

## KOSOVO CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

E-NEWSLETTER

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### Kosovo Bans Smoking in Public Places, including Bars

*“Do you mind if I smoke? Do you mind if I die?”*

To go out with friends and enjoy a cup of coffee was something that Abnor Hasani was only rarely able to do. He is not only a non-smoker but also allergic to cigarette smoke, which made it almost impossible for him to stay in a café, bar, or any other public space in Pristina for longer than a few minutes. This is changing now, due to the ISC supported Kosovo Advocacy and Development Center (KADC) and its advocacy initiative “Protecting Public Health from Smoking.”

Since the Tobacco Law was adopted four years ago, nothing much had changed. Smokers could smoke everywhere, even in public health and educational institutions. The expert team of KADC identified the immense need to improve the situation.

During the past 18 months KADC achieved major breakthroughs in the implementation process of the existing Tobacco Law. KADC recommended changes and additions to the existing Law on Tobacco, which were included in the Law and approved by the parliamentary health commission. KADC advocated the implementation of the Law with the Ministry of Health and the Sanitary Inspectorate and as a result, a smoking prohibition was imposed in public places, health-and educational institutions and restaurants, in line with the existing Tobacco Law.



*“We are very proud of the results achieved, especially the higher awareness of the people and their active involvement. We noticed a dramatic change in people’s attitudes towards the smoking ban from the beginning until the end of the project. We are even more proud to see that more and more people have started to believe that the smoking ban can succeed here,” said Shkumbin Spahija, KADC Executive Director*

In addition, KADC assisted the inspectorate in preparing orders for smoking prohibition, which were broadcasted on national TV. Besides that, the organization produced stickers promoting the prohibition of selling tobacco products to persons under eighteen, which the inspectorate distributed to cigarette sellers.

### Dozens of Children with Down Syndrome Integrate in Kosovo Schools

*“I want to become a teacher!” ...*

Eleven years old Mjalta Bajraktari often says. Until November 2010, this was only wishful thinking for Mjalta, who has the Down Syndrome and was excluded from the Kosovo educational system.

The ISC-supported Down Syndrome Kosova (DSK) has made Mjalta’s dreams possible now, together with those of many other children.

With their project “Inclusive Education: National policy, or only an idea?” DSK has opened doors to those who have been denied their right to education because they have special needs. *Continues on page 2*

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Furthermore, DSK initiated and coordinated the drafting of a five-year-strategy (2010-2015) for the inclusive education for children with special needs, which was approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in May 2010.

Following the approval, the Ministry organized together with DSK and Save the Children a national conference on inclusive education for children with disabilities during which MEST representatives credited DSK as the initiator of the five-year strategy. In addition to the five-year strategy, DSK coordinated the drafting of two other important documents:

## Regional Office Established to Hold Central Government Accountable

Eye of Vision (EoV) identified the need of having an interaction between central and local level of governance to enable the latter to represent the local electorate in their best interest.

*“We have noticed that the central level has very little knowledge about local issues and needs of the local governance, different groups of interest, or the community itself,” Veton Mujaj, EoV Executive Director said.*

The ultimate goal of such project, according to Mujaj, is to allow laws to be implemented more easily because they are drafted while considering the specific circumstances the local community lives in. In addition, Members of Parliament would be held accountable, and the law making process be made more transparent.

EoV established a regional office in Pejë/Peć that serves as a contact point for Members of the Kosovo Assembly and local authorities and citizens. It also serves as a pilot project that can be later on replicated in other regions of Kosovo. Peja citizens welcomed the opening of the regional office and constantly ask

the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and the respective user guide. On January 31, 2011, DSK held a conference about the findings of their project and its success.

*“All 19 children whom we could register through our project in pre-primary schools and all 20 whom we could register in primary schools are very happy. Their parents and teachers are extremely satisfied and believe that only by attending mainstream educational institutions, these children can develop to their full potential,” said Leonora Shabani from the Parents Support Group of DSK*

When asked what Mjalta likes most about her new school, she said “I love my teacher, and also Qëndrim,” who is a boy in her class.

Thanks to ISC’s support through the USAID-funded Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program and DSK’s engagement and hard work, boys and girls, just like Mjalta, can now go on to pursue their dreams.

