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Are you interested in helping advocate changes to Kosovo's budget?

If so than contact ATRC at 038-244-810 or via e-mail at [oerd@advocacy-center.org](mailto:oerd@advocacy-center.org)

## THE ADVOCATE

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## Citizens and children consume polluted water

**Peja, November.** The non-governmental organization (NGO) Water for the New Millennium has found the water in Peja and Istog villages to be contaminated. After taking drinking water samples from 17 villages and running bacteriological tests, preliminary results have shown that the population in these areas is playing a Russian roulette with death every time they quench their thirst.

"In a single milliliter of water, we have seen as many as 6000 different kinds of bacteria and countless other chemical substances, some of which are well known poisons and fertilizers," Halit Gashi, Director of Water for a New Millennium said.

Zahaç and Naberxhan villages in Peja and Saradran in Istog are the worst affected. Not only are citizens being poisoned in their homes, but children are exposed to the same water at elementary school. If they get sick and require medical assistance, they will drink the same water at local clinics.

While the water's effect on the



The population in rural areas is consuming polluted well water

population is not yet clear, people think that certain current deaths might be related to the contaminated water.

In the next step, academics will study the test results to see how the contaminated water affects citizens' lives and any possible impact on mortality. The study should be published in January.

Yet, the Institute for Public Health has not demonstrated much interest in the preliminary results and has not addressed the NGO's concerns.

"We feel ignored - yet the situa-

tion is serious," Gashi said. The only solution is to advocate for bringing potable water to these small villages though a modern water supply system, he said.

Since the situation of potable water is probably not restricted to this region, the greater implications of this study should create a sense of urgency among other Kosovo NGOs to conduct similar studies advocate for the governing authorities to address the issue. This project was made possible through a grant from the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives. ■

## Radio Kamenica Monitors Local Officials

**Kamenica, November 19.** In an attempt to raise accountability and transparency in the local government, Radio Kamenica hosts a program that monitors local governance. The program aims to build bridges between local officials and voters.

Since early October, Radio Kamenica employees have paid

unannounced visits to municipal offices to investigate officials' attendance and learn about their duties. The idea for this program came from a news spread of a high ranking local official that had witnessed high absenteeism, according to a Radio Kamenica representative.

Being in touch with both officials

and listeners, Radio Kamenica has influenced decision-making, according to the population's needs. For example, listeners brought up the issue that those who

lived in Kosovo five years before the war were ineligible to be registered at the Civil Registration center. While the issue of whether or not individuals deserved such rights could be disputed, the indisputable issue is that the decision-making bodies on the issue, in this case International Administration showed no transparency regarding its decisions. Due to Radio Kamenica's intervention, the issue is being discussed, and the central office in Pristina is reevaluating the policies for granting documentation.

This is not the only institution that Radio Kamenica has impacted. Radio Kamenica has also pushed local healthcare facilities to better serve patients.

This project, which will continue through February, was made possible through an FDI grant. ■



Staff working in the studios of Radio Kamenica.



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## How and When Citizens Can Influence the Budget

Kosovo's budget process changed this year to include "results-oriented budgeting". One of the advantages of results-oriented budgeting is that it communicates to budget reviewers and decision-makers the results expected by the spending agencies. Another advantage is that it links decisions with specific choices about public priorities and expenditures. This allows for greater spending in areas that are important, thereby helping to control or reduce spending in areas that are less important or deemed to be less productive.

Considering that the budget process results in funding for specific public priorities, it is important for NGOs to participate in this process. By participating, NGOs can ensure that civil society's and citizens' needs are adequately met. They can also monitor how the government is spending tax payers' money.

Next we have a calendar detailing each step of the budget process, including key stakeholders and decision-makers. It also shows when and how citizens can become involved in influencing or monitoring the budget process. ■

## Budget Process Calendar

<b>JANUARY</b> The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE) receives the newly enacted budget by December 31, and informs the ministries and municipalities about the actual budgets that they will receive.	Citizens can learn the final details about what new money will be available for programs in which they are interested.
<b>FEBRUARY</b> In February or March, the MFE reports to the SRSG about the actual amount spent in the previous year. They also report the amount of money that is "in the bank", saved for use in the new year as well as the sum of money that is left over and can be used for a one-time-only needs in the new year.	Citizens can review what they (and the programs in which they are interested) were able to accomplish in the previous year and can determine if they need to change their activities.
<b>MARCH</b> The MFE issues the first of two estimates about revenues and budget ceilings for the following year. This information is provided to the ministries and municipalities to think about what they will need to accomplish in the following year.	Citizens should learn about the following year's revenue and budget levels for the year, so they can see if there are general trends that will impact the programs in which they are interested.
<b>APRIL</b> The MFE issues its first Quarterly Report of government spending.	Citizens should examine this report to see if spending on vital programs is going according to their expectations.
<b>MAY</b> The MFE issues the instructions to the ministries and municipalities about how to prepare for the following year's budget, within the limitations of the budget ceilings that were announced in March. The instructions also contain the government's priority areas for the following year. The MFE begins discussions with ministries and municipalities.	Citizens should begin to meet with ministry and municipality officials to ensure that their interests will be protected.
<b>JUNE</b> The MFE should continue discussions.	Citizens should conclude the discussions that they began in May.
<b>JULY</b> The MFE issues its second Quarterly Report of government spending.	Citizens should examine this report to see if spending on vital programs is going according to their expectations.
<b>AUGUST</b> The MFE issues its second and final revenue (budget) estimate for the following year. Ministries and municipalities use these figures in developing their final budget request for the following year.	Citizens should learn about how the following year's final budget may differ from the initial estimate, so they can know whether or not the budget ceiling for their programs might be changed.
<b>SEPTEMBER</b> The MFE conducts hearings with the ministries to discuss the details of the budget.	Qytetarët mund t'iu japin ministrive fakte dhe shifra me qëllim forcimin e kërkesave të tyre për fonde buxheti.
<b>OCTOBER</b> The MFE issues its third Quarterly Report of government spending.	Citizens should examine this report to see if spending on vital programs is going according to their expectations.

(continues in pg 3)

## Six Key Phases of Budget Preparation

As the pyramid demonstrates, the budget process begins at the micro-level in local communities with wide discussion and input from many actors. In the early phases, NGOs have the opportunity to influence the budget through budget organizations.

Later the process, as the budget is viewed at the macro-level, fewer actors are involved. Yet, even in Phase V, NGOs can influence the Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) through the Economic and Fiscal Council (EFC). In the final phase, the SRSG approves the budget.

While explaining the budget preparation process, the pyramid demonstrates the importance of civil society's involvement at the local level during the early phases of the process.

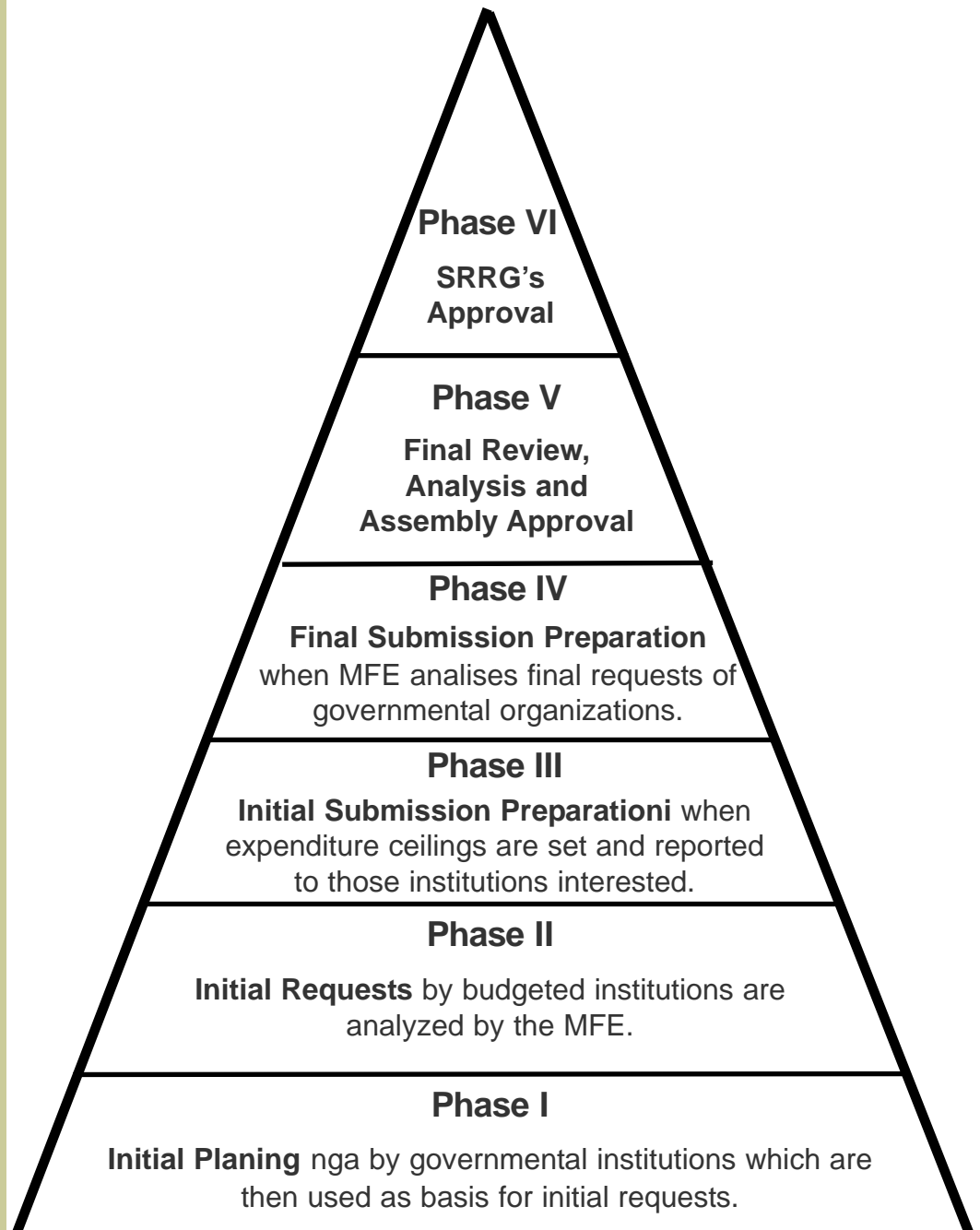
Like the calendar, this scheme is based upon an edited version of the participatory budget guide, which the Press Office of the Ministry of Economy and Finance drafted with help from specialists at USAID/BEARINGPOINT. A calendar version of this document is in the process of being finalized by the Press Office of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. If you are interested in more detailed information, feel free to contact ATRC at:

[oord@advocacy-center.org](mailto:oord@advocacy-center.org) ■

## Budget Process Calendar (continued from pg. 2)

<b>NOVEMBER</b> The Assembly receives and examines the ministry and municipality budget requests and makes its own recommendations.	Citizens can use their voice within the Assembly and its committees to explain the importance of specific programs.
<b>DECEMBER</b> The Assembly completes its review and changes and sends the budget to the SRSG. The SRSG can accept the budget or change it. However, the SRSG should sign and thus enact the budget by December 31	Citizens should observe the actions of the Assembly and the SRSG.

## Budget process pyramidal



## REA-Pristina Study Revisits March Riots

**Pristina, November 13.** REA-Pristina, a non-governmental organization, has cooperated with civil society, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Governance to better understand what caused the March 16-18 riots. The resulting report aims to explain the March events in order to prevent them from reoccurring.

REA's study has focused on the impact that economic hardship, high unemployment and a young population had on fermenting civil unrest. The preliminary findings of this study are:

-The willingness of authori-

ties to accept joint responsibilities with civil society is not very promising.

-The authorities are primarily concerned with political interests.

-Communication between the local and central level is very poor.

-Local economic development is not a priority for local government; not one municipality has invested in a single local economic development project.

Recommendations for future actions include:

- Support the local and central authorities in identifying the priority policy areas in each region and area; and,

-Strengthen the capacity of

local and central institutions, economic development, promotion and the marketing working group.

As a follow on, REA is organizing several roundtables to debate possible solutions to the problems that led to the March events. The first such roundtable, held on September 30, focused on local economic development, and the second, focusing on youth unemployment is scheduled to take place on December. The final results of the project will be presented late December. This project is funded through the Foundation for Democratic Initiatives. ■

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## Civil Society and Local Government Cooperate to Regulate Metal Graveyards

**Pristina, November 22.** NGO Aquila from Peja has partnered with NGOs "Oaza" and "Ekoklina" to raise awareness among citizens and local governing institutions regarding problems associated with metal graveyards.

Metal graveyards in Peja region can be seen by all travelers to this area. Since local authorities have failed to address this problem, NGOs have become involved in finding a solution.

Metal graveyards are a serious concern because they pollute not only the land, but also potable water. They minimize arable and green territories, which affects people both directly through drinking water and indirectly through food. Esthetically speaking, they also damage Peja region's beautiful scenery.

The FDI supported project aims to raise the population's awareness of this serious issue and to build communication bridges between the public and local government.

This project began with research in Peja region, where the concerns were first raised, but also in Klina and Istog.

Then, posters and brochures were produced and disseminated to the public, and a short documentary has been produced.

In the project's second phase, the NGOs will draft a regulation for addressing this

issue. After organizing three public debates to discuss the issue, the draft regulation will hopefully be adopted by the local authorities.

"The only solution will come from cooperation between local government and civil society," said Hysen Nikqi Director of Aquila. Considering the success Aquila has had so far, such cooperation seems possible. ■



*Car graveyards are the most common metal threat to the environment.*