Support to Strengthening the Rule of Law in Kosovo

Project Summary:
The project works towards strengthening an independent, accountable and effective justice system, which protects and promotes human rights standards and ensures better access to justice for all the citizens with special focus on women. More specifically, the project supports the justice institutions, namely the Ministry of Justice, the Kosovo Judicial Council, the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, the Justice Academy on policy development, legislation (primary and secondary), as well as on inter-institutional coordination on areas of mutual concern. The project also supports the first, and the second instance court in improving the judicial practices, and court efficiency. Furthermore, the project provides professional, and technical support in improving the access to justice by strengthening the performance of mediation, and the legal aid.

What do we want to achieve?
- Improving strategic planning, policy development and coordination in the rule of law sector;
- Strengthen the institutional capacities of judicial institutions (Kosovo Judicial Council, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, the Justice Academy) and develop the capacities of legal actors;
- Support the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC), Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC) and the Justice Academy to develop the policy on trainings to increase the judges’ and prosecutors’ performance;
- Support the MoJ in implementing its functional rule of law review process including the support in the legislation and strategic issues in the rule of law sector;
- Support the MoJ in monitoring and coordination of donor funded projects in the rule of law sector. Specifically, preparing a manual for the evaluation and monitoring of donor funded projects in the rule of law sector;
- Support the Ministry of Justice Legal Department in the process of revising the Kosovo Civil Code;
- Increase access to justice and justice service delivery through Mediation;
- Reduce the court case backlog through mediation and provision of technical support (national legal experts) to Pristina Basic Court and Court of Appeal;
- Increase the judicial efficiency through further harmonization of judicial practice;
- Develop and promote the mediation system in line with the revised law;
- Improve access to justice through promotion and development of gender equal responsive legal aid services.

Results:
- The draft law on the bar Exam revised achieving a significant reform of the bar exam, which is essential for ensuring professional quality and integrity in the legal profession;
- In 2016 only, 962 cases (a 35% increase compared to 2015) resolved through mediation, thereby improving people’s access to justice;
- In 2016 only, 812 cases (a 8.3% increase compared to 2015) resolved through mediation, thereby improving people’s access to justice;
- Around 100 law students gained knowledge about the functioning of the Mediation system. Of them, 22 students engaged in an action research project in the subject;
- A cadre of legal practitioners (13 judges w/m and two prosecutors) with skills on the judicial application of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) developed;
- The 2017 gender responsive training programme for judges and prosecutors developed;
- An orientation training programme for the judges and prosecutors from the Kosovo Serbian community prepared.

Overview:
Status: Active

Where?
Prishtinë/Priština and Kosovo wide

Focus Area:
Democratic Governance

Beneficiaries:
Judges, prosecutors, justice policy makers, judicial staff, mediators, legal aid providers; the general population

Partners:
Ministry of Justice, Kosovo Judicial Council, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, Kosovo Justice Academy, Court of Appeal, Basic Court, Agency for Free Legal Aid, Mediation Commission (MoJ)

Project Budget:
USD 1,143,351

Donor(s):
Government of Netherlands
BPRS UNDP
Kosovo Ministry of Justice
Government of Germany
Government of Norway

Time Frame:
2014 - 2017

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