

P r e s s r e l e a s e

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Social entrepreneurship in Serbia is accelerating – from the food and fashion industries to media with the aim to support the most vulnerable categories of the population

Within the third edition of competition Idea for Better Tomorrow, UniCredit Bank, UniCredit Foundation, Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and Smart kolektive organized a weekend Media Caravan during which five out of seven winners of the competition were visited. On this occasion, caravan participants had the opportunity to get to know the Association of Citizens against Human Trafficking and all forms of violence against women "Atina", the Association of citizens "Liceulice", Citizens Association "Vunena", Initiative for Social Empowerment and the Association for Support to Persons with Disabilities "Naša kuća", which managed to improve their business due to educational trainings and grants.

Association of Citizens against Human Trafficking and all forms of violence against women "Atina" used the funds allocated during the competition to improve the social enterprise "Bagel Bejgl", by employing an expert who has developed innovative offers for catering, but also by enhancing product branding and design development packaging. More information can be found at www.bagel.rs

Marijana Savić from "Atina" stated: "Contribution of "Idea for Better Tomorrow" to NGO Atina and the social enterprise Bagel Bejgl is multiple - thanks to the financial support we have improved the offer and raised the capacities of the social enterprise, and we managed to develop a new eco packaging. Also, the mentoring program has helped us in defining a new communication strategy and the way how we want to present our business. The greatest success is additional activities when economic empowerment of our beneficiaries is concerned who have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and professional practice through their social enterprise, Bagel Bagl, which facilitates their access to the labour market."

Thanks to competition Citizens' Association "LICEULICE" managed to develop an online fundraising platform, to set up an online store and a donation page that is in the testing phase, as well as to expand the network of sellers in the territory of Novi Sad, enabling the economic empowerment of members of marginalized groups and outside of Belgrade. More information can be found at liceulice.wordpress.com

Nikoleta Kosovac from Liceulice added: "We are small organization with a great mission. According to official data, almost a quarter of Serbia's population aged over eighteen lives in poverty or in some form of stigmatization and/or isolation. Our sellers are not accepting their status. On contrary, although their situation

seems to be hapless, they have made a lot of progress and are working hard every day to earn money and improve their living conditions. We are looking for those who can help them on this path, because every donation is more than it can be counted in money. Thus it is very important for us to have a partnership with donors, and then things really get better, because we make them better together! Therefore, we are especially pleased that the potential of Liceulice was recognized during the Idea for Better Tomorrow competition. This support will directly affect the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Serbia. We will continue to work together on this, because our goals are the same.”

Citizens' Association Vunena, thanks to the competition, managed to implement its project called "Vunena goes international". Namely, by performing at one of the most important fashion shows in Milan in February 2018, "Vunena" presented latest collection and made excellent contacts, securing new orders and getting a chance to present the same collection at the Fashion show in London in July 2018. More information can be found at www.facebook.com/vunenatheclub

Milica Bainović from Vunena stated: „For Vunena Idea for a better tomorrow was a project of great importance because it helped us make international contacts and enable the placement of our product on the foreign market. In addition, the mentoring program was very interesting experience through which we connected with new suppliers, but first of all, the cooperation with the mentor has improved our internal organization and the way of doing business. “

On this occasion, Initiative for social empowerment managed to improve initiative "Chrono.rs", that is the production of a mixture of flour for bread adapted to restrictive nutrition (Chrono, paleo, diet of people with diabetes). In addition, redesign of product packaging is being developed for the purpose of potential entering into large retailers. The allocated grant was also used for leasing larger space within the industrial zone of the city, thus consolidating the procurement and sale services. More information can be found at www.chrono.rs

Valentina Bogdanović from Chrono added: "The social economy path is interesting, exciting and personally it returns much more than invested. Enthusiasm, small and great victories, big and even bigger ideas, recognized and respected users. This journey is not easy, and therefore success is double. The funds we received through "Idea for Better Tomorrow" competition means a lot to us, but more than money, we appreciate a true partner's support. "

The project "Healthy Garden - Hydroponics Center for Vegetable Production" is a new initiative of the Association for Support of People with Developmental Disorders "Nasa kuca ". Thanks to the competition Idea for Better Tomorrow, complete equipment for hydroponic vegetable growing was procured: shelves, ice lamps and parameters of parameters necessary for proper plant growth, such as Ph value, humidity, temperature and concentration of nutrients in the solution. Also, the Association moved to a new area where suitable conditions

for hydroponic vegetable growing were provided. More information can be found at www.facebook.com/nasa.kuca

Anica Spasojević from Nasa kuca stated: „The support we received during this project was very important to us especially in the field of financial management and development of marketing strategy. In addition, we managed to develop innovative technology of hydroponic growing of plants, engaged agronomists and introduced more of our users to the field of planting.“

The aim of the competition "Idea for Better Tomorrow", which is being implemented since 2012, is the development of social entrepreneurship and existing business, as well as finding ideas for traditional Serbian products and services that can best represent the country in the region and abroad, and thus contribute to improving its image, as well as to improving the export potential of Serbia. Out of over 130 reported ideas in the third edition based on the innovativeness and sustainability of projects, the 7 best ones were selected for grants in the total amount of EUR 40,000.