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**USAID Kosovo EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 6, September 2015**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

Supporting Diverse Business Ideas

Sofas, children's bed, automotive air filters, ICT, broiler production and more are some of the activities we will support. In August 2015, USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector signed a total of **10** grant agreements, expected to create almost **700** new jobs.

Sela Impex will expand the sofa production capacities and quality for the export market, **Tefik Çanga** will introduce new products – children's beds and classic style sofas, while Pure Power will increase the number of air filter types they produce.

Read more about our August grantees!

Grant Helps Launch new Call Center and Create New Jobs for Youth

In August 2015, USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector and IQ-to-Link signed a grant agreement that will support the company to grow the services it provides as the newest call center in Pristina. The grant enables IQ-to-Link to purchase headsets and servers needed for the center operations, and assist with creation of an expected 400 new jobs within three years.

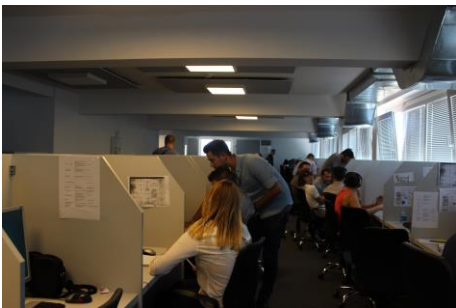
IQ-to-Link is a new call center in Pristina that started with the training of staff and operations in August 2015. The company is currently providing services to big clients from Germany. They expect to increase their business operations beginning in September, and the goal is to reach out to clients in other European countries too.

"The talented youth, with exceptional language skills, and the great potential for business development were among the reasons that made me come to Pristina to invest," says Jens Reichenbach from Germany, who is the owner of IQ-to-Link.

IQ-to-Link is a service provider operating based on European standards for data protection and safety. The company was registered in Kosovo in 2015, and has already hired 200 young people. The employment of youth with language skills in German, but also English, Spanish, French and potentially other languages, will continue.

"Employees who perform well and respect rules make a company strong." – Jens Reichenbach, owner of IQ-to-Link.

IQ-to-Link has already started to provide services full-time. The employees are currently undergoing training. "It is important to teach employees how to do their job really well. Everybody needs to feel they have done a great job when they go home in the evening. This makes a company strong," says Reichenbach. His goal is to make IQ-to-Link a Kosovo company with a strong culture of work and respect for rules.



About 200 German-speaking young people have already started work



H.E. Ambassador Greg Delawie visited the factory of Tefik Çanga

Supporting the Success of Kosovo Companies

U.S. Ambassador Greg Delawie visited our recent grant beneficiary Tefik Çanga. Ambassador Delawie toured the production facilities of sofas, chairs and tables, and custom-made furniture. With USAID assistance, the company will establish new production lines for children's beds and classic-style sofas, which are expected to create over 60 new jobs.



David King, Vjollca Çavolli and Scott Cameron sign the grant agreement for a new ICT training program

Careers in ICT for Unemployed Youth

EMPOWER Private Sector is supporting innovative initiatives in the Information and Communication Technology field. The initiatives implemented by the Kosovo Association of Information and Communications Technology (STIKK), and Cactus JSC will equip unemployed youth with new skills in software and mobile applications development and testing that will result in a critical mass of qualified individuals to meet strong local market demand and provide outsource services to foreign markets.

Increasing Employment in North Kosovo

In August 2015, EMPOWER Private Sector signed four grant agreements with businesses in North Kosovo. As a result, the four businesses combined are expected to create at least 70 new jobs.

A grant will enable Agro-Centar Company in Leposavić/q, which since 2011 is producing and exporting apples, to purchase a cool storage chamber and calibration equipment, overcoming the obstacle of lacking post-harvest storage capacities for apples to be sold beyond the harvest season. Storage capacities will be expanded, tripling annual sales.

The second grantee, pellet producer Europa Company, will purchase a new high-capacity wood chipper that will increase the output of wood pellets from 600t to 1500t per year.

Aves-Prom, broiler producer in Zvečan/Zveçan, will purchase semi-automated equipment for the company's new line of chicken parts production that is expected to increase production capacity by fifty percent, while producing a higher-value product.

A new edge-banding machine that Godži, a wood processor in Zvečan/Zveçan, will purchase through grant support, will increase their output and product quality. "This is a dream come true for me," said Goran Jocić, owner, after signing the grant agreement.

Through specific activities and interventions, USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector supports Kosovo businesses grow and create new jobs. North Kosovo residents are one of the four priority population groups that EMPOWER Private Sector targets, to promote their full inclusion in the country's economic development.



Aves-Prom owner shows USAID Mission Director around the broiler slaughterhouse



Owner of Godži talks to USAID Mission Director about his business expansion plans

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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.