power in Kosovo and the final arbiter of the meaning of constitutional human rights provisions.

EWMI served as the secretariat of the group, provided the group with critical expertise, and coordinated the input of domestic and international stakeholders. As a result, the working group achieved impressive results: after six months of intensive work the Law on the Constitutional Court was adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in December 2008; the budget for the Court was prepared and entered into the government's budget plan; the structure of the Secretariat of the Court was agreed upon by the group; and, temporary and permanent locations for the Court were found. In addition, the working group prepared draft Rules of Procedures for the Court that will be available for the members of the Court to review once they are appointed. In a letter to EWMI, Dr. Fatmir Sejdiu, President of Kosovo, applauded these major accomplishments and offered his and Kosovar institutions support in the further development of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo.

After the formal establishment of the Court in January 2009, EWMI provided training to the future staff of the Interim Secretariat for the Court in order to

*Working in partnership with grass roots groups, local governments and international organizations to build just, prosperous and democratic societies.*

ensure that claims can be properly registered and procedures set in place pending the appointment of a permanent Secretariat. In early February 2009, the persistent work of EWMI and its partners culminated in the achievement of a great milestone for Kosovo in its democratic development. The Interim Secretariat began to officially serve Kosovar institutions and citizens by providing them with a legal recourse to bring complaints before the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo.

In an effort to best serve the needs of the citizens of Kosovo, the launch of an operational Constitutional Court also included the unveiling of the official website, [www.gjk-ks.org](http://www.gjk-ks.org), on February 27, 2009. Developed through the support of EWMI's Kosovo Constitutional Justice Initiative, the interactive website was launched in Albanian, Serbian, and English. It is designed to be an invaluable resource for the citizens of Kosovo, providing information about the composition, function, and structure of the court. Visitors to the website are able to download the forms needed to file a petition and will be able to track court decisions.

EWMI and members of the working group, comprised of Kosovo government officials, local and international experts, continue to work to establish a Court that effectively protects the rights and freedoms defined in the Constitution of Kosovo. Over the next 18 months, it will be important to ensure that the Court staff is qualified and well trained, members of the Court (once appointed) have the capacity to implement its mandate, domestic lawyers understand how to bring complaints before the Court, and the public is aware of the Court and its significance. To those ends, EWMI intends to provide a package of continued technical assistance in 2009-2010 that includes study tours to relevant European countries to expose new members of the Court to the experience of Constitutional Courts with similar mandates; a series of training workshops for lawyers and municipalities on the new constitutional complaint and municipal petition procedures; and a comprehensive public awareness campaign, consisting of informational pamphlets, radio announcements and a series of public roundtables or discussion forums, to educate the public about the role of the Court and how to bring claims of rights violations before the Court.

**COMMUNITY SAFETY (2007-2010)** In the wake of Independence, the role of the international presence in Kosovo has decreased, leaving Kosovo's fledgling government with the challenge of managing security in a multi-ethnic state. In late 2007 EWMI, with a seed grant from Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, began to explore the possibility of reactivating the Municipal Councils on Safety in Communities (MCSCs) to address Kosovo's security issues after independence. EWMI determined that these municipal level structures could serve as the backbone in assuring communication between central and local government officials, civic institutions, and minority communities and between the municipal officials and the public. In September 2008, USAID recognized the importance of EWMI's work and awarded EWMI a two year grant to expand the MCSCs Project. Working in cooperation with the Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), local NGOs and the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA),



*Dr. Arsim Bajrami, Minister of Public Services, opening the Constitutional Court.*

the two year MCSC Project will build trust between citizens and elected officials, and between Kosovo Serb and Albanian communities by providing mechanisms and resources for them to work together to improve life and security through more effective participation in municipal and central government decision-making processes. The Municipal Councils, which are comprised of local political leaders, law enforcement and civil society representatives, will benefit from a grants program that will support “common cause” projects that will allow them to propose and implement projects that will foster community development and inter-ethnic cooperation, while building trust in Kosovo’s governing institutions. EWMI has also been working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo in preparing the Administrative Instruction for establishing the MCSC in accordance with the Law on Police, which has passed both readings by the Kosovo Assembly and had entered into force March 2009.

