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**USAID KOSOVO EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 4, July 2015**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

Fashion Fair First Results

Eight Kosovo textile & apparel companies participated in the Tirana Regional Textile, Fashion and Façon Fair, June 3-6. First results are here. Way to go!

Arta Tex

Following the agreement signed with Mediterran company from Albania, Arta Tex will produce for them 300 pieces of work wear.

Puntex

Following the agreement with Franko Fabrika from Italy, Puntex will produce 4,000 shirts for them.

Sportswear Distributor Turns Producer and Creates New Jobs

STAFF Company started in 2007 as a small family business of importing and distributing sportswear. Seeing the great market potential for sportswear, five years later the company designed its own brand – S//Sprint. Now, the company has three stores of their own, and 125 retail clients in Kosovo, including the largest domestic market chains.

Current domestic production in Kosovo covers only 20% of the local sportswear market, while requests from clients increase. The moment was right for the company to open a new factory and go regional with the S//Sprint brand. However, the financial means to realize this market opportunity proved to be a challenge due to the high investment made already by the company.

Therefore, USAID, through EMPOWER Private Sector, decided to support the opening of the new S//Sprint factory by giving a grant that completed and facilitated the full financing package and will create 80 new jobs, 65 of which will be for women. The new factory premises were inaugurated in June 2015.

Speaking at the inauguration event, the Prime Minister of Kosovo Isa Mustafa appreciated the support of USAID for the opening of the new factory, stating that “US support for this project and the development of the private sector is of key importance. It is up to the private sector to take on the responsibility for economic growth.”

The opening of the new sportswear production factory highlights the great potential of the textiles sector to create new jobs, increase household income and develop the economy in Kosovo.



USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope at S//Sprint Factory inauguration ceremony

“The opening of a new factory is an expression of entrepreneurship, innovation, and optimism about the future.” – USAID/Kosovo Mission Director James Hope at the S//Sprint Factory inauguration ceremony

STAFF S//Sprint company is one of the eight companies that USAID’s EMPOWER Private Sector supported to participate in the regional textile fair in Tirana this June. The company made many useful contacts and signed a contract with Albanian Marketing, a yellow page type booklet to begin promotion of its products for the Albanian market.



Group picture of training participants

Celebrating the Success of Kosovo Companies

USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector and the US-based Adventure Travel and Trade Association brought together over 40 tour operators and tourism agencies from the region in a two-day workshop on building knowledge and skills for world class marketing and service delivery. The training is part of USAID's efforts to connect regional tour operators with the growing global market.

Women in Focus

Skills training initiatives are key to the economic empowerment of women, enabling them to make a decent living for themselves and their families, and advancing economic growth overall.

Rural Women Join Skills Training Program in Textile Industry

The unemployment rate among women in Kosovo remains very high, and the labor force participation rate is extremely low, especially for rural women who lack skills required in the labor market and little experience with employment. To address this issue, USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector partnered with the Office of the President of Kosovo and KosovaTex – the leading producer of jeans in Kosovo, to support a training program for 20 unemployed rural women.

Over the course of this six-month program, twenty women will learn how to cut and sew jeans that are manufactured for the domestic and export markets. At least five women are expected to be employed upon completion of the training program, while the others will have acquired skills that increase their employability.

Speaking before media at the launching event of the training program, the President of Kosovo, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, said "Our institutions should collaborate with the private sector to provide a sustainable economic base that generates jobs for our citizens. I am particularly encouraged by the joint project with KosovaTex and USAID to achieve economic empowerment for rural women."

Investing in Women Has Great Returns

USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector participated in the event "Regional Women Business Meeting" organized by CEED Albania and CEED Macedonia with support from USAID's Regional Economic Growth program organized in Tirana on June 11, 2015. Participating women entrepreneurs met with potential business partners, received information on different business support projects and expanded their network with other entrepreneurs from the region.



Twenty unemployed rural women to learn new skills at local jeans producer



President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga meeting with one of trainees



Two Kosovo women entrepreneurs from the textile industry met with the Albanian Association of Craftswomen

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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.