EMPOWER THROUGH JOB CREATION!

FAST FACTS

EMPOWER Private Sector signed a grant of €16,000 with Jasin Metal to support the company in obtaining the CE mark for five groups of products. The CE mark, which is a quality certification for conformity with international health, safety, and environmental protection standards, will help Jasin Metal expand its export market and create new jobs.

For the first time in Kosovo, EMPOWER initiated the delivery of a certification program on photovoltaic (PV) solar panel design and installation for Kosovo’s solar installation companies. The activity will generate the first batch of TUV certified Kosovo PV solar panel designers and installers, boosting competitiveness in local and other markets for local producers and installers.

B2B Diaspora Conference Gathers Hundreds of Businesses and Yields Export Deals

The biggest Diaspora event of the year was held on May 24th and 25th, 2019, in Prishtina. The Economic Conference of Albanian Diaspora from Europe - B2B gathered and connected Kosovo businesses with Diaspora businesses, with the aim of creating new business deals to increase exports of Made in Kosovo products and services. Over 144 Diaspora companies from Austria, Germany, Finland, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, and Belgium and more than 47 Kosovo companies took part in the Conference.

The two-day event was opened by the USAID Economic Growth Office Director, Brian Martalus, and the Chair of the Albanian Diaspora Business Network branch in Austria, Yll Blakaj. They emphasized the importance of creating linkages between Diaspora and Kosovo businesses for the economic development of Kosovo.

“The reason why you came here today is not just about coming and visiting your motherland Kosovo…but is about creating real business linkages with your country and helping Kosovo in the long run. For Kosovo companies, it is not just about making sales but is about getting new ideas and innovation you can use to improve yourselves.” - Brian Martalus, USAID Kosovo Economic Growth Office Director.

Over 250 B2B meetings were held between Diaspora and Kosovo businesses from the wood processing, apparel, energy, information and communications technology, food and beverages, and other sectors. The B2B meetings were pre-arranged through an online platform, as well as with the aid of the 2019 edition of the business catalog containing the profiles with photos of 116 Kosovo export-ready businesses, which were both developed specifically for the event by EMPOWER Private Sector.

The B2B meetings reportedly resulted in three signed contracts and one cooperation agreement, six deals and offers initiated, and around €400K in new sales reported, with more deals and offers to materialize in the following months.

The second day of the event consisted of panel discussions and site visits to EMPOWER Private Sector beneficiary companies Ciao Berto and Tiki Mosaic and concluded with a cocktail closing event, hosted by EMPOWER beneficiary Binni, also a Diaspora-invested company.

The Economic Conference of Albanian Diaspora from Europe - B2B was organized by the Albanian Diaspora Business Networks from Europe, in cooperation with USAID’s EMPOWER Private Sector project in partnership with Sida and the Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments of the Republic of Kosovo.
**Kosovo Wood Processing Companies in Belgium with a Mission**

On March 29th, 2019, Kosovo wood processing companies Ciao Berto, Elnor, Candeo, Albed and Shehu and the Association of Wood Processors of Kosovo went on a three-day trade mission to Belgium. Representatives from these companies visited five showrooms and met with 16 Belgian and Albanian Diaspora businesses in various cities in Belgium. The mission was very productive, with all five companies creating business contacts and initiating potential deals. As a result of this activity, Kosovo businesses from the wood processing sector will have better access to the Belgium and larger European markets. The visit was organized and funded by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida and Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in Belgium.

**Solar Energy Companies Successful at Leading Industry Fair**

Kosovo companies involved in solar energy attended the world’s leading exhibition fair for the solar industry, Intersolar Europe 2019, held in Munich, Germany, during May 15th -17th, 2019. The annual fair gathers more than 1,300 exhibitors each year. Jaha Solar, S-Imeri (ESKO), ProGroup and SunVolta Energy met with providers of products and solutions for photovoltaics, solar thermal technologies and solar power plants, grid infrastructure and solutions for the integration of renewable energy. The companies held 93 B2B meetings and made valuable contacts. Importantly, several potential export deals were made, and test exports to Italy and Switzerland have already been realized as a result of the fair participation. The visit was supported by EMPOWER Private Sector in Partnership with Sida.

