



USAID | **SERBIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2001-PRESENT



Vesna Jeftovic, the owner of "Hera" from Prokuplje, was able to adopt international standards with USAID assistance. During a study visit to the U.S. in 2014, organized by the U.S. Embassy, the company met a U.S.-based importer and successfully negotiated the export of frozen "burek" with cheese and spinach.



USAID helped 12 small shoe companies from the south and south-west of Serbia unite to form a cluster. Working together, these former competitors now collectively take on larger orders from some of the world's top designers.



USAID partnered with the Food Technology Park in Leskovac to establish a research and development plant that helps food processors develop new and improved products.



USAID built new water reservoirs in Preševo and Tutin that provide a reliable source of potable water to residents.



An election bus that toured Serbia helped inform citizens about different election systems and their effects on everyday life.

USAID ASSISTANCE HIGHLIGHTS 2001-PRESENT

Since 2001, USAID has invested more than \$882 million to support Serbia's economic and democratic development. This represents a significant part of the nearly \$1.2 billion in total United States Government assistance to Serbia during that time. In partnership with Serbia's government, private sector and civil society, USAID has implemented thousands of activities throughout Serbia to improve lives, create jobs and to support the country's European aspirations.

USAID's current programs help make: Serbia's economy more inclusive and competitive; government more responsive to citizen needs; energy and environment more green; and civil society and media more vibrant.

CREATING TOGETHER: LASTING RESULTS

During the last two decades, USAID has forged strong partnerships with the Serbian people, government, non-governmental organizations, and businesses. These joint efforts have resulted in reforms needed for Serbia to become a key contributor to economic growth and stability in the Balkans.

DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When USAID began working in Serbia, it was clear that there was a strong entrepreneurial spirit, but the country lacked the strong enabling environment necessary for businesses to thrive. USAID employed a multi-tiered strategy that removed obstacles to doing business, increased transparency, attracted domestic and foreign investments, and provided opportunities for businesses to grow. USAID assistance enabled Serbia to modernize laws and regulations that fueled economic growth, increased Serbia's competitiveness, and made it easier for businesses to operate and prosper in Serbia.

BANKING AND CAPITAL MARKETS: USAID helped Serbia modernize its banking, insurance, investment funds and pension funds in Serbia, as well as to introduce value-added tax (VAT) and modern wholesale and retail payment systems.

REGULATORY REFORMS: USAID has helped Serbia adopt and implement regulations that make it easier for businesses to function and grow. Working with the Serbian government and relevant stakeholders, USAID supported reforms that simplified the construction permit and business inspection processes and decreased opportunities for corruption.

Construction permit reforms have generated increased construction activity and construction-related jobs. By 2020, Serbia was ranked as the ninth-best country in the world for ease of obtaining a construction permit (Prior to USAID's assistance on construction reform, Serbia was ranked 186th).



USAID supported the development and implementation of reforms in Serbia's construction permitting regime.

Inspection reforms standardized inspection practices in a range of areas and provided for greater oversight of inspectors. In addition, provisions of the law related to inspections of unregistered businesses led to a rapid increase in the number of registered businesses – moving companies out of the shadow economy, where a lack of regulatory enforcement had provided myriad opportunities for corruption.



To help make business inspections more transparent and less burdensome, USAID facilitated 'Open Days' between inspectors and businesses that helped businesses comply with new regulations.

The 2014 **Labor Law**, adopted in 2014 with support from USAID, made the labor market more flexible and Serbia more attractive for foreign direct investments.



The Mayors of five municipalities certified as business friendly proudly hold their certificates. Belgrade, June 2010.

The National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED) was established in 2006 with USAID’s support. Since then, NALED has grown into a significant force for encouraging businesses, entrepreneurs, and the government to embrace reforms that have improved the ease of doing business in Serbia. USAID and NALED designed and introduced the Business-Friendly Certification (BFC) process that serves as a seal of quality for investors coming to Serbia. It has since grown into a regionally-recognized certification, with 100 local governments from Serbia, Croatia, BiH, North Macedonia, and Montenegro all applying and receiving the BFC. Nearly half of the 268 recommendations captured in NALED’s annually published “Grey book,” a regulatory bible first published in 2008, were adopted by state institutions.

