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# Newsletter.

PROMOTING  
PRIVATE SECTOR  
EMPLOYMENT



## 60 Years of Creating Opportunities Worldwide

The drive to create an environment where human wellbeing thrives lies in the heart of development work. For this to happen, it is crucial to understand their needs, expectations and vision for a better future. That is the starting point for designing solutions and delivering the right kind of support that bring about the real, lasting change.

Since its founding 60 years ago, Swisscontact has firmly believed in the principle that people can improve their livelihoods, based on their own strength. Success is seen when people are able to participate in the local economy as producers, employees or consumer. Read [here](#) for an impressive body of work by Swisscontact since 1959.

In Kosovo, Swisscontact was first registered in 2001. Initially, it provided business advisory support services in the western part of the country. In the next stage, Swisscontact went national with a skills development project. Since 2013, Swisscontact implements the Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE) project, funded by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency.

The main goal of PPSE is to create jobs and opportunities, especially for youth and women. Opportunities are created in many forms, always to suit the timely and strategic needs of partners: a much-needed equipment, the right market linkage, better packaging and promotion, or technical advice by senior experts.

“The timing of Swisscontact support to tackle challenges was serendipitous,” says Danica Trboljevac of Trboljevac Bakery in Leposavić/q. Do you want to know more about this? Read [here the testimonial](#) she gave on the occasion of Swisscontact’s 60th anniversary. Nol Krasniqi has another testimonial, “We have succeeded in increasing the number of tourists... We have created new jobs and contributed to the economic growth of our city.” Here [is the story](#) of our collaboration.

The success of our partners makes us proud, and we are inspired by their tenacity, innovative minds and commitment to success!

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR WORK

## Hello World, Uncover the Secrets of Destination Kosovo

■ “We came to Kosovo to explore the country. We want to have ready the offers for our clients, who are constantly looking for unusual and new destinations. Kosovo is that destination: good infrastructure, very friendly and welcoming people, and the food is excellent”. Sona Shah, owner of **Beyond Mumbai** travel agency, India, visited Kosovo in April together with a group of some 70 tour operators from all over the world, to check what the country can offer to their clients. In May, a group of Turkish tour operators travelled around Kosovo exploring its potential with a special focus on outdoor activities, completing this experience by overnights in guest houses, getting a real taste of traditional hospitality, food and storytelling. In June, Turkish celebrity Suzan Kardes, accompanied by a group of journalists from high profile media outlets in Turkey, presented Kosovo’s main attraction to a broad Turkish audience. “Prizren, like the ancient, untouched villages of Italy but in the Ottoman version” wrote [Hurriyet’s](#) journalist after her trip.

Storytelling in a language that tourists speak is a much needed tool to any destination promotion. “For French-speaking tourists, it is important to have reliable information in their own language, from trained people who are able to guide,” said Joseph Giustiniani from the French Embassy in Kosovo, who together with PPSE supported the [training and certification](#) of the first cohort of French-speaking tour guides in the country.

Food is one of the biggest attractions of a tourism destination, and Kosovo is lucky to have a cuisine rich in unique tastes, fresh ingredients and special recipes. World-famed chefs of Albanian heritage are on a mission: discovering the traditional dishes of the region to introduce them to the world. Check out [RRNO Foundation’s](#) page. Learning from the best practices of gastronomy worldwide is a smart business decision, especially when your clients are from all over the world! Through the [Senior Expert Corps service](#), PPSE brought an experienced Swiss chef to share know-how work with Kosovo’s young chefs.



## Advanced Technology and Production Techniques for Kosovo Farmers and Producers

■ **Agrobora** is the first specialized seedling producer in Kosovo that now uses high-tech equipment to produce superior quality seedlings that increase the final yield by at least 30%. Challenging the traditional methods, this technology provides good reliable inputs from the beginning, creates a sustainable production and expands of the contracted farming system, thus increasing the financial security of farmers. Flamur Sylja, owner of **Agrobora** said “our mission is to provide healthy vegetable seedlings for the farmers in Kosovo and become a model of agribusiness growth. We will achieve this with the Swiss Government support.” **Fidanishtja e Godancit**, a producer of vegetable and flower seedlings also acquired with

PPSE support new technology that increases efficiency. On the other hand, the relationship between early care and the growth of vegetable seedlings is crucial. To complement the support to seedling production and contracted farming, we collaborated with the **Association of Agricultural Input Dealers** to deliver a series of training sessions for agronomists working for agricultural pharmacists. The sessions focused on good agricultural practices in cultivation of vegetable seedlings.

Aside from being a requirement for development, knowledge transfer and introduction of innovative technologies and solutions are transformational for the sector and profitable for the entire chain.



# Inclusion Starts with Creating Opportunities

What do women need to break down the barriers for employment or run a business? Women themselves can give the best answer to this question. That is why we reached out to women from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Gjakovë/Djakovica, Klinë/a, Pejë/Peć and Pristina, who then attended a practical training program on how to grow a business. The training was tailored to their skills and needs. In the process, we had an open-heart talk with these women and learned directly from them what works to help create a space in which they can fulfill productive roles within their communities.

The women we met already support families doing work in tailoring, agriculture, cattle or chicken farming, even nursing services and IT solutions. They said just having a business idea is not enough, as they are not in a position to implement the idea without external help. In their words, most lack the strength to continue on their own, saying “how can I invest money that my family needs?” So, the training program also encouraged women to think and become more aware of the fact that taking care of a business means taking better care of your family; everyone benefits from that.