**Kosovo Apparel Manufacturers Hold B2B Meetings in Turkey**

During May 7th-10th, 2019, apparel producers CroFashion, Wear & Go, ArtaTex and ArtaTex Group visited apparel factories and held B2B meetings with Turkish companies in Istanbul and Bursa. Supported by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida, the Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association, the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency, and the Kosovo-Turkish Chamber of Commerce, the apparel companies met with the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey - DEIK (counterpart of KIESA), and held 50 B2B meetings with Turkish companies, 40 in Istanbul and 10 in Bursa. Moreover, the Kosovo delegation visited five textile factories in Bursa. Potential deals are expected as a result.

**First Ever Certification Program on Solar Panel Design and Installation Initiated in Kosovo**

A one-week training on the design and installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems took place in Pristina from June 3rd, 2019. This is a first of its kind activity in Kosovo, where 19 participants are undertaking 15-days of training on the design and installation of solar PV systems. At the end of the training, the successful candidates will be tested and certified as PV experts with a TÜV certificate. In the first week, participants learned about Production of PV systems from Cell to Module, PV System Quality, Audits and Warranty, Site and Building Evaluation, Solar Radiation and more. They also visited local company Jaha Solar where they learned first-hand about the PV solar panel production process. The activity is co-funded by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida; Enhancing Youth Employment - EYE Project; and participating individuals mostly from the private sector. The activity is facilitated Kosovo Cluster of Metal and Renewable Energy Industry (KIMERK) and is implemented by TÜV Rheinland Akademie. The training is continuing and will be completed by September 2019.
On-the-Job Training Enables Youth to Find Jobs

Empowering youth and helping them obtain adequate skills to meet job market requirements is one of the primary goals of the EMPOWER Private Sector project. As a part of the third phase of EMPOWER Private Sector’s On-the-Job Training Program, 63 youth from the municipalities of Gjilan, Han i Elezit, Kacanik and Viti completed three-months of training at companies Sharrcem, OxaGroup, Eurothesi, Fludi, Menakon, Gan Dizajn, EuroART, Vinex and EuroFisi. They were awarded certificates at ceremonies held at the municipalities on June 18th and 19th, 2019. Out of the 102 youth that completed in-company trainings as part of the program, 40 have already found full-time employment. The On-the-Job Training Program is financed by USAID EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida and implemented by the Kosovo Manufacturing Club (KMC) supported by the municipalities.

Empowering Kosovo’s Young Women to Take on Careers in ICT

On April 26th, 2019, more than 250 ambitious Kosovo girls and young women gathered to mark the Girls in ICT Day in Pristina. The annual event is celebrated around the world to inspire and motivate girls and young women to consider education and careers in the ICT sector. The young women and girls connected and networked with local and international ICT women leaders listened to inspirational speeches and participated in interactive workshops. The event also included a job fair where the young women were given the opportunity to meet 25 Kosovo companies who were looking for potential employees. Out of the 20 women who were interviewed at the job fair, three were hired. EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida supported the event for the fourth year running.

Humanizing the Digital on Focus at DOKU.TECH 2019

Over 900 youth attended DOKU.TECH 2019, one of the biggest annual technological events in the region. With the theme of “Humanizing the digital, Digitizing the human”, the event was held at the youth-run building, Termokiss in Pristina on June 8th and 9th, bringing together more than 20 local organizations and companies. The conference served as a place to gather tech enthusiasts from all around the world through inspiring talks, masterclasses, and innovative workshops. Participants also attended the Do It Yourself (DIY) fair, where more than 30 organizations showcased their work and hands-on products created by Kosovo’s youth. The event was supported for the third-year running by EMPOWER Private Sector in partnership with Sida. The next edition will be held in Prizren during DokuFest on August 9th, 2019.

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

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