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2018  
DECEMBER

# Newsletter.

CREATING JOBS  
AND MARKET  
OPPORTUNITIES



## A Snapshot of 2018!

Another year that went by so fast! As the end of 2018 is approaching, we take a look at what happened in the first year of implementation of PPSE Phase 2 (November 2017- November 2021).

Our data tell us that **795** people have benefitted from employment opportunities. Of them, **44%** are women, and over **20%** come from minorities. These newly-created jobs in the Food and Natural Ingredients and Tourism sectors include seasonal jobs too. The employment benefits for this year, which mean how much money they earned from the new jobs created are estimated at CHF1,511,000.

Some 95 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have earned net additional income of **CHF745,000**. This means additional profits that were generated by SMEs that have directly or indirectly benefitted from PPSE support through targeted interven-

tions. Also, **234** farms were recipients of direct project support aiming to increase primary production.

The Food and Natural Ingredients sector focused on further promotion of the contract farming model, which was implemented in 6 new regions with 9 partners, to increase primary production of vegetables and medicinal and aromatic plants. Other critical changes introduced were the specialized seedling production and certification programs for export promotion, along with supporting exhibition and participation in trade fairs and organization of sales missions. Read more on page 3 and 4.

The Tourism sector activities for the development of new products and targeted strategies focused around the regions of Prizren and Pristina, complemented by activities that seek to improve sector organization on the national and local level. In-

ternational promotion activities, such as familiarization and press trips targeting in particular the Asian market and preparation for exhibition in trade fairs intensified further. Read more on page 3.

The Opportunity Fund, an integral part of both sectors, has supported co-investment projects to promote sustainable value chain growth. The Social Inclusion Fund, a new mechanism introduced in Phase II, has supported activities that promote equity and inclusion of socially excluded communities and women. Read more on page 2.

This picture is a direct result of the engagement of PPSE on activities with potential to scale up and expand. Key words describing our work this year are “the development of new and improved products and services”.

See you in 2019!

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK

## Bringing Global Context into the Tourism Strategy Development for Prizren

■ Enes Toska from Prizren is a newly-trained city guide in his hometown, and he knows all about cultural diversity, hidden gems, and where to find local delicacies. Enes was one of thirteen youth from Prizren, Pristina and Gjakovë/Djakovica who attended a one-month training program for city guides by Gears Up Solutions. With such new skills, they fill a gap for people in this profession, which is one of the key links in the tourism sector development chain in Kosovo.

Paragliding is soon to be offered in Prizren as a product. Two members of Aeroklub Shkaba in Prizren are turning their sport passion into an income generation activity. A tri-partite agreement between Aeroklub Shkaba, the Municipality of Prizren and PPSE supports the development and commercialization of paragliding as a tourism product in the area. It is expected to create some 7 new jobs for pilots and make Prizren more attractive as a destination.

Kayaking, glamping and biking are other new products being developed in Prizren in partnership with Supercampers, expected to create at least 5 jobs initially.

These are but a few examples of the collaboration between PPSE and the Municipality of Prizren that started this year to develop a tourism strategy for the city that contributes to its sustainable tourism development and increase employment. In October 2018, some 40 representatives of hotels, cultural organizations, museums, guides, extreme sports, craftsmen and others from Prizren got together at a workshop facilitated by Swisscontact tourism experts to brainstorm on how to harness the potential of Prizren for developing tourism further.

“We will have a tourism development plan and solution to increase the touristic capacities to increase the length of stay of existing tourists and number of tourists to our city,” said Mytaher Haskuka, Mayor of Prizren.



