

## MISSION OF THE MONTH



Macedonian children benefit from an improved learning environment in renovated schools.

## MACEDONIA



educational software, and teacher training on ICT.

### Results

To date, over 10,000 primary school teachers have been trained in ICT, interactive teaching, math, science, and assessment methods. Forty-six primary schools have been renovated, with an additional 80 planned within the next two years. Over 1,500 Roma students have received educational support, resulting in increased school retention and higher academic achievement.

USAID and the Macedonia Office of Defense Cooperation worked together to renovate four schools for children with special needs.

“Thanks to USAID, we received new windows for our classroom. I’m not cold and sick anymore and enjoy going to school,” said Ana Georgieva, 14, a student at Vera Ciriviri Trena Primary School in Skopje.

Asen Prlickov, director of Vasil Glavinov Primary School in Veles, said: “The school greatly benefited from the project—we received 16 computers and 60 professors were trained on ICT. The kids do feel more comfortable in coming to school—the modern equipment helps them to be more focused. Classes are more interesting and interactive for the children as the teachers are using new and creative methods of teaching.”

By 2011, USAID plans to have renovated one-third of the primary schools in Macedonia, serving 80,000 students. The Agency will renovate at least one school per municipality.

Interested in learning more about the project? Go to [www.pep.org.mk](http://www.pep.org.mk). In addition, to see a short video highlighting the school improvement program go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jC5gSJWy-Do](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jC5gSJWy-Do). ★

## INSIGHTS

FROM ACTING  
ADMINISTRATOR  
**ALONZO FULGHAM**



I write this prior to departing for the Middle East, where I will be privileged to represent the Agency at the International Donors Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, and to visit our missions in Cairo and Amman. I look forward to highlighting the important and painstaking work our missions undertake throughout the region to help create a brighter future for its citizens.

I was proud to see USAID’s work featured prominently during Secretary of State Clinton’s recent visit to Indonesia and expect that our Agency’s contributions will continue to be highlighted in her travel schedule during the months and years ahead. As development specialists, we have dozens of stories to tell—and we need to continue to tell them well.

Even as Secretary Clinton and Deputy Secretary Jacob Lew make the case for a strengthened and revitalized role for development as an essential element of U.S. “smart power,” we are taking that same message to Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, the National Security Council, and the First Lady’s Office. Among other things, that includes working to ensure sufficient funds to rebuild the Agency, and that USAID is seen as a resource on development policy and implementation.

As we together engage in this important work, let me note three areas where we can all make a difference:

**Leadership:** USAID has the largest concentration of knowledge and know-how about development in the U.S. government. We should be proactive in making that knowledge available across other departments and agencies. Our ability to engage on important development issues depends upon our ability to demonstrate our skill, commitment, and creativity. Leading by example, we become the source of good ideas and sound, pragmatic advice. We also make ourselves indispensable as far as any discussions related to development are concerned.

**Outreach:** USAID already participates in policy discussions on issues from food security and climate change to future approaches to Iraq and Afghanistan. Here again, we have a wealth of expertise as well as hands-on experience. Within the U.S. government, USAID staff assigned to State, the combatant commands and the National Security Council enrich the debate immeasurably. We can all look for ways to further share that experience, not only within the foreign policy community but among the broader American public as well.

**Communication:** There is no doubt that effective communication helps us all to do our jobs better. Yet, communication within the Agency has historically been one of our greatest challenges. As a result, we have put in place three systems to improve the flow of information within Washington and between Washington and the field.

First, we have reinstated the Chief Operating Officer’s biweekly update to the Agency. (Visit <http://inside.usaid.gov/COO/> to read previous updates.) Second, we recently launched the USAID “Sounding Board” (<http://communities.usaid.gov/soundingboard/>), an initiative aimed at promoting Agency innovation and reform. I want to encourage all of our people in the field and in Washington to contribute your best thinking to this important initiative. I look forward to sharing your ideas with the Secretary and with the next Administrator.

Third, the Office of the Chief Operating Officer has launched a blog entitled “AIDSPEAK” (<http://communities.usaid.gov/coo/>) to keep the Agency abreast of key events and issues and to foster a dialogue amongst USAID personnel. I encourage you to visit AIDSPEAK and to let us know ([aidspeak@usaid.gov](mailto:aidspeak@usaid.gov)) what we can do to improve the site.

Finally, let me close by once again expressing my appreciation for your hard work as well as your continued skill and commitment in the midst of this historic transition. ★

## Computers and School Renovations Boost Macedonia’s Education

By Biljana Velickovska and Corinne Dalenson

### Challenge

In education performance, Macedonia lags behind other transition countries—those that changed from socialism to free market economies after 1990—international studies show.

Many schools have not been renovated for decades and do not provide students or teachers with a good environment for learning and teaching.

As Macedonia prepares to join the European Union, the education system needs major improvements, especially in infrastructure, access by minorities, and updated curricula. Many students fail to find jobs after completing their education because their skills do not match the labor market requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Innovative Response

To address these challenges, USAID launched the Primary Education Project in October 2006, which directly engages teachers, parents, municipalities, and relevant ministries. The project identified short- and long-term

educational improvements: new teaching methods to stimulate critical thinking and problem solving; renovating schools; and expanding use of computers and the Internet.

Project organizers agreed that schools should stimulate young people, encourage discovery, and provide a safe and comfortable environment.

Parents and teachers helped with classroom design and scheduling renovations. They decided to create “green schools” to encourage youth to develop and apply environmental awareness. Municipalities took up the “green” banner to create cost-effective learning environments that use energy-efficient building materials to conserve resources while improving school quality.

To prepare students for the educational demands of the job market, USAID, with the Macedonia Ministry of Education, modernized the technical education curriculum in primary schools. Many teachers asked for increased access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in primary schools. USAID supplied new computers for the schools,