

REPORT MISSION TO GEORGIA

11-15 February 2008

TBILISI ; 12 February

Meeting Bill Krauze, Urban Insitute

The contract of Urban Insitute with USAID is ending in September; the Urban Insitute will leave the country and transfer the staff to NALAG. He invited us to contact him in June; there is an opportunity to obtain used computers for the info points

SIDA - Kakha Khimshiashvili
Programme Officer

SIDA (Swedish Agency for Development) is composed of a small team (3 people). SIDA is mainly sponsoring Ministries (ombudsman, UNDP programmes, Eurasian Foundation, etc...) they are not interested by funding project at local level.

EC Delegation

We informed them about the Youth the right direction project and we invited them to attend to the training to be organised in Kutaisi in June. They informed us also about the Jean Monnet programmes (grant for informations on European Institutions).

SDC

The Swiss Agency for Development (SDC) just defines its new strategy 2008-2011. The main focus are economic development to the regions (agriculture programmes); humanitarian aid (in the conflict zone) and disaster management.

On parallel the SDC has a small grant programme (25'000 GEL around 10'000 euros) for project proposal on Gender.

PMMG

PMMG is an umbrella organisation composed of 65 communities; it is a local NGO dealing with minorities issues. PMMG has three components: Youth; Journalists and Women.

They asked to ALDA membership after the presentation of ALDA and LDA Georgia 8by Thea, Soso's assistant) in a forum gathering different Georgian NGOs.

The persons we met seem to be pro active and dynamic. We stress the fact that the LDA Georgia is our main partner in the country but that PMMG will be integrated in project proposals that correspond to objectives of the organisation.

KUTAISI, 13th February

Meeting with Mayor of Kutaisi, Mr Nuzgar Shamugia

He is well informed of the LDA activities. The issue of the office was raised, he promised us to give a free office to the LDA by June. He mentioned the need of the city for Fire trucks and asks the LDA partners if they can help, it seems that Strasbourg and Newport will make a donation of used fire cars.

Meeting with young people interested by the Youth the right direction project

I presented them the project and explained them what we expect from the participants of the training to be organised in June: long term commitment, pro active behaviour

Meeting with GYLA and KNIA

GYLA asked me to give them contact of Balkans NGO tackling the same issues. They ask me to help them to fundraise for the monitoring of the elections. I explained them that ALDA is not a grant making organisation, we already implemented a common project on Women's' right we can hardly do more than what we have done. I had also the opportunity to meet the beneficiaries of the different projects, they expressed their satisfaction and propose to develop project proposal on Human and Children Rights capacity buildings for the school managers (there are 44 schools in Kutaisi).

Tbilisi, 14th February

Meeting with H.E. Eric Fournier, French Ambassador to Georgia

Useful meeting, Ambassador seems to be willing to develop concrete activities in Georgia and to promote French know how. He mentioned the project developed by the department of Yonne in South Georgia (setting up of a modern medical centre). Collaboration supported by Senator Henri de Raincourt. The Ambassador will set up French Business Council to support French investment in Georgia. We agreed to inform him on regular basis about LDA activities. There might be an opportunity to develop a project on manuscripts protection. Soso will inform him about the political situation in Kutaisi.

Meeting with Youth NGO in the Council of Europe Office

The aim of the meeting was to exchange informations and to set up future collaboration with NGO dealing with Youth issue. A representative of the EC in charge of Youth attended to the meeting. 3 NGOs came (Ertoba, Sunshine House and PMMG). Sunshine is interested to become ALDA member. Interactive and useful meetings for future partnerships.

Meeting with USAID

USAID sponsored only US NGO. After the November events, they are reconsidering the strategy. They sponsor civil society organisations only trough the Eurasian Foundation.

Meeting with NALAG and Partners Georgia

We discussed the MATRA project content to de developed with VNG. NALAG will benefit from the withdrawal of Urban Insitute, the local staff of Urban Institute is transferred to NALAG (15 persons funded by USAID), it will increase the capacities of NALAG (currently there are 7 persons working full time).

Media coverage

I gave an interview to two local TV in Kutaisi and an interview to the journalists of the NALAG newsletter.

FOLLOW UP

Martial

- To contact and to organise an information meeting with the Parliamentary Group of friendship France-Caucasus
- Check the Jean Monnet foundation for possible sponsoring

Soso

- To draft a project proposal to the small grant programmes of SDC
- To keep inform on regular basis the French Ambassador
- To keep inform and develop project proposal with the different NGOs representatives met
- To check on regular basis the Eurasian Foundation and EC website
- To contact Bill Krauze from Urban Insitute in June for possible donation for the info point
- To invite EC representative to the training “Youth in Action” to be held in June in Kutaisi.

Conclusion

The visit was useful in order to raise the profile of the LDA. It helps us to understand the strategy of potential donors. The problem is that they are only funding State bodies because they consider that local authorities are too weak for the time being. Kutaisi, even if it is the second largest city is the “black hole” of the country the main reason is the political instability. State and donors are investing in Batumi. It reconfirms the good choice made by ALDA and LDAs partners to develop project in the western part of the country (the forgotten part).

I would recommend to organise the partners meeting 2008 in Kutaisi in order to raise the profile of the LDA, to strengthen the relations with Kutaisi local authorities and to attract potential donors.