Flat tax reform: USAID and NALED developed a predictive tax liability calculator that enables more than 120,000



“I am happy that current young and future entrepreneurs, who register their business in the flat rate tax system, can accurately calculate the tax base at any time, and thus plan their business without unpleasant surprises,” said Marija Ivanković Jurišić, a small business owner.

entrepreneurs in the flat rate tax system to calculate their tax liabilities four years in advance. This has eliminated the need for the Tax Administration to issue tax decisions on paper, which had previously caused extensive delays, and has increased longer term predictability of tax payments for these small businesses.

ACCESS TO FINANCE: The USAID-initiated Opportunity Bank of Serbia provided more than €785 million in loans to micro-enterprises, small agricultural producers, and other businesses which could not access loans elsewhere. Those loans helped create 56,000 new jobs and sustained over 280,000 jobs. Every second farm loan issued in Serbia came from Opportunity Bank, according to the Serbian Credit Bureau.



With the help of a microfinance loan from USAID's partner Opportunity Bank, Siniša Milinković from Rušanaj was able to repair his mobile beekeeping bus.

USAID, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and the Ministry of Agriculture established a joint loan portfolio guarantee with commercial banks in 2019. By covering up to 60 percent of associated losses, the guarantee incentivizes banks to provide up to \$91 million in finance for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Serbia's agricultural sector. The program enables Serbian firms to access financing under better terms to help them to grow, innovate, and create new jobs.

In 2020, USAID supported the launch of two digital financing platforms for SMEs - the crowd-investing platform Ventu.rs and the factoring platform Finspot. Ventu.rs completed Serbia's first successful crowd-investing campaign in 2021. Through use of Finspot's invoice factoring, business users boosted their liquidity by €3.8 million.



Through Serbia's first crowd-investing platform, Bubaja d.o.o. was able to raise €50,000 in funding to improve business operations and its ability to access the EU market.

ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS: USAID worked with municipalities throughout Serbia to create the conditions to attract foreign investments and create jobs. USAID established 32 Local Economic Development Offices that fostered local economic development and established Business Improvement Districts in nine cities. These Districts helped to increase business traffic through the creation of city center pedestrian zones.



USAID established Business Improvement Districts with pedestrian zones across Serbia to revitalize local communities and spur economic development. Business Improvement District in Zrenjanin.

COMPETITIVENESS: Between 2007-2011, USAID assisted firms in high-potential sectors like renewable energy, information and communication technology, construction services, and film, leading to more than \$250 million in sales and exports. Serbia is increasingly home to large foreign film productions as a result of our support to the film industry. USAID supported training

for 1,800 people in marketing, trade show participation and international standards.



USAID worked with Serbian film producers to form the Serbian Film Commission. The commission attracts foreign productions and helped Serbia to regain its status as an international filming destination.

AGRIBUSINESS: Recognizing the significant potential of Serbia’s agricultural sector to help revitalize rural areas of the country, USAID has worked through multiple projects to help Serbia’s producers become competitive in lucrative export markets for both raw and processed foodstuffs, increasing their overall earnings.



With USAID assistance, Serbian agribusinesses, such as this maker of ajvar, participated in international trade shows — increasing their access to new markets.

The USAID Agribusiness project, which operated from 2007 to 2012, helped hundreds of firms, including many run by women and young entrepreneurs, prepare for trade fairs and enter new markets, resulting in the sale of over \$120 million worth of Serbian food products, primarily for export to regional markets. These same firms created more than 7,000 new jobs in Serbia.

