

ACTIVITY FACT SHEET

Mission for Serbia & Montenegro 2004

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE: SERBIA Community Development & Local Government Reform

What is USAID doing to promote community and local development in Serbia?

The Serbian reformist government that took power in January 2001 committed itself to restoring democracy and implementing a program of decentralization. However, it found itself facing a ruined economy, deteriorating infrastructure and a population accustomed to decision making by the central government. USAID assessments determined that assistance could make a valuable contribution on two fronts: helping community members become active participants in local decisions affecting their future, and producing immediate improvements to local living conditions. Today, these activities are carried out through two complementary programs that work throughout Serbia to engage communities, build the capacity of local authorities and improve the quality of life.

Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA or Sada)

Launched in the summer of 2001, CRDA is an extensive, multi-year civil society program that uses community development activities to build trust between different ethnic and religious groups, demonstrate the value of citizen participation, support grassroots democratic action and bring immediate improvement in people's living conditions. Each of the five American Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) selected to implement the program in different parts of the country work through locally formed community committees that organize themselves to prioritize, plan and implement projects that:

- Undertake essential civil work
- Create income-generating opportunities
- Address critical environmental problems
- Promote civic participation

Through June 2004, CRDA program results include:

- Participation of over 450 communities and 125 clusters in Serbia
- Initiation of over 3,200 projects (close to 1,900 completed)
- Contribution of 45% average community matching funds

Serbian Local Government Reform

The Serbian Local Government Reform Program (SLGRP) complements the CRDA program. Whereas CRDA supports municipal infrastructure improvement, economic growth, environmental protection and civic participation, the local government team works directly with municipalities to improve their management capacities and help local governments become more effective, responsive and accountable.

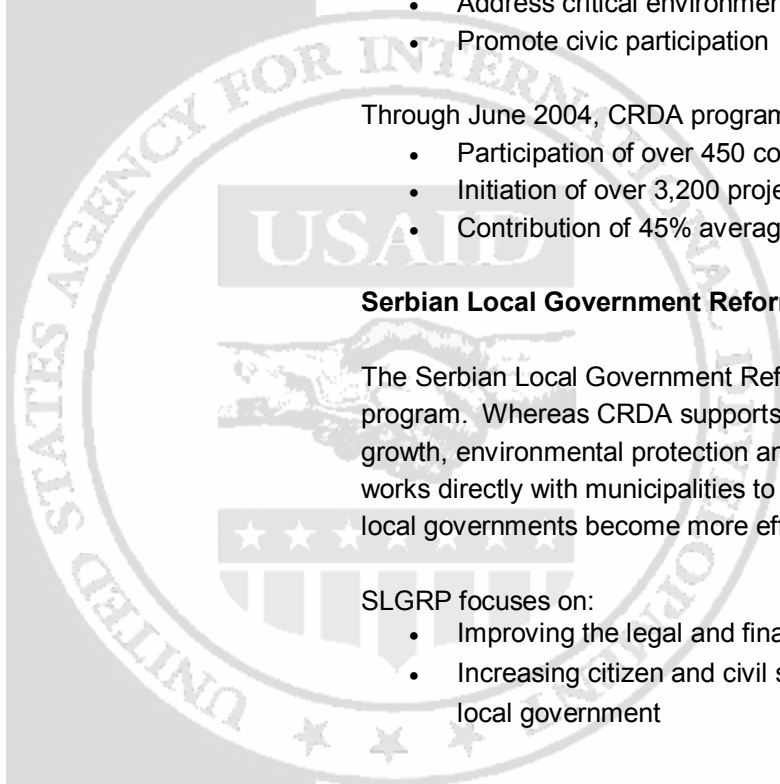
SLGRP focuses on:

- Improving the legal and financial sustainability of local government
- Increasing citizen and civil society organization access to and involvement in local government

United States Agency for
International Development
U.S. Embassy
Kneza Miloša 50
11 000 Belgrade
Serbia & Montenegro

For additional information
on USAID activities, please
contact:

Cara Stern
Senior Program Information
Specialist
(381-11) 306-4709
cstern@usaid.gov
Or visit: www.usaid.org.yu



- Increasing local government influence and working to develop decentralization policies at both the local and national level
- Improving the customer focus and responsiveness of municipalities

Current program achievements include:

- Software, computers and training provided in over 50 municipalities
- Four Business Investment Districts established in Zrenjanin, Krusevac, Valjevo and Niš
- Six Citizens Advisory Centers established in Zrenjanin, Niš, Sabac, Indjia, Presevo and Paracin, with up to 29 planned by 2006
- IT computer network installed
- Public budget hearings held

The program also supports the transformation of the national municipal association into a truly representative and service-oriented organization that engages the national government in policy dialogue on relevant legislative issues. In addition, the Serbian Local Government Reform Program provides technical assistance to the Government of the Republic of Serbia in developing policies on local government and decentralization, particularly with reforming the inter-governmental transfer system and fiscal decentralization. SLGRP also assists the Ministry of Local Government with developing a property devolution law and supported the property legalization campaign of the Ministry of Construction and Urban Planning (now the Ministry of Capital Investments).



For more information on these programs, visit:

<http://sada.usaid.org.yu>

<http://www.slgrp.usaid.org.yu>