#### KOSOVO TASK FORCE (2007-2008)

EWMI has been at the forefront in assisting Kosovo prepare for independence. In early 2007, with the support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), EWMI established a Task Force comprised of leading civic leaders and policy analysts from Kosovo to assist the Kosovar administration and civil society prepare for upcoming challenges associated with the resolution of its status. The Task Force played a critical role in bringing together Kosovo’s Unity Team, Kosovar central and local government representatives and other international and regional leaders, representatives of the Serb minority, civil society leaders, and representatives of Kosovo’s media together for the historic Developing a Strategy for Kosovo’s First 120 Days conference hosted by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund at Pocantico, NY in April 2007. Following the conference, the Task Force has been expanded and strengthened with the support of RBF and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The Task Force is providing assistance to support both civil society and government institutions in their preparations, including: (i) advising and mentoring the government to improve communications and risk management associated with upcoming independence, which includes supporting development of structures at the municipal level that will enable a stable line of communications between the central and municipal authorities; (ii) supporting the development of public policy related to economic development; (iii) facilitating activities that move Kosovo towards regional integration; and (iv) launching activities that promote closer relations with the EU.



*A children's Peace Park, built as a part of the Community Watch Project.*

#### NEGOTIATIONS AWARENESS (2006)

The Negotiations Awareness Campaign (NAC), funded by both the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Balkan Trust for Democracy Fund/German Marshall Fund, played a critical role in establishing a dialogue between the Kosovar negotiators and the public. A total of four public discussions were held between senior Kosovar Negotiators and the Kosovo public, including Albanians and Serbs. Two of the discussions were held in predominantly Serb-populated municipalities, one was held in Prishtina, led by the Prime Minister and a fourth was held live on RTK (a major television station) with the Unity Team. The NAC provided the public with a unique opportunity to meet the negotiators and learn first-hand about the status of the negotiations process and what impact it will have on them.



One of the "Get Out The Vote" campaign posters.

### COMMUNITY WATCH (2006)

EWMI worked to improve relations between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo through the implementation of an inter-ethnic Community Watch Project. The CWP built trust between Kosovo Serb and Albanian communities. The Project established Citizen Watch Committees (CWCs) comprised of citizens, NGOs and local government officials. Through the CWCs and a grants program that supported these "common cause" projects, Kosovo's Serbs and Albanians in target communities had a platform to propose and implement projects that fostered inter-ethnic cooperation. CWP was supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

### NGO ADVOCACY (2001-2005)

From 2001–2005, EWMI implemented the Kosovo NGO Advocacy Project (KNAP), under a USAID-funded cooperative agreement. KNAP achieved its main goal of transforming Kosovar NGOs from service providers into issue-driven agents of change. These NGOs successfully participate in the formation of policy at local and Kosovo-wide levels, hold local, Kosovo-wide and international authorities accountable and raise public awareness about corruption and other issues in Kosovo. As part of KNAP, EWMI published a "Citizen's Guide" designed to educate the public and NGOs about the structure and authorities of UNMIK and the provisional government institutions. The guide proved to be a valuable tool in informing citizens, NGOs, and even government officials about their government, highlighting areas of authority and lack of authority, describing the basic relationships between the various branches of government, and identifying ways for citizens to participate in self-governance. It received widespread media attention and acclaim. In addition, EWMI co-sponsored a "Get Out The Vote" campaign for the October 2004 parliamentary elections. A coalition of more than 70 local organizations, two national television stations, five international organizations and over 2,000 volunteers united in this Kosovo-wide effort with the message: "Don't Complain, Vote."

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### NGO DEVELOPMENT (1999-2001)

Shortly after the cessation of the NATO bombing campaign in July 1999, EWMI established its office in Kosovo. With funding from the American Jewish World Service and the Joint Distribution Committee, EWMI provided assistance to Kosovo's civil society, working with and training local NGOs. Recognizing that the foundation of civil society is open access to information, EWMI conducted a survey of local media, funded by Press Now and the Open Society Institute - Budapest, to determine future training needs for local journalists. The surveyed served as the basis of a strategic plan for donors to support independent media development in Kosovo. As part of its mission to support higher education, EWMI, with funding from Ford Foundation, sponsored visits of professors from the New School University (formerly the New School for Social Research) in New York to consult with the departments of sociology and philosophy at Pristine University on curriculum development and reform.

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