

We Make Peaceful Change Possible

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EUROPE

Albania
Bulgaria
Czech Republic
Hungary
Kosova
Lithuania
Poland
Romania
Slovakia

SOUTH CAUCASUS

Georgia

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina
Mexico

MIDDLE EAST

Jordan

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PARTNERS' MISSION:

Partners for Democratic Change is an international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide.



Charles Kolb, Katherine Hope Gurun, Gaston Luken, and Paul Warner during the Symposium's morning plenary.

Partners Engages Corporations as Democracy Builders

In an effort to facilitate a dialogue between the business and democratic institution-building sectors, Partners, with generous support of the JAMS Foundation, hosted a Symposium on "Corporations as Builders of Law and Society in Evolving Democracies" in Washington, DC. Swedish Ambassador Jan Eliasson's key note address set the stage for a day long series of facilitated discussions by corporate leaders on the challenges and opportunities they face in developing democracies. Through plenary and small roundtable discussions, participants shared information and strategies for constructive engagement in communities

where they operate. Following this event, Partners began to further explore how democracy-building work could mutually benefit the corporate sector and citizens.

Earlier this year, Partners brought Mexican and international corporate funders into a partnership with USAID's Mission in Mexico and the Global Development Alliance. This consortium funded a new Partners Center in Mexico City dedicated to building a professional change management capacity for addressing complex economic and reform issues.

Partners was contracted by the Australian mining company

BHP Billiton to assess the community multi-stakeholder consensus processes in Peru and determine what it would take to build local capacity to manage such processes. This has led to establishment of Socios Perú: Centro de Colaboración Cívica, a change and conflict management Center, which will resolve conflicts, especially in communities with mining operations. Partners' effort is supported by the Peruvian government, community, and corporate sectors, as well as international development agencies and donors.

For information about the Symposium please visit http://www.partnersglobal.org/Events/corporate_symposium12.04.html

New Centers Open in Mexico and Jordan

This year Partners celebrates the opening of its two new Centers for Change and Conflict Management in Mexico City, Mexico and Amman, Jordan. The new Centers have joined Partners' international network – Partners for Democratic Change International (PDCI), which consists of 13 Centers around the world and two U.S. offices.

The new Centers will further Partners' mission of advancing civil society and a culture of non-violent conflict resolution. Specifically, Partners-Mexico, directed by Mara Hernandez, is fostering increased cooperation among NGOs, the private sector, as well as government agencies to resolve public disputes and to advance democratic planning and

decision-making in Mexico. Partners-Jordan, directed by Dina Dukhqan, works to strengthen ongoing government reform efforts by facilitating government-civil society dialogue and cooperation, and by fostering increased political participation, especially among women, youth and marginalized groups.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Albania: Democracy and Governance

Partners and Partners-Albania are supporting NGOs engaged in advocacy, anti-corruption initiatives, and legislative monitoring through training, technical assistance and small grants. The Center recently published the results of its national survey of NGO advocacy capacity and completed the first round of small grant funding, which focused on supporting election-related activities, including monitoring and voter registration. This project is implemented in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) with funding provided by USAID.

Moldova: Citizen Participation

In cooperation with IREX, Partners and Partners-Romania are providing training-for-trainers programs for Moldovan participants in the USAID-funded "Citizen Participation Program." The program mobilizes Moldovan citizens to use civic participation processes to improve their communities. To date, three trainings-of-trainers sessions have been conducted for regional hubs. Specifically, the trainings aim to enable participants to facilitate cooperative planning processes in their communities.

Lithuania: Good Governance at the Municipal Level

A consortium of organizations including VNG (Association of Netherlands Municipalities), Partners and Partners Center in Lithuania, introduced consensus-building processes to three municipalities in Lithuania. The current program includes trainings for community members and government officials as well as cooperative planning processes on issues selected by municipalities.

Regional Roma Integration Program Reduces Violence and Discrimination

Violence and discrimination pose the most serious threats to the Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. In 2002 Partners launched a four-year, USAID-funded *Roma Integration Program* in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia to empower Roma groups to promote their interests in cooperation with other sectors at the local and national level.

Since the start of the program, Partners' Centers in the three countries have trained over 360 Roma community leaders in communication and negotiation skills, cooperative planning, project development and project management. The program facilitated the establishment of eight conciliation commissions, which serve as vital

community resources and will continue to do so long after the program ends. The commissions contribute to a reduction in violence and discrimination towards Roma, by regularly mediating inter-ethnic disputes and convening community-wide problem-solving meetings on Roma issues.

