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**USAID'S EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 2, May 2015**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

Stakeholder Meetings

Wood

The Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo and USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector brought together over 25 wood processing companies to begin working on the action plan 2015 – 2016 about participation in domestic and international industry fairs and trade shows.

Tourism

EMPOWER Private Sector met with tourism sector stakeholders about the development of Kosovo's segment of Via Dinarica, a product that is able to gain a global tourism market profile for Kosovo. Participants in the meeting will continue to meet to develop this concept further.

MADE-IN KOSOVO PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ATTRACT REGIONAL BUYERS

Since 2004, Daqa Company has made a name in indoor and outdoor wooden playground equipment.

"We did market research and found out that all playground equipment in Kosovo was being imported. So we decided to switch our production line from doors, windows and furniture to playground equipment exclusively," said Nexhmedin Sadiku, owner of Daqa.

The switch was a smooth one, as the company re-purposed almost 70 percent of the equipment for production of the new items. Due to the demand for playground equipment, Daqa increased its employment from 4 to 13. The playground equipment made by Daqa is designed and produced following the European safety norms. The company also provides assembling and inspection services to ensure maximum safety for children.

In March this year, Daqa was one of the five wood processing companies that participated in the International Furniture Fair ALBANIA 2015. The trip proved to be a successful one for Daqa: the company sold all products they brought for the exhibition and signed contracts to implement 4 outdoor playground projects in Albania projects.

*"...the cost-share provided by USAID's
EMPOWER Private Sector made it easier... I am
amazed by the success we had this year." –
Nexhmedin Sadiku, Owner of DAQA Company*



DAQA Playground on Display
At the International Furniture Fair ALBANIA 2015

"I was reluctant to participate in the fair this year, it would be our fifth time" says Sadiku, "but the cost-share support provided by USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector made it easier on expenses and logistics. I am amazed by the success we had at the fair this year."

For Sadiku, who is a wood processing engineer, it is now time to expand his activities further. The experience at the fair in Albania this year has given life to bigger plans, and he is counting on USAID support to achieve his aspirations.



USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector Deputy Director Skënder Rama, Guest of Klan Kosova Morning Show

SPREADING THE WORD

We were on TV to talk about the scope of EMPOWER Private Sector, our grant scheme and application process: at the national station TV Klan '*Mysafiri i mëngjesit*' and regional station TV Tema – Ferizaj/Uroševac '*VIP Intervista*'.



USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector Director David T. King at AUK 'Females in IT' Conference

WOMEN ON FOCUS

EMPOWER Private Sector is all about creating jobs. We believe that by increasing the participation of women in all aspects of the economy we create not just more jobs for women, but more jobs for everyone. The movement for women in business is really growing.



Young Women from the 'Females in IT' Training Program

Technology Has No Gender

EMPOWER Private Sector is supporting the 'Females in IT' training program implemented by AUK Training and Development Institute. With our support, twenty women are able to attend the program and learn skills in three ICT job profiles that maximize their chances for employment. At the conference organized by AUK on April 23, 2015 to mark the Girls in ICT International Day, EMPOWER Private Sector's David T. King congratulated the young Kosovo women who have started the year-long training, adding that "By creating jobs for women, we help companies grow stronger and hire more women and men. Gender diversity is a core business value because having more women and their talent makes companies more successful and more competitive." ICT is an excellent sector for employment and personal growth for girls and women.



Women Entrepreneurs Share Their Stories and Challenges

Investing in Women Has Great Returns

For many women business owners, the biggest challenges are expansion to new markets and access to funds to grow their activities. EMPOWER Private Sector met with over 30 women organizations actively involved in economic and social empowerment of other women and youth, and women business owners from different parts of Kosovo to learn from them which are the barriers they encounter in their work, and what skills or resources they need to achieve success. Empowering women-owned or run businesses and creating more job opportunities for women is one of EMPOWER Private sector's major cross-cutting objectives.

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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.