

## SHE ERA RETRAINS ACCOUNTANTS TO MEET STANDARDS

Currently there are no accounting standards in Kosovo. Previously, accountants were trained to provide financial statements for the Serbian authorities. Now there is no accreditation for accountants and no auditing requirements. Companies are not yet required to submit accounts to a central registry. This is a major constraint to economic development for Kosovo.

To address this problem, SHE ERA has pioneered the introduction of international accounting standards by running the first International Accounting Standards Training of Trainers program in Kosovo since the war. The original Trainer of Trainers course, conducted by an international expert in accounting from Scotland, retrained 14 professional accountants and helped them to become trainers. The candidates, selected by SHE ERA's board, came from different towns throughout Kosovo. During



*Accountants are retrained with skills that will enable them to meet Kosovo's new accounting standards.*

the training, participants were taught:

- To build a forecasting model using Excel;
- To add a worksheet for adjustments;
- To make the necessary adjustments to upgrade accounts to International Accounting Standards;
- To perform Time Value of Money calculations;
- To perform and model investment appraisal calculations; and
- The principles of company valuation.

SHE ERA has continued to offer international standards accounting training. As a re-

sult of this training, the 80 participants now have the capacity to fulfill international standards in accounting. The training was sponsored by SEED and the Canadian Cooperation Support Office (CCSO).

The World Bank, KBS and CCSO have continued this program to support the preparation of licensed accountants and auditors for Kosovo. SHE ERA plans to further develop these courses in order to provide international accounting standards trainings throughout the region.

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### CURRENT PROJECTS

In addition to the projects SHE ERA has completed, described within the pages of this news bulletin, SHE ERA is also working on the following three programs:

- Integration of Rural Women in Social, Economic and Political Life;
- Economic Development Strategy of Gjakova Municipalities; and
- Business Training and Advocacy for Rural Population.

For more information about SHE ERA's past or current activities, please do not hesitate to contact us at [she-era01@hotmail.com](mailto:she-era01@hotmail.com).

## INTER-REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNSEL RENEWS BALKAN RELATIONSHIPS

JUNE 2001 - SHE ERA organized an inter-regional scientific counsel for the reconstruction and complementary development of the Dukagjini and gravitating region. The counsel aimed to stimulate complementary development and identify opportunities for collaboration in the Dukagjini region, a key region for Kosovo and the surrounding Balkan countries. At the conference, 165 participants from Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo worked towards a new common vision for economic, cultural and educational activities in

the Balkans.

This Counsel initiated regular contact between Balkan countries, renewed old relationships and aimed towards increasing activities in the international economic spectrum. The Counsel has stimulated Complementary



*The inter-regional scientific counsel conference rebuilt regional relationships for the Balkans. Participants discussed issues of common concern such as the economy, culture and education.*

Development and has resulted in other councils opening in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and other Balkan locations.

# TRAINING

## REGIONAL BUSINESSWOMEN EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

JUNE 2002 - To satisfy the many requests coming from Kosova businesswomen, SHE ERA organized an experience exchange with businesswomen from the neighboring countries. SHE ERA invited representatives from the Bosnian organization "VIDRA" and from the Albanian professional businesswomen's association "SHGPA" to participate in an experience exchange on credit line. At the roundtable, Bosnian, Albanian and Kosovar women shared experiences regarding the challenges and successes they face in the field of credit line. Kosova women also received support and advice for advancing their businesses. The roundtable included participants from the Municipal Assembly of Gjakova - Economic and Finance Department, the Central Fiscal Authority, the Ministry of Public Services, banking and financing institutions, NGOs and businesswomen. SHE ERA has continued this initiative with different campaigns, meetings and conferences.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE

MARCH 2000 - SHE ERA's English Training Course had 60 beneficiaries. Following the training, 36% of the attendants found employment and 21% obtained further English qualifications by continuing their studies. Forty-three participants said that the course saved their jobs. Therefore, SHE ERA was very satisfied with the execution of this project and the resulting achievements of the participants.

## BUSINESS COURSE BOOSTS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

2000 - SHE ERA trained 485 participants through its business course. The women who participated in the training found that they had an advantage when entering the job market. Following the training, 10% of the participants started their own small business, 30% expanded their businesses through micro credit loans, 60% became employed by a private small or medium-sized enterprise or organization and 10% are actively seeking employment.

Also, the businesses that started as a result of the training are more sustainable due to the increased



*This group of women participated in the "Starting Your Own Business Training" held in Gjakova in 2000.*

capability of the entrepreneurs. The business course responded to market demand and showed the need for additional activities of

this kind. The course launched the operation of SHE ERA as a new provider of practical training solutions in Kosova.

## COMPUTER COURSE GIVES WOMEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES

AUGUST 2001 - Computer literacy is regarded as essential in today's workplace.