## Kosovo's Non-Wood Forest Products Getting Closer to International Markets

■ Investing in certificates proving food safety standards for final consumers, good agricultural practices in cultivation of non-wood forest products, as well as collection and storage of wild grown plants, pays off in the end. Three blueberry cultivators from Kosovo – Blue Pearls, Santefruit and BerryKode – have obtained Global GAP certificates, which allow them to export to European markets right away. “This certification is the key that opens the doors for exporting fresh blueberries” says Kujtim Lepaja from the association Mjedra e Kosovës that enabled the certification process in col-

laboration with PPSE. On the other hand, facilitation of meetings between companies in Kosovo and Europe is equally important for the sector. In July, PPSE organized a sales mission to Switzerland for Kosovo producers and processors of forest fruit. Swiss company Bio-Partner returned the visit in October and reached an agreement in principle with Eurofruti. Eurofruti will supply the Swiss company with wild berries, whereas Bio-Partner will provide Eurofruti technical support for the Biosuisse certification process, which is a must for exporting to the Swiss market.

## MORE WOMEN FARMERS INVOLVED IN MEDICINAL AROMATIC PLANTS CULTIVATION

■ More women farmers Kosovo-wide are turning to cultivation of medicinal aromatic plants as a way of earning more income. In the region of Pristina, 99 Lule is expanding the network of women involved in the cultivation of MAPs and is increasing crop variety. Biofruti in the area of Kaçanik/Kaçanik also works with a growing network of women farmers, and has a secure buyer for everything they collect and cultivate: Agroprodukt in Istog/k. Read more about the increasing roles women play in this sector



# Access to Opportunities for Improving Lives

Social inclusion is about providing vulnerable and marginalized groups with access to opportunities, employment, and tools, so they can fulfil their aspirations to improve living conditions, while working in a dignified way. Strategic social inclusion fits together individual activities to serve the needs of the community. For PPSE, this means addressing social inclusion needs working with the public and private sectors, and the NGO and donor community, to bring about the aspired impact on individual lives.

Ismet Selimović, from the Roma community living in Gračanica/Graçanicë, acquired a pressing machine that will increase by at least threefold his plastic bottle collection income-generating activity. He is one of three Roma individual plastic collectors who received pressing machines from G-PLUS,

a waste collection and recycling company, which is collaborating with the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë and PPSE to support income generation activities for the Roma community in the area. The partnership with G-PLUS is part of a broader project to improve waste management in this municipality; in one hand by increasing the access for individual collectors to collectible and recyclable waste, and on the other hand, to raise awareness of residents about the importance of waste sorting on the household level within the territory of the Municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë. For this purpose, municipal authorities have distributed 354 waste separation bins to 177 households in the area, while carrying on with awareness raising activities about the importance of recycling and waste separation at the source, as a way to healthier environment, which is



Ismet Selimović, acquired a pressing machine that will increase by at least threefold his plastic bottle collection income-generating activity

## In Service of the Community

■“Caring about more than just your immediate surrounding and doing what you can for those less fortunate than you”. This is how Jehona Gjurgjeala, Executive Director of NGO TOKA explains the drive behind the transition of the NGO into a social enterprise that is planning to run a recreational and hospitality center in Kosovo. Creativity for the benefit of all society is a sure way to ensure sustainability of income generation. PPSE is supporting TOKA to conduct a feasibility study for their project in service of the community.

## Education in Technology Increases Women Employability

■NGO Qendra LEAP has conducted a study on “Gender Stereotypes and Education Choices in Kosovo”, to contribute to the gender perspective of human resources available for science-technology-engineering-mathematics (STEM) in Kosovo. The study builds on the debate about women’s role and participation in the job market and the need to address stereotyping of women’s abilities in these fields to begin an effective change process.

## DID YOU KNOW...?

A

What can a tourist do in Kosovo? A group of Japanese tour operators first tested the options themselves before beginning to recommend various packages to their clients back at home. Ancient history, monuments, city scapes, food, culture and religious heritage filled their three-day agenda to the brim. Gadime Cave, Novobërdë Castle, Ulpiana archaeological park, an evening in Pristina, followed by the main attractions in Pejë/Peć, Rugova, Gjakovë/ Djakovica completed their stay. This familiarization trip was organized by the Embassy of Kosovo in Japan, with support from Turkish Airlines and PPSE.