Following cooperative planning processes facilitated by Partners over \$300,000 was approved in small grants for Roma integration initiatives. As an example, projects carried out in the Czech communities of Chomutov, and Pardubice and a Slovak town of Kezmarok provided 2,500 people with access to education, infrastructure, free-time activities, health, housing, welfare and/or job training and



Participants' poster from the 2004 Regional Beneficiaries Meeting

employment assistance.

Partners' Centers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia have also organized national roundtable dialogues to address Roma related policy issues, trained journalists in objective media reporting, and launched multicultural tolerance programs in schools.

Partners and IREX Strengthen Civil Society in Central Asia

Since the demise of the USSR, a nascent Central Asian civil society has been emerging. Although still weak and vulnerable, and not always supported by their local governments, NGOs in Central Asia provide an important voice to communities that lack effective representation. Many of them are in need of specialized trainings and technical assistance.

To aid this situation, Partners and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) are implementing a multi-year, USAID-funded project designed to strengthen local

networks of Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs). Throughout Central Asia, locally staffed and managed CSSCs act as resource hubs and serve as information and training centers for local communities. Partners and IREX are working to help existing CSSCs become sustainable and to assist them in forming a support network that will strengthen their local and regional operations.

Partners' role consists of organizing trainings and consultations for CSSCs in **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**. To date, Partners has helped

CSSCs develop new strategic plans, improve their financial and program management systems and manage small-scale community sub-grant programs. Leaders of the CSSCs have visited several of Partners' Centers to observe their daily operations and learn how other networks have maintained communication and achieved sustainability.

Partners' programs not only provide the organizations with lasting skills such as communication and conflict management, but also build leadership, management and training capacity of their staff.



Partners Expands its Middle East Programs

In 2005, Partners spearheaded new civil society development programs in Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq.

In **Jordan** a new Partners Center strengthens ongoing government reform by facilitating government-civil society dialogue and cooperation and fostering increased political participation, especially among women, youth and marginalized groups.

In **Lebanon**, Partners, is implementing a national Youth Coalition for Advocacy and Reform project. The initiative focuses on improving the capacity of Lebanon's young leaders to form coalitions and design and implement advocacy campaigns across confessional lines.

Partners is implementing a new program in **Yemen** in collaboration with the Civic Democratic Support Initiatives Foundation (CDF). The program builds the skills of 30 political, economic, and community leaders to use cooperative planning and participatory decision-making processes to

implement programs in their communities that deal with issues such as health services, employment, business development, and water and sanitation.

Finally, Partners offered training to 25 civil society leaders from northern, central, and southern **Iraq**. The overall goal of the program was to strengthen nascent democracy in Iraq by empowering civil society leaders with the tools to facilitate inclusive community change and mobilization. Participants developed action plans to be supported with small grants, to enhance community initiative and cohesion, improve the delivery of services and model the application of democratic methods to local issues.

Funding for Partners' programs in the Middle East comes from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), National Endowment for Democracy, and the U.S. State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

Cooperative Advocacy Introduced to Chicago and New York NGOs

Many advocacy groups are ineffective because they focus too much on adversarial approaches to advocacy and miss the opportunities that cooperation could produce. Partners' new technique - **cooperative advocacy**, focuses on building lasting relationships and coalitions among people or groups, even when they sit on opposite sides of the table, to jointly address important community issues.

Following meetings with advocacy groups in Chicago and New York City, Partners developed a series of trainings that responded to their need to conduct advanced advocacy in alliance with diverse groups.

In **Chicago** Partners, in cooperation with the Advocacy Institute and the Coalition of African, Asian, European, and Latino Immigrants of Illinois (CAELII), helped participating NGOs conduct community mapping in their neighborhoods and implement pilot projects. The pilot projects dealt with family unity disrupted by deportation, access to driver's licenses for



Participants in the Chicago training, December 2004

immigrants, access to higher education, community healing following trauma from genocide, and racial profiling. This part of the program was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

In **New York City**, Partners is providing training and consultation to select immigrant, environmental and arts advocacy organizations as they implement cooperative advocacy campaigns. Development of the methodology and training program in New York was made possible with funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Central America: Water and Sanitation Networks

Partners and Project Concern International are implementing CASCADA, a project in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras which aims to strengthen civil society by strengthening water and sanitation networks. Partners provided trainings for the networks in advocacy, facilitation, conflict management and effective communication, and helped the networks develop their advocacy plans.

