



SNAPSHOT

Event Planner Makes it Happen in Kosovo



Photo: USAID Youth Entrepreneurs Program

Vesa Gashi has a plan for anyone and everyone in Kosovo with a reason to celebrate.

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Vesa Gashi has a plan for anyone and everyone in Kosovo with a reason to celebrate. Whether you’re getting married, celebrating a birthday or just hankering to party, Gashi, 26, is here to help. Since Gashi began her own event management company in 2012, she has planned more than 150 bashes, soirees and other parties.

“I offer everything and even if I don’t have it, I find it,” says Gashi. “I make it happen.”

USAID, through its Young Entrepreneurs Program, helped Gashi launch her firm, called Finesë—*refinement* in Albanian in spring 2012. The roughly \$12,000 (9,300 Euro) grant from USAID went to purchase tablecloths, chair covers and a pipe and drape kit. The latter serves to create decorative canopies, backdrops and tents that transform any space.

“It gives me the edge—I have more to offer than does the competition,” Gashi says.

Gashi is busiest in summer, when many émigrés return home to wed. For this upcoming season, she may average four weddings a week. “Challenge accepted,” she says, with characteristic aplomb. Gashi also plans birthday parties, corporate events and government functions, and also does set design and prop styling.

When planning an event, client meetings can start months in advance—and last for hours at a time. “We build a vision together,” Gashi says.

While Gashi supplies a needed service, she also works to spur demand by catering to couples who know how much weddings can cost elsewhere—and works to capture more of that business as it increases in Kosovo, too.

“I have raised the bar a bit,” says Gashi, who has also struck a deal with a local bank that allows newlyweds to pay off the cost of their wedding on an installment plan.

Advertising, so far, has been by word-of-mouth—an approach that works well in a country where weddings can draw upwards of 400 guests. The more Gashi sends them home awestruck, the more her telephone rings. She is already eyeing expanding to neighboring Albania and Macedonia.

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USAID’s Young Entrepreneurs Program, which runs from September 2010 - September 2013, is designed to assist Kosovo’s new and emerging entrepreneurs, ages 18 – 35. USAID recognizes that young entrepreneurs need more than mere training—they need capital and real-time support during the critical early business start-up period. To achieve this, the program provides business start-up matching grants and financing options with practical business training and sustained, hands-on coaching services for fledgling enterprises.