Since 2017, the USAID Competitive Economy project has helped more than 100 fruit and vegetable producers attract \$35 million in investments and helped 240 firms improve their management practices and technologies. More than 3,200 smallholder farmers are now engaged in modern, commercial export chains.

USAID designed a business support hub that encompasses support for production, marketing and sales all in one in order to help food producers enter new markets. Since 2018, more than 37 agribusinesses have received support to upgrade their products and place 90 new premium food and cosmetic products on the shelves of major domestic retail chains. German retailer dm-drogerie markt replicated USAID's hub concept and, in partnership with USAID, helped 19 local businesses develop 79 new products for sale in dm shops throughout Serbia.



With expert support, Tatjana Avramov improved her production, began selling her products at Serbia's largest retail chain, and received the Superior Taste award from the International Taste Institute in Brussels.



The success of the company BMD from Arilje is proof that more than just raspberries can be cultivated in western Serbia. “After 20 years of exporting our products, we are finally able to offer them to customers in Serbia thanks to the dm incubator,” said Dragana Maslar, director of BMD.

Since USAID initiated its partnership with Serbia’s apple industry in 2018, the nation’s export markets have shifted considerably, reflecting an array of new and expanded global trade opportunities. Serbian apple exports to world markets have risen by 37 percent.



Dušan Stanišić is one of Serbia’s numerous small producers, now integrated into the supply chain of large companies, who benefited from the apple sector diversifying its exports.



USAID assistance programs have provided Serbian entrepreneurs like Ajla Škijelj with the skills and equipment to start their own business.

PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT IN VULNERABLE AREAS: USAID helped businesses and entrepreneurs in south and southwest Serbia develop, grow and enter new domestic and foreign markets. Between 2006 and 2018, USAID helped hundreds of firms in economically underdeveloped areas. The support helped companies to improve operations and establish the business connections needed to compete. This support helped create more than 1,000 jobs in these areas and helped firms generate approximately \$14 million in sales from their participation at trade fairs. As part of these efforts, USAID provided 71 youth and women-owned startups with more than \$761,000 in equipment - helping them grow and become more competitive.



Milorad Pantović from Raška launched a start-up company for the hot processing of fruits and vegetables in 2014. Not long thereafter, he received a fruit washing machine and a dense mass filling machine from USAID that helped him speed up production and improve product quality. In collaboration with Mercator, he produces a wide range of products under the brand “Ukusi moga kraja (Tastes of my region)”.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: In partnership with the private company Insert, Ltd., and the Municipality of Ruma, USAID established, equipped and staffed the Women's Education Center in Ruma in 2015. The center helps unemployed women acquire new skills in demand by the private sector. Many women have been able to obtain jobs based on their improved skillsets.



Svetlana Mitrović is one of several dozen unemployed women who were able to find a job after passing courses at the USAID-supported Womens Education Center.

YOUTH TECHNOLOGY STARTUPS: USAID helped to establish IT and innovation centers in Niš, Novi Sad, and Belgrade. The ICT Hub, founded in Belgrade in 2014, helps young, highly-skilled individuals and talented software developers grow as technology entrepreneurs and project managers. The Hub has helped more than 40 startups since its inception.



Vuk Nikolić is one of many successful technology entrepreneurs whose software for managing a trucking company's daily operations got off the ground with support from the ICT Hub, which was co-founded by USAID.



With USAID support, the “Ključ” bakery was able to launch an online store, weather the difficulties of the pandemic, and reach new customers.

E-COMMERCE: USAID helped form the e-Commerce Association, now one of the fastest-growing business associations in Serbia. According to the National Bank of Serbia, e-Commerce has increased by more than 500 percent since late 2018. Through the e-Commerce Academy, launched with USAID support in 2020, 160 businesses have learned to develop and implement e-Commerce business models.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Twenty years ago, democratic institutions were fragile, government provision of services were unreliable, and citizens were inexperienced in ways to advocate for their needs. USAID helped Serbia to address these challenges by working first at the local-level to improve interaction between local governments and citizens and, later, by working directly with national government institutions to drive the reforms that they themselves had identified as crucial to the good-functioning of government.

REVITALIZATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES: In the early years of our assistance (2001-2007), USAID undertook more than 5,000 projects in partnership with local communities to improve infrastructure, to renovate schools, health clinics and community centers, and to support other priorities identified by community members.



USAID reconstructed and renovated schools across Serbia. School in Bestovac, near Leskovac, Serbia.

RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: U.S. assistance introduced e-governance solutions in 83 municipalities and established 32 Citizen Assistance Centers across Serbia, making it simpler for Serbians to complete tasks, such as changing their official residences or registering marriages and births.



USAID worked with local governments to establish 32 Citizen Assistance Centers throughout Serbia, providing citizens with improved government services. Citizen Assistance Center in Zrenjanin.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: USAID helped 62 municipalities achieve Enhanced Disaster Resilient Status, trained 1,400 emergency workers from 120 municipalities, and supported the passage of a much-needed Law on Emergency Situations that dictates the roles, rights and responsibilities of all relevant actors when disasters occur.



USAID provided more than \$2 million in assistance to Serbia to respond and recover from the 2014 floods. Gordana Petrović from Liso Polje used the funds she received to buy a new sow and feed.

USAID helped local communities respond in time of crisis. USAID provided more than \$2 million in assistance to Serbia to respond and recover from the 2014 floods. USAID also provided



USAID supported the renovation of the kindergarten in Basaid, Kikinda, to provide a safe environment for migrant and local children to play and learn together.

\$2 million to help Serbian communities affected by the migrant crisis in 2016. This assistance helped municipalities improve social and health services, positioning them to respond to the crisis and improve services to all their citizens. Support included: new reservoirs in Preševo and Tutin that help ensure a reliable source of potable water for residents; a new emergency care center at Bosilegrad's health clinic; medical equipment and a public kitchen in Subotica; and new school facilities in Kikinda, as well as other upgrades.

COVID-19 RESPONSE: USAID has led the United States Government's more than \$9 million in COVID-19 assistance to Serbia. Working to help meet needs identified by the Government of Serbia, USAID assistance included everything from ambulances, medical equipment and testing containers for hospitals to working with the Red Cross and UNICEF to help vulnerable families get through this crisis.



In 2021, USAID donated 11 new ambulances to the Serbian Ministry of Health, to help health institutions throughout the country respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECONSTRUCTION OF BELGRADE YOUTH CENTER: In 2007, we provided the Belgrade Youth Center with \$1 million for the reconstruction of its multipurpose hall (“Hala Amerikana”), its facade and roof/summer terrace, enriching its cultural offerings.



The U.S. supported renovation of the Belgrade Youth Center's concert hall has provided space for cultural events such as the Belgrade Jazz festival.

HOMELESS PEOPLE: USAID supports ADRA's mobile service for homeless people in Belgrade, known as "DrumoDom", which provides hygiene, health care, and psycho-social services during 2021.



In 2021, DrumoDom provided more than 5,000 services to the homeless in Belgrade.

ENERGY: USAID installed modernized equipment and energy management systems at district heating plants in Niš, Pančevo, and Čačak. This allowed the municipalities to improve heat generation to consumers and saved 33 percent in natural gas consumption. In 2020, USAID refurbished the heating and hot

water system at the Pančevo General Hospital, which can now provide a stable supply of sanitary hot water to the maternity and surgery wards and maintain comfortable temperatures in all areas of the hospital during the winter.



To improve energy efficiency, USAID installed 200 solar thermal panels on the roof of Pančevo's District Heating "Kotež" with a capacity of 350 kWh for the supply of sanitary hot water for heating.

STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW:

Since the beginning, USAID has worked to improve access to justice, case management and court efficiency. Improvements over the course of the last 20 years have resulted in cases being tried more quickly and efficiently to fostered greater trust in Serbian justice institutions from citizens, businesses and investors.

