



January 30, 2008

Bi-weekly Newsletter

>> **USAID Microfinance Legacy Nachala Joins European Microfinance Network**



On January 15, the Nachala Cooperative, a key legacy institution of USAID microfinance assistance, was accepted as a member to the European Microfinance Network (EMN). The network includes 60 members in 21 European countries. EMN promotes microfinance as a tool to fight social exclusion and to support the development of self-employment and micro-enterprise in Europe. This new membership is an excellent sign of recognition for Nachala and provides them with access to a wide range of the network's activities. ❖

>> **Bulgaria Takes Major Step to Introduce Career Counseling in Secondary and Vocational Schools**

One thousand secondary and vocational school counselors from across Bulgaria will be trained and certified as career counselors by September 2008, a result of efforts by USAID to establish a career guidance system in Bulgarian schools. In 2006, an agreement was signed by the USAID Labor Market Project (LMP) and the National Pedagogical Center of the Ministry of Education. The LMP trained a group of trainers, 15 of whom will train the new career counselors. LMP also developed the training methodology.

The newly trained career counselors will gain the knowledge to help thousands of young people make career choices, assess their own potential and become more competitive on the labor market. They will be certified by Business Foundation of Education, a legacy of the USAID Labor Market Project which continues to support the development of career counseling profession in Bulgarian education and to narrow the gap between employers and the educational system. ❖

>> **Anti-Trafficking Commission Launches Website, Opens First Local Commission**

The National Anti-Trafficking Commission, with assistance from USAID and the International Organization for Migration, is progressing with implementation of the Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. In the beginning of 2008, it launched its new bi-lingual website at <http://antitraffic.government.bg>. Another important achievement is the opening of the first Local Anti-Trafficking Commission in the municipality of Bourgas. The Local Commission is headed by the Deputy Mayor for Social Affairs and Healthcare, Mr. Loris Manuelian. ❖

>> **USAID on the Airwaves Again**

The public awareness TV spots produced by USAID in the fall of 2007 will run again on Nova TV during news and prime-time programs during February. The airings are part of a second burst of the campaign, which aims to further raise awareness about USAID in Bulgaria and will include radio spots and internet banners targeted primarily at youth and business audiences. So if you missed them the first time...stay tuned! ❖