For more info: [www.downsyndromekosova.org](http://www.downsyndromekosova.org)



for meetings with MPs, Mujaj said. In addition to using the regional office as a link between actors of local and central level, EoV used the office as a channel to advocate for an amendment to the Law on Forests in Kosovo. EoV together with other stakeholders urged the Kosovo Assembly Committee for Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development to put pressure on the Assembly to draft a new law on forests. As part of a working group, EoV provided 30 recommendations to improve the existing law, in line with EU regulations. The new draft law, which includes EoV’s recommendations, was submitted to the Kosovo Assembly.

## Media Experts Train K-CSSP NGOs on Effective Use of the Media

More than 40 participants, gathered by the Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program (K-CSSP) learned how to communicate effectively with the media during two training workshops, held in Pristina from February 22nd to 24th and in Mitrovica on March 1st and 2nd.

Designed to meet the specific needs of both Albanian and Serbian speaking NGOs, the workshops provided K-CSSP partners with practical knowledge about electronic and print media relations. The training was delivered by prominent TV and newspaper journalists and editors who have direct experience of the needs and priorities of the NGO sector. Following these workshops, the NGOs involved will be able to better inform citizens about their actions, and build support to widen their constituencies for greater public pressure on decision makers.

Filmed interviews, during which real-life conditions of a television studio were simulated, formed the culmination of the training. Participants practiced and improved their television presentation skills in front of the camera.

During this highly practical training exercise, K-CSSP National Advocacy Partners, Local Advocacy Partners,

*“The TV camera exercise was the most challenging and useful part of the training, something I never had the chance to practice before. It not only helped me to behave better in front of the camera, but also to convey my message in a precise, short and articulated way,” said Milan Milosavljević, from the NGO Aktiv*



and Special Initiative Fund grantees, together with members of the Kosovo Policy Action Network (KPAN) presented the successes they achieved through K-CSSP support, which will be further shared with their constituencies and the general public through ISC's and partners' online and social media and at various project events.

The communication with media and TV presentation workshops are part of the ISC's capacity building and outreach support provided to NGOs throughout Kosovo through the USAID-funded Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program.



## FOL Movement Publishes First Annual 'Monitoring Corruption' Report

FOL Movement published an annual report about anti-corruption efforts undertaken in Kosovo during 2010, at a roundtable discussion held in Pristina on February 23, 2011.

Entitled 'Monitoring Corruption 2010', the report is a product of FOL Movement's one-year systematic monitoring of the fight against corruption by various

public institutions in Kosovo.

This non-governmental movement presented the findings of the report to roundtable participants, who represent the very institutions involved in the fight against corruption: Prosecutor, Anti-Corruption Agency, Police, Government, Judiciary, Customs, Civil Society Organizations, etc.

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## FOL Movement Publishes First Annual 'Monitoring Corruption' Report

*"Progress in the fight against corruption was been limited and insufficient in comparison to the high level of corruption present in the Kosovo institutions" said Armend Mazreku from FOL Movement, referring to summary of the 'Monitoring Corruption' report*



Various print and broadcast media covered the event which enabled the FOL Movement to reach out the general public.

FOL Movement has been monitoring the fight against corruption in Kosovo and publishing monthly reports on this issue since January 2010. This Monitoring Corruption initiative is part of the Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program (K-CSSP), implemented by ISC and funded by USAID which aims to publicly support the anti-corruption activities undertaken by the Parliament, Government, and Jurisdiction. It also aims to monitor and strength the relations of these institutions in the fight against corruption.

More on FOL activities: [www.levizjafol.org](http://www.levizjafol.org)

### K-CSSP Upcoming Events

- Public Promotion Event for NGOs participating in K-CSSP – April 2011



## KOSOVO CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

The Kosovo Civil Society Strengthening Program (K-CSSP) aims to ensure that Kosovo civil society becomes an effective and influential partner to government in public decision making, and shaping the legislative and policy agenda.

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in K-CSSP tackle a broad range of issues seeking to hold government accountable to citizens, at both central and local level. K-CSSP was established in 2008, and is implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Communities, which supports NGOs from all parts of Kosovo through grant giving, capacity building, and working on the legal framework for civil society organizations. K-CSSP is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The articles from above feature recent activities of K-CSSP-supported advocacy initiatives that address high priority issues about Kosovo.

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