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**USAID'S EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 1, April 2015**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

TRAINING PROGRAM REALIZES A YOUNG WOMAN'S DREAM

FAST FACTS

Grant Agreements Signed

Fashion House Menakon

Vocational training for 20 women

AUK Training Development Institute

Training and certification for 70 unemployed women in three well-defined ICT job profiles

MicroBiz

Training of 10 unemployed junior IT developers

Adaptivit

Training for 20 software engineers and 30 junior IT technicians

It took one radio ad heard by chance to put Vildane Ismaili, 20, into the path of realizing her career dream.

"Fashion is my passion. I want to be a designer, and create beautiful things with my hands," says Vildane, a graduate of textile / clothing branch at vocational school "Arbëria" in Gjilan/Gnjilane, who recently started her vocational training with Menakon

Fashion House.

Vildane learned to love cutting and sewing while watching her mother. While at school, Vildane says she and her friends learned a lot about the theory of textile, design, and cutting and sewing but did not have many opportunities to do practical work. The training program at Menakon Fashion House, supported by USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector, is exactly the push that Vildane needed to include her in the world of fashion and give her the tools to make a better living for herself, her parents and four siblings.

"I always followed the work of Menakon. The head designer there, Nadire Zymberi, is my role model of a successful woman. When they called me to say I had been selected for an interview, I could not believe it," says Vildane. "I am so happy that now I am part of the group of trainees, and I really hope that upon completion of the training, I will stay on."

"The best thing a young woman like me can do for herself is to acquire a vocation, a profession. We can achieve anything through work." – Vildane Ismaili, Trainee



Vildane Ismaili at the Training Initiation Ceremony

Vildane is very happy with the way Nadire Zymberi and the other mentors transfer knowledge to the twenty trainees. She says she is learning a lot about this professional, and about life, and hopes to be part of Menakon's success story in the years to come.

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Businesses Across Kosovo Are Interested in USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector Opportunities



Kosovo Gown Producers Learn from Turkish Experience



Kosovo Wood Processors At ALBANIA 2015 Fair



International Visitors Find Out About Kosovo's Tourism Offers

SPREADING THE WORD

Our staff has met with over 280 representatives of businesses, municipalities and economic development organizations across Kosovo and shared information on the business sectors we support, our grant scheme and application process.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS & MISSIONS

EMPOWER Private Sector organized participation and trade missions of businesses from Kosovo to important industry trade shows in Europe.

Fashion: Izmir Wedding Gowns & Evening Wear Fair (February 4-6, 2015); Texpo Eurasia Fair of Textile Machinery in Istanbul (February 6-8, 2015). EMPOWER Private Sector supported attendance by four gown producers, where they established useful contacts with suppliers of machinery and material, and with Turkish business chambers.

Wood Processing: International Furniture Fair ALBANIA (March 12-15, 2015). In cooperation with the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo, EMPOWER Private Sector supported participation of 5 Kosovo companies. The value of contracts signed during the fair was €18,280, with potential agreements over €240,000. EMPOWER Private Sector accompanied 20 Kosovo wood processing companies to the Made Expo Fair, Milan, Italy (March 18-21, 2015), where businesses were exposed to the newest trends in the industry and established good contacts. Thanks to this mission, it will be easier for these companies to make informed decisions about potential exhibition in next year's edition.

Tourism: Our program cooperated with the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA) to support five tour operators from Kosovo to attend the ITB Fair Berlin (March 4-8, 2015). The value of the contracts signed during the fair amounts to €24,000, while the expected value of potential contracts to be signed in the upcoming year is about €200,000. In cooperation with Kosovo Environment Protection Agency, French Embassy in Kosovo and KIESA, EMPOWER Private Sector program supported the participation of four tour operators from Kosovo at Destination Nature Paris Fair (March 19-22, 2015), where they established contacts with French operators, as a result of which at least one group of French hikers will visit Kosovo this year to assess the outdoor/adventure tourism potential.

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USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector, which started in July 2014, is a five-year project designed to stimulate large-scale job creation by elevating the competitiveness of Kosovo firms. The project is funded by USAID, and is implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.