B

Films and documentaries are part of the universal language of mankind, speaking to all audiences. During PriFest - Prishtina International Film Festival 10th edition, Kosovo was briefly transformed into a meeting point of filmmakers, artists, writers and journalists. We teamed up with PriFest to give this community of artists an opportunity to see Kosovo through their professional lens, as a destination of the film industry. We organized two one-day location scouting trips to explore Kosovo’s less known landscapes and locations with potential to become filming sites. PriFest also organized a forum discussion “Kosovo Ready to Roll” on human resources and technical capacities that Kosovo has to offer to international productions.

C

Reliable, relevant and useful information is key to increasing productivity at farm level. PPSE has signed a partnership agreement with the Association of Agricultural Input Dealers (SHTIB) to improve the information-sharing system and help farmers make well-informed decisions, take advantage of market opportunities and manage their production system. To further enhance services provided to farmers, SHTIB went on a two-day study visit to Albania to learn from experience there on how to better serve the farmers and advocate on behalf of their sector.

D

Introduction of new crops is part of contracted farming model expansion. Based on the partnership agreement we signed, Agroshala-AG will contract more farmers and cultivate more land with sunflower for their seeds to be further processed into other products for the local and export market, such as: sunflower seeds for fresh consumption and seeds for the confectionery sector. For Agroshala-AG to increase its processing capacities and a result, increase the number of contracted farmers for cultivation, newly-acquired lines for sunflower seed roasting and dehulling will come in handy.

## BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

# Placing the Focus on Business Growth from Inside

There comes a time in the life of every business when it needs to reflect, regroup and focus on the bigger picture ahead for the next leap. “Business coaching helps owners and managers build a vision for growth, develop growth strategies, and drive performance,” says Kreshnik Lleshi of CEED Kosovo, the brainchild behind “Coaching for Growth” program.

The “Coaching for Growth” is a 9-month program, specifically designed for food processing and confectionery companies in Kosovo. The program works with owners and managers from this sector addressing any barriers they face internally and externally. This involves anything from expanding production lines, improving existing products and developing new ones, to understanding consumer behavior, targeted promotion, and improving their marketing and sale strategies.

Understanding growth barriers may be the immediate goal of the program, but the ability to look into the future of the business

and plan accordingly is what the program aims to achieve in the longer run to accelerate growth.

Learning from the experience of companies who have been there and done that is a useful way of seeing in practice how they have dealt with challenges and came up with solutions. For this purpose, the “Coaching for Growth” program included local and regional study trips to experience leading food-processing companies in the region.

At Vitaminka in Macedonia, the group met with the senior management of the company and learned first-hand from them about the company history, challenges and growth over the years, and in particular, how they develop new products and expand into markets. The group also visited the production area. For Bujar Istrefi, general manager at “Missini”, the visit provided an opportunity to learn about company operations, sector division and arrangements for each production line. “The visit provided the right impetus to explore opportunities so that we



also invest in more sophisticated machinery”, Istrefi said.

During the second regional study visit to Konex-Tiva Canning in Bulgaria, program participants learned about the best practices that Bulgarian food processing companies have established throughout the years. At Plovdiv University for Food Technologies, the group learned about research projects in the food processing industry. “Kosovo companies can explore what this university offers in terms of capacity building for food technologists,” said Lleshi.

The “Coaching for Growth” program is implemented by CEED Kosovo, and supported by Promoting Private Sector Employment program through its activities in the Food and Natural Ingredients sector.



**“Business coaching helps owners and managers build a vision for growth, develop growth strategies, and drive performance.”**

Kreshnik Lleshi of CEED Kosovo



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### Promoting Private Sector Employment

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation project Promoting Private Sector Employment is implemented by Swisscontact and Riinvest Institute.