More practical business and skills training came up as a recurring need, along with the



need of women to get together in this type of programs. Mejreme from Gjakovë/Djakovica said, “Training programs like this are valuable to our community, they serve as a guide for our future. We share experiences, we listen to one another, and we can join our forces in opening businesses.” Tunaeta from Prizren left the training with an entirely new business idea from her original one. “The training helped me channel my thoughts to a new idea and how to make my work more efficient”.

PPSE partnered with the Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women of Kosovo to analyze the needs and opportunities for women businesses in these areas then award small grants to three business ideas. The goal is to create real opportunities for women from these communities and encourage them to use entrepreneurship as a means of self-empowerment. Every society is stronger when all its members are included.



## Afërdita's Fruit Juice Business Means Self-Reliance

■ In 2015, Afërdita Murati began selling juice made of fresh squeezed berries. She started with 10 liters, and now, 4 years later, she supplies some 500 shops around Kosovo. To reach the next level of a solid business that creates more jobs, Afërdita needed support in acquiring a precise bottle-filling machine that closes lids automatically. She will be able to complete this investment through a partnership with PPSE. A side effect of this partnership is more employment through contracted production with



farmers and collectors, generating more self-reliance for everyone involved.

## DID YOU KNOW...?

A

...that you can step into the shoes of Sherlock Holmes, and unlock the door to a thrilling mystery, right from the heart of Prishtina? The [RAZ Escape Room](#) is one of the newest fun things the city has to offer along with the classic exploration of its heritage sites and landmarks. There is more good news! In south of the country, Prizren, young outdoor enthusiasts are seriously changing the destination's offer. [SUPERCAMPERS](#) can now take you kayaking and biking through the most beautiful spots of the area. New tourism products, more fun, more jobs!

B

...world-famed chefs are reinventing local dishes while supporting farmers? By introducing fresh locally grown ingredients into their recipes, the chefs foster stronger connections between farmers and restaurants, farmers and consumers. Chef Fejsal Demiraj from Noma restaurant in Denmark and Entiana Osmenzeza, chef in Italy, hosted the “Taste of Kosovo” event serving dishes made entirely of locally grown or foraged ingredients. The event was part of the Albanian Gastronomy Expedition, a project of RRNO Foundation, which aims at documenting and reinventing Albanian cuisine, placing a special focus on local farmers and producers. The funds raised during the event held at Menza Ramiz Sadiku were given in support of a woman farmer in Kosovo.

C

...medicinal aromatic plants (MAPs) play an important role in the life of humans? They benefit our health as food or medicine ingredients. Importantly, they provide a livelihood resource for everyone involved in their cultivation, collection and processing. We added two new partners working with MAPs and forest fruit. **AgroPeti**, in Podujevë/o will add 50 hectares of chamomile, a new crop for them. **ADE Group** in Obiliq/ç provides advisory services to other farmers, along with cultivating various MAP types. Both companies have acquired equipment with upgraded efficiency, which translates into new jobs. Investing resources in obtaining organic production certification enables direct exporting to foreign companies.

D

...advanced production technology is crucial for companies seeking to expand their business vision, but also benefits the network of farmers supplying these producers? **Albini SHPK**, a vegetable collection center, Podujevë/o will use the new line to increase aggregation capacities, improve product packaging, expand into international markets, and so, increase the number of contracted farmers – and their income. **Nektar**, a food processing company in Prizren, will use the new equipment to improve packaging quality and branding for the local and international markets, and become one of the largest producers of pickled cucumbers in the country.

# BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

## Consumer Driven Products Make for a Successful Business Case

The driving force of the food processing industry is the development of products, on continuous basis, ranging from the modification of an already existing product, to developing a brand new one, and even how products are presented in the market. The aim is satisfying customer demand.

Adiat Hajdari, owner of [Ananas Impex](#), is fully aware of the role that customer demand plays in the success of his business as a producer of ground red pepper, vegetable condiments and recently, soups. The idea for soups as a new product was a result of the collaboration with Swisscontact's Senior Expert Corps (SEC). Based on the direct feedback by local suppliers on the types of soups consumers were looking for, Adiat knew that the increasing demand for better soup quality and different tastes was a game-changing factor.

Through the Coaching for Growth (C4G) program, delivered by [CEED Kosovo](#) with PPSE support, **Ananas Impex** engaged a market expert to conduct a research on soups, "because we took seriously the advice of the Swiss expert." The information

collected from different channels was then handed over to the food technologist, resulting in four different soup mix flavors.

Next came the branding of soups, condiments and the new company logo design. PPSE facilitated a business partnership between **Ananas Impex** and a specialized marketing agency that developed the visual concept for the new products. "I would not have been able to afford their service on my own; I am very pleased with the result," says Adiat.

**Missini Sweets** company has also benefited from SEC advice. Their new and improved pralines now have a finer chocolate shell that pronounces more the filling flavor, tastes better and is more cost-effective. Combining the knowledge acquired from the SEC expert and by participating at the C4G program, Missini has better expertise on the production of chocolates and a clearer vision about implementing the company expansion.

**Aktiva** is another company that attended the C4G program, at a time when they were



planning to expand the business operations of their brand Hektar into a new packaging facility and add three new products to their line: potato puree mix, ground red pepper and vegetable condiment. "Entrepreneurs in Kosovo need to get out of their box, to expand their mindset and get to know world markets. The C4G program was useful in this sense," said Driton Mehmeti of **Aktiva**.

Within the food processing industry environment, process and product innovation in response to market demand result in companies that are competitive and continue to grow. Facilitating the expertise, connections and support that complement one another is what makes the real and timely difference.



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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.