COMMERCIAL COURTS: Between 2004 and 2008, USAID helped connect commercial courts into one computer network and helped significantly cut case backlogs. A case management system in all 16 courts and High Commercial Court enhanced efficiency and transparency. The system was later rolled out to all basic and high courts by the Ministry of Justice.

SUPREME COURT OF CASSATION: From 2015-2017 USAID helped the Supreme Court of Cassation introduce centralized statistics within all basic courts on case backlogs, case duration, and court performance - supporting efforts to reduce backlogs and shorten case duration.



USAID helped the Supreme Commercial Court in Belgrade introduce a case management system that allows it to track the work of all basic courts.

BASIC COURTS: Between 2009-2014, USAID helped reduce case backlogs by more than 50 percent and improved case-processing efficiency in 10 partner courts.



Vršac Basic Court's former Acting President analyzes case backlog reduction results. Ten USAID partner courts reduced their combined backlog by more than 50 percent.

HIGH COURT COUNCIL: USAID helped raise the High Court Council's capacity to allocate, acquire, and manage its own resources. The USAID-developed software used in all courts enables data collection on resources and finances. Using these tools, the High Court Council was able to prepare and imple-

ment an integrated budget for the entire judicial branch, which identified funding shortages and led to increased budget allocation and smoother court operations.

MISDEMEANOR COURTS: USAID helped renovate misdemeanor courts throughout Serbia and improved court operations through case management systems and electronic registries. This has generated more than 100 million euros for Serbia's budget through the collection of court costs and fines and the reduction of problematic case backlogs by up to 80 percent in some courts. Support to the misdemeanor courts also raised voluntary compliance with fines from 30 percent to more than 70 percent.



The USAID-funded renovation of the Belgrade Misdemeanor Court streamlined court operations, improved case management, and made it easier for citizens to pursue justice.

JUDICIAL TRAINING: USAID helped establish the Judicial Training Academy in Belgrade and regional offices in Novi Sad and Kragujevac, where all Serbian judges are trained. USAID also helped the Judicial Academy develop an electronic learning platform for the judiciary (e-Academy). Regular judicial education improves the predictability, efficiency, and fairness of the judiciary, on which citizens depend.

PROTECTION FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS: USAID helped Serbia adopt and implement the Whistleblower Protection Law, one of the first in the region, making it easier and safer to report corruption and fraud. As part of the support, USAID set up a hotline, which anyone can use, to safely report corruption and abuse of public resources. USAID trained more than 1,200 judges and judicial staff on how to adjudicate whistleblowing cases. And as a result, the law is working. As of September 2021,

28 final decisions have been made in favor of whistleblowers, often providing financial compensation and restoring their positions. More than 25 whistleblowers have been provided temporary protections as their cases have moved forward within the judicial system.



USAID helped Serbia develop and implement its Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers. Marija Beretka won a whistleblowing case against her employer in 2017.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE: USAID helped develop a digital platform for online communication between members of the judiciary and citizens. Additionally, USAID helped to organize local council meetings with courts of all jurisdictions that enabled more than a million people across Serbia to meet with members of the judiciary to directly discuss problems they faced in accessing justice.



Practical guides on citizens' rights and ways they can access justice were made available to citizens at judicial institutions across the country.

ENFORCEMENT OF JUDGEMENTS: USAID helped draft 2020 amendments to the Law on Enforcement and Security, which increased protections for vulnerable groups. USAID also helped develop the electronic public auction system, which improved the transparency of confiscated property sales. To date, over 26,000 transparent and safe auctions have been carried out through the e-Auction tool.



Amendments have allowed over 400,000 old enforcement cases to be transferred out of the courts to Public Enforcement Officers, significantly reducing court backlogs.