The SHE ERA computer course's main objective was to assist women in returning

to the workplace. Families who lost the "breadwinner"

received direct economic benefit from this course. The computer course provided the necessary skills for participants to find employment as well as safeguarded the jobs of those participants already employed.

This course, which has trained 520 participants thus far, has proven highly successful and fulfilled only a small part of the demand for such training. SHE ERA wishes to continue this course in the future.



*The SHE ERA computer course, held in 2001, increased participants' economic opportunities.*

## SHE ERA COURSE TRAINS WOMEN IN HAIRDRESSING

DEC. 1999 - SHE ERA supported a hairdressing course through which 25 women were trained. The course allowed many participants to achieve their ambitions and led to financial self-sustainability for many families. Three months after the course, SHE ERA representatives monitored the progress of these women and found that:

- 14% work in a hairdressing saloon opened by SHE-ERA. Through their work,

they are able to meet their financial obligations and support their families;

- 53% work individually at home or in unsuitable circumstances such as factory buildings or even in houses burnt during the war. Despite their working circumstances, they are still able to cover their living costs, and their clients seem willing to go to their work place; and
- 33% of the attendants work only for their family

and have not continued with hairdressing as a career.



*Women practice hairdressing at SHE ERA's course in 1999. Women from the rural areas surrounding Gjakova municipality attended.*

## LOCALS, INTERNATIONALS DISCUSS GENDER ISSUES

FEB. 2000 - In cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), SHE ERA organized a gender task force meeting to discuss economic issues, opportunities and Kosovar women's rights. About 100 participants, including women activists, male and female businesspersons, donors, journalists and representatives from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), local women's organizations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gathered in Gjakova, to discuss and share their individual and organizational experiences.



*Women discussed issues of concern at the Gender Task Force meeting organized by SHE ERA in February 2000.*

At the meeting, participants concluded that there were a range of issues to be addressed. Women specifically expressed their concern for the economic situation. Participants discussed the need for local organizations and international

agencies to collaborate on specific issues and find common solutions. SHE ERA hopes that each respective organization that participated took these recommendations into account for their future programs and work.

## CULTURAL AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY SHE ERA

### SHE ERA FINDS SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

The women's junior basketball team "Vllaznimi" had a shortage of sports equipment and could not afford to go on tour. In order to save this team, SHE ERA responded to their request for

help by approaching donors for financial assistance. As a result, the juniors basketball team "Vllaznimi" won support from the Canadian Cooperation Support Office in Prishtina, who provided

the team with all of the equipment they needed. This enabled women's basketball team Vllaznimi to travel throughout Kosova on their basketball tour.

### GJAKOVA WOMEN'S CHOIR REBUILDS MUSIC PROGRAM

The city of Gjakova was badly affected by the war in 1999. The Gjakovar women's determination to rebuild their lives was a driving force behind this project.

SHE ERA helped these

women gain support from the Canadian Cooperation Support Office in order to reequip the Gjakova Cultural Centre "Asim Vokshi" with musical instruments. The Women's Choir and other musicians have been

able to use these instruments for performances. At the same time, the Gjakovar women were given the opportunity and facilities for their project.

### BEGINNING OF THE SMALL BUSINESS FOR ICE CREAM MAKING

After SHE ERA members were retrained in small business management, they suggested that SHE ERA start a small ice cream making business. SHE ERA decided to create this small business in order to provide support funds for future SHE ERA projects.

These funds will be especially helpful after international donor support in Kosova declines and sponsorship for training is more difficult to obtain. At the same time, the project has provided employment for four local people. All of the business' benefits will be

used for continued support of SHE ERA. This is one example of the SHE ERA business management training being put to practice.

The Canadian Cooperation Support Office in Prishtina supported the project.

## CONFERENCES

### ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE ECONOMY

Despite the commitments made by governments in the Beijing Platform for Action, the CEDAW convention and other policy and legal documents with regard to gender equity and women's empowerment, trade and economic policies continue to undermine gender equity. Women remain at the bottom, with less access to education, means of production (such as land, credits, agricultural inputs etc.), employment, housing, food and health care services.

Influencing the formulation processes of macro-economic policies, trade agreements, etc. is a crucial element in mitigating the negative effects that such policies and agreements have on poor and vulnerable groups of women at the grassroots level. However, the complexity of economic processes and the low level of economic literacy are a hampering factor for women's organisations and activists to achieve their objectives. There is an urgent need for women's groups to increase the level of economic literacy of their members in order to establish a broad popular action base on these issues.





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## SHE ERA Association Memberships

SHE ERA is a proud member of Project Tsunami's Global Brain Trust (GBT); The International Alliance for Women (TIAW); Kosova Women's Lobby; Kosova National Action Plan working group; European Small Business Alliance (ESBA); Star Network of World Learning; and the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID).

In addition, SHE ERA's Director has also held the following positions:

- 2002 - Board Member, Gjakova Accounting Association
- 2002 - Deputy Chairperson