Bolivia: Networking Training

With funding from Casals and Associates, Partners conducted a two-day assessment and provided a networking training in La Paz to Bolivian organizations working on anti-corruption initiatives.

Morocco: Civil Society Assessment

Partners, with funds from the Compton Foundation, assessed the capacity of civil society in Morocco to democratically manage conflict and change. Under this grant, Partners will seek to align corporate and US government agencies' interests to promote a broad capacity to manage change and conflict.

Middle East and North Africa: Democrats' Network

In collaboration with the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Partners is helping to develop a Network of Democrats in the MENA region with funding from the Department of State. The network will enable information exchange, collaboration on new regional programs, and coordination of regional advocacy initiatives. The first convening of the 60 network founders from over 12 countries will take place in Casablanca in December.



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2005 Center Highlights

Partners-Albania's Small Grants Program enabled 10 local NGOs to conduct activities in support of the July parliamentary elections. The organizations monitored the election, assisted minority and immigrant citizens to participate in voting, and reported on campaign finance spending.

Partners-Argentina facilitated dialogues in northern Argentina that resulted in the passage of a public policy that resolved a contentious and at times violent, two-year land dispute between municipal officials, environmentalists, businesses, and landless squatters on 2000 hectares of land in Puerto Iguacu.

Partners-Baltic facilitated cooperative processes for local government, business and civil society representatives in the Lithuanian municipalities of Trakai, Jonava and Klaipeda, to help them implement concrete agreements on issues of economic development, youth and tourism.

Partners-Bulgaria is implementing the USAID-funded Ethnic Integration and Conflict Resolution project, which supports ethnic interaction and cross-sector cooperation in 13 Bulgarian municipalities. The Center provides trainings, facilitates cooperative planning processes and gives grants for small projects in the areas of economic development, education, and social services.

Partners-Czech began two new EU funded projects. The 'Law for Every Day' program will develop juvenile offenders' skills and sense of social responsibility with the objective of lowering recidivism. The 'Understanding Media' project supports media education in the Czech Republic by training students about how to critically analyze and understand the media. The Center will implement both programs over the next two years.

Partners-Georgia organized and delivered training programs in advocacy for more than 300 people throughout Georgia as part of the recently completed, USAID-funded Citizens Advocate! Program.

Partners-Hungary has been facilitating national roundtables in Hungary on how to encourage and collaborate with media owners and representatives to provide a more positive

portrayal of the Roma in various aspects of media. These roundtables will culminate in a recommendation to be submitted to the Ministry of Equal Opportunities.

Partners-Kosova assisted the municipality of Rahovec to draft and adopt a professional Code of Ethics for Municipal Inspectors (civil servants who inspect businesses, construction sites and other activities to ensure their compliance with the law). The Code is the first of its kind in Kosovo.

Partners-Poland conducted nine gender equality workshops at military academies for the Polish Army. Gender equality in the military is a relatively recent and highly important issue for Poland as a member of NATO. The Center published a brochure designed to assist army educators in conducting similar workshops for Polish soldiers.

Partners-Slovakia won the Slovak social development fund tender to provide a set of 90 trainings on community social work standards for field social workers working in Roma communities. The Center will create a team of 25 trainers and will conduct these trainings in 2005-2007.

Partners-Romania has created a new manual entitled, "Restore the Health of Your Organization: A Practical Guide to Curing and Preventing Corruption in Local Governance." The guide is designed to be used by senior elected and appointed local government officials and their employees and will be disseminated throughout the CEE/SEE region.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU...

Partners' programs mentioned in this Newsletter were made possible thanks to generous contributions from: Bechtel Corporation, BHP Billiton, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Casals and Associates, Compañia Minera Antamina, Compton Foundation, GE Foundation, The JAMS Foundation, Kimberly Clark Mexico, National Endowment for Democracy, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, T. Rowe Price Program for Charitable Giving, United States Institute of Peace, U.S. Department of State MEPI Program, U.S. Agency for International Development, Xstrata, and the generous contributions of Partners' Board of Directors.