COURTEFFICIENCY: With USAID support, the Ministry of Justice expanded the use of the Judicial Information System and replaced paper-based communication between the judiciary and state institutions with electronic data exchanges, saving more than \$20.6 million in budget costs. E-justice solutions implemented in four Serbian basic courts made the completion of administrative tasks three times faster, giving judges more time to handle substantive legal matters.



Envelopes for writs at the basic court in Niš are now barcoded, printed, and registered directly from the courts' case management system, saving considerable time for employees in the expedition office.

AN ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA

Acknowledging the importance of vibrant civil society and independent media in voicing the desires and concerns of citizens, USAID has supported civil society's capacity, from the village to the national levels, to advocate for issues of importance to Serbian citizens. USAID has also worked closely with independent media outlets to improve their professionalism in everything from investigative journalism to business operations.

CAPACITY BUILDING: Between 2006 and 2013, USAID improved the advocacy skills of 230 Serbian organizations and more than 1,500 civic activists, strengthening their ability to represent the needs of citizens.

CIVIC ACTION: Through multiple civil society programs between 2018- 2020, USAID supported over 500 local initiatives and civil society groups engaged in advocacy and community development around a variety of issues including environmental protection, labor rights, air pollution, youth development, human rights, waste management, culture, and art.



The “Red Badges” initiative organized a street campaign in front of the Smederevo City Assembly to raise awareness about the negative consequences of polluted air in February 2021. Activists left 223 pairs of shoes as a tribute to all those who passed away within one year because of air pollution.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: USAID helped establish the Responsible Business Forum, gathering members from leading companies to encourage increased social responsibility and philanthropy. USAID also helped establish the VIRTUS Corporate Philanthropy Excellence Award to recognize outstanding philanthropic contributions of socially responsible businesses and individuals.



Milomir Glavčić is the winner of the Virtus philanthropy award for individual contributions in 2015 and 2018. Retired and living in Canada, Mr Glavčić has been helping people in need in Serbia for seven decades. Through the years, he donated more than 7 million Euros and engaged his extended family to provide donations in Serbia on his behalf.

ELECTION INTEGRITY: USAID supported the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) and Center for



Helping an older citizen to understand the voting process.

Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) to develop the skills necessary to play a constructive oversight role in election monitoring in Serbia and in the region, to increase election integrity.



USAID-sponsored trainings for journalists helped increase the professional skills of journalists in Serbia.

MEDIA CAPACITY: USAID assisted the development of independent media into successful, resilient enterprises. USAID provided technical and financial assistance to support the sustainability of serious news and investigative reporting sources, including the BETA news agency and the former B92 TV. Between 2001-2012, nearly 1,500 journalists and 250 media outlets received USAID supported training.



USAID supported Bujanovačke, a local online daily in Bujanovac, to develop new approaches. By launching a section in Albanian and transforming into a unique bilingual portal, Bujanovačke nearly tripled their audience and signed new advertising contracts.

More recently, USAID supported the modernization and digitization of media platforms through innovative business approaches, content monetization, development and implementation of new digital tools, and business networking and cooperation. USAID also supported efforts to increase the digital literacy of Serbian citizens to inform themselves in the complex online media environment.

PHILANTHROPY: USAID supported the establishment of a National Day of Giving, an annual nationwide public campaign that promotes domestic philanthropy. Each year, the campaign has brought in more donations, raising over \$212,000 on the National Day of Giving 2020 from citizens and companies. The 2020 campaign raised money for an interpretation center for hearing impaired people, while in 2021 nearly 43,000 kg of essential food items were collected for the poor. USAID also helped develop an online-crowdfunding platform, donacije.rs, which allows citizens to donate to causes they believe in, and increased citizen awareness regarding giving and community engagement. In 2021, Serbia jumped to 48th from 129th on the World Giving Index.



The proceeds of the first National Day of Giving in 2018 were used to purchase a spectrometer for the Petnica Science Center to further the scientific education of young Serbians.

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE: USAID helped local governments improve the use of social media, websites and information booklets which increased citizens' access to information of public importance and led to the rise of the national average Local Transparency Index score by six points in 2020, for the first time since 2015.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN DEMOCRACY: USAID facilitated Serbia's first large-scale, youth-based engagement of 17,000 students from 25 high schools to participate in local budgeting processes. To fund school modernization projects voted on by students, local administrations allocated \$144,000 in their 2021 local budgets.



Students in high schools in Sombor voted for school modernization projects that were later funded by the local government.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: USAID supported persons with disabilities (PWDs), helping them connect with members of parliament so their concerns would be taken into consideration when creating laws and policies. Amendments to the Serbian Criminal Code, recommended by USAID, improved the standing of PWDs by defining a more severe penalty for



USAID provided youth with, and without, intellectual disabilities opportunities to work and play together, creating socially inclusive communities.

sexual abuse of PWDs. USAID helped support changes to the Law on Protection of Discrimination of PWDs that enabled PWDs with guide dogs to gain access to public spaces, including polling places. USAID also helped connect more than 1,700 youth with and without intellectual disabilities through sports, fostering inclusive societies.

POLITICAL PROCESSES: USAID improved the institutional capacity of the government, political parties, parliament and civil society. This helped advance key reforms, enhanced the policy development process, increased citizen' participation in politics, and supported free and fair elections. USAID helped increase the inclusion of women and minority groups in political processes. USAID-supported Constituency Offices continue to bring Serbians into direct contact with their elected representatives.



USAID-supported constituency offices bring Serbians into direct contact with their elected representatives. Constituency office in Rakovica, Belgrade.

YOUTH: Several thousand youth have been trained in entrepreneurship by USAID, which provided them with new jobs and business opportunities. USAID supported the Serbian Ministry of Youth during the adoption of a National Youth Strategy and in establishing more than 70 youth offices around the country. Some 31 Youth Offices have adopted Youth Entrepreneurship Action Plans benefitting 12,580 youths. More than 850 students from south Serbia and Sandžak have undertaken internships to develop job skills. USAID supported organizations that linked youth and local governments to promote youth-led community development solutions impacting more than 130,000 members of 97 local communities.



Serbian youth participate in a national entrepreneurship competition supported by USAID.

WOMEN: USAID helped establish the Women Leadership Academy that, between 2015-2017, provided leadership training for 130 emerging women leaders. Forty percent of these participants went on to be elected for the first time or to gain higher political office or higher positions within their party. In partnership with the Development Agency of Serbia, between 2013-2018, USAID Serbia helped 48 women from south and southwest Serbia start their own businesses and provided grants for them to purchase equipment. USAID helped establish Opportunity Bank Serbia in 2007 that provides micro-lending to clients that cannot ordinarily access financial services from traditional banks, including women entrepreneurs, helping them become key drivers of economic growth in their communities.



Victoria Šljuka is one of tens of thousands women who received a micro loan from Opportunity Bank Serbia (OBS), which was established with USAID support in 2007.

USAID supported the creation of “Etno Mreža” as an umbrella organization of handicraft producers from all over Serbia, organized into associations and cooperatives, who produce authentic handicrafts using traditional techniques. One of those associations is also “Panonke Pančevo”.



During COVID-19, together with the Red Cross of Serbia, USAID purchased and distributed food and hygiene parcels for 4,000 families and provided support for mobile teams. Distribution of parcels in the municipalities Brus and Ivanjica.



Zoran Štrika, Editor-in-Chief of the O21 portal, one of hundreds of media outlets that USAID has helped to become more professional and sustainable, shows off the wall of radios at the Radio Cafe.



The DOJA winery is located near Prokuplje, in the Toplički region, that has a several centuries old vinicultural tradition. It is particularly known for its autochthonous grape varieties, Prokupac and Tamjanika. Through continued promotional activities supported by USAID, such as the Prokupac day every October, Serbia's visibility as a wine region is rising and its competitiveness on world markets is strengthening.





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