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SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITIES

Goals

Increase private sector investments in projects with broad social impact

Establish cross-sector partnerships for locally led development

Duration

June 2021 – June 2025

USAID Funding

\$1.17 million

Implementing Partner

Albiz Foundation

in collaboration with

- Dauti Commerce
- Omnium Training and Coaching

Key National Partners

- Local governments of Saraj, Zhelino, Brvenica, and Tearce
- Economic Chambers
- Civil society organizations
- Youth councils

USAID Contact

Kreshnik Grubi
kgrubi@usaid.gov

BACKGROUND

Citizens and local businesses are not typically engaged in actions to address local priority issues in their communities due to poor communication between citizens and local authorities, insufficient understanding of the role businesses can play in community development, limited municipal finances, lack of public-private collaboration, as well as weak linkages among civil society, the private sector, and local governments. USAID contributes to North Macedonia's efforts to promote inclusivity, improve economic security and growth, engage youth in social and economic opportunities, and increase local governments' responsiveness and accountability to citizens. A fundamental principle for success is local ownership and applying local capacity to achieve results.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is part of USAID North Macedonia's Local Works initiative that aims to empower local actors to take the lead in identifying and addressing development challenges in their own communities.

The goal of Social Impact Investments in Communities is to increase private sector investments that will result in positive social impact and improved living standards for all citizens in four municipalities in the northwest of the country (Saraj, Zhelino, Brvenica, and Tearce). This activity helps businesses to become recognizable drivers of locally led development, bringing them together with local citizens, civil society organizations, municipal authorities, and other interest groups to jointly generate ideas, develop projects, and mobilize resources to implement them. The activity creates cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration by establishing public-private-civil sector platforms and local development councils in target municipalities. The activity also helps build the capacities of local stakeholders to plan and realize local development projects. By rolling out and improving Albiz Foundation's existing model for corporate social responsibility, the activity aims to establish effective, sustainable mechanisms for addressing community issues. Special focus is placed on promoting the active participation of youth, women, and other vulnerable categories of citizens to develop

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

During the first year of this activity, there was a heavy focus on bringing community members together to generate ideas for community projects and develop partnerships to achieve those ends.

- More than 240 participants from local communities, businesses, civil society organizations, and municipal authorities, including religious leaders and women and youth organizations, participated in almost 70 gatherings to encourage developing and implementing future social investment projects that will benefit all residents, private sector, and local self-governments in the four target municipalities. Further meetings of

diverse citizens, including those living in rural areas, women, and youth, prompted discussions on community challenges, resulting in ideas for local development projects.

- We established Local Youth Clubs and Local Development Councils in each of the municipalities for discussing local priority issues and devising ways to address them.
- We created a database of more than 2,020 local economic operators in the four municipalities and held meetings to raise their interest in supporting community actions and investing in locally led development.
- The first community project of Social Impact Investments in Communities led to the creation of a park with 30 newly planted trees in Ozormishte village in June 2022. The community mobilized to raise the \$14,700 needed to fund the park's construction.
- Through a locally led action, community members from Radusha village partnered with the municipality and the Step-by-Step association to build an inclusive school playground for children with special needs at the Faik Konica Elementary School. To further assist those children, the community members and municipality established a special sensory room to enrich their speech and math skills.

