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**USAID Kosovo EMPOWER Private Sector
Newsletter No. 18, September 2016**

EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

Grants Awarded in September

Lirimi, a paper bag producer, will now diversify into new products and will expand production capacities, thus serving the needs of two important value chains: food industry and insulation producers. At least 30 new jobs are expected to be created.

Tiki, an interior design studio now has the needed financing the open the new factory for mainly made-to-order custom furniture, and begin with production. Some 103 new jobs are expected to be created thanks to the grant awarded.

Kosovo Joins World Market Trends in Automotive Industry

Fashion and molding come to mind to describe what goes on inside the factory of Koshi Group in Prizren. Yet, no gowns or suits, nor tools or toys are produced there. Instead, the factory is internationally making a name with their creative, exclusive, aesthetic, and function-enhancing body parts for luxury cars, mostly sold online.

The “secret” of this made in Kosovo – in fact, in the entire region – product, lies in the raw material and design. Made of carbon fiber, which is imported as fibers or sheets, the product is cut, molded, processed in the autoclave, polished, and finished. Almost the entire product of Koshi is exported to auto dealers such as Fiat and Alfa Romeo.

Young entrepreneur Shkamb Koshi, with a degree in machinery engineering, is the brains behind this daring undertaking, and the soul of the family run business. He was only 18 when he started crafting carbon fiber parts for vehicles while living in Italy. In 2014, he established Koshi Group in Kosovo, and has taken the operations several steps further thanks to his creative designs and meticulous production of car body-parts that make a Lamborghini, for example, look sleeker, go faster, and be safer.

As a new business, Shkamb faces his share of challenges, from marketing to administration, and transition into a steadily growing business. Connecting with more international buyers is crucial. That is why in September, USAID EMPOWER Private Sector supported Koshi Group to exhibit in *E.R. Motorfest*, a fair in Italy dedicated to motorsports enthusiasts, companies, and consumers.



Shkamb Koshi (right, standing) overseeing production

“At my first exhibition abroad I understood my potential to produce the required quality for large buyers. My goal now is to begin serial production.” – Shkamb Koshi, innovator.

At the fair, Shkamb made 210 professional contacts with individuals and companies, and received orders for Alfa Romeo. We expect to hear more great things about this company.



Kosovo producers making useful business contacts at international trade fairs



Furniture made in Kosovo at MOW Fair in Germany



First day of training for childcare service providers in North Mitrovicë/a



Kosovo tour operators at Alaska tourism world summit

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Continuing to Support Kosovo Companies

USAID's EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with SIDA supported participation of three Kosovo apparel companies to Premier Vision Fair in Paris, an essential apparel business hub for this sector. The three Kosovo companies: Menakon Fashion House, Intertext and Inversone made new business contacts, and were exposed to useful first-hand information on the requirements of the EU market, which they all aim to export to.

The Brand of Kosovo Wood Products

Eight Kosovo wood processing companies that exhibited their products at the MOW international Furniture Fair that was held in Germany on September 18-22, 2016, did so under the new brand name of "Schwarzwald Massivholz", developed specifically for made in Kosovo furniture. That was a great opportunity for the exhibitors to present their products to a large audience of furniture sellers, specialized stores, chain, and online sale platform from Europe. The exhibiting companies were: Tefik Çanga, Elnor, Dekoriti, Deva, Balaj, Kelmendi, Shehu and Arta, which were supported by the professional sales agent that opened in Germany earlier in June 2016.

More Childcare Providers to be Certified in North Kosovo

Fourteen unemployed women are part of the fourth round of training for certified childcare providers in North Kosovo that started this month. The training program is arranged in five modules, to equip the future childcare providers with skills ranging from pedagogy, to speech therapy and nutrition. Following the certification, the participants are ready to join the workforce. The program is implemented by the Center for Women Development (CWD). To date, CWD has trained 51 women, of whom 30 have been certified, and 17 have already found employment.

Tackling the Global Market of Adventure Tourism

In September, three Kosovo tour operators: Catung, Outdoor Kosovo, and Outdoor In, attended the Adventure Travel World Summit organized in Alaska. This was the second representation of Kosovo operators at this summit, which brings together more than 850 delegates from world-class outdoor and adventure operators, and renowned media such as National Geographic, Lonely Planet, and Outdoor Magazine.

Kosovo operators attended the education sessions for outdoor adventure businesses and the full day marketplace event. They were among 116 suppliers that presented their adventure tourism offers to 96 tour operator buyers and had more than 30 individual meetings.

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 Sida, and is implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd.