

Focusing the Learning Provision of Kosovo's MakerSpaces

Public Affairs Section

Public Affairs to Kosovo

Overview:

Kosovo has three American Corners. They are small dynamic, program-driven American-style libraries, hosted in public libraries. Two of them (in Pristina and Prizren) intend to provide more intensively practice-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs. In this regard, they have been provided separate spaces to create or update their makerspace provision. Needs for such programs are huge; however, they operate with certain resource limitations and need to define their STEM focus.

This project intends to support both American Corners to a) identify what subject areas within STEM they need to focus on regarding their makerspace provision; b) basic courses/programs they need to develop and provide, and; c) resources (i.e. staff skills, and equipment/materials) they need to have and develop in order to implement such provision successfully.

The ultimate goal of this project is to support American Corners to create STEM programs that provide alternative venues to youth age 14-30 to develop their hard and soft skills for employment or self-employment. In addition, focusing American Corners' makerspaces will enable youth to match their expectations more easily with the American Corners. These makerspaces should keep the American spirit of learning and teaching methodology and resources, while being locally relevant and support State Department education goals for Kosovo.

Background note on Kosovo's education system: The Kosovo education system is struggling to integrate practice-based learning in many fields, particularly in STEM areas. Generally, this is due to a lack of funding, appropriate training, and resources. It often produces a skill force that is not compatible with the developing trends of the labor market. Higher education institutions are focused on the quantity of students rather than the quality of learning experiences, and university graduates often remain unemployed due to a lack of job opportunities and the failure of the education system to provide students with critical skills needed by the labor market.

Background note on makerspaces in Kosovo: There are few successful alternative makerspaces in Kosovo, such as Bonevet and Prishtina HackerSpace. They provide a variety of learning opportunities and skills for children and youth.

Format of Final Project:

1) A brief report outlining specific STEM subject areas in which American Corners should focus their makerspaces; 2) five program designs for each of the two makerspaces, and; 3) a brief report on what resources American Corners need to have in order to implement these provisions. This can be one report divided into separate sections.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; International Development; Science and Technology; Youth Issues; Curriculum Development;

Comments:

Information on American Corners Kosovo: <http://ackosovo.com/>

Information on the overall Department of State's vision of American Spaces:
<https://americanspaces.state.gov/>

Department of State's Goals for Kosovo: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/285041.pdf>

U.S. Embassy Kosovo website: <https://xk.usembassy.gov/education-culture/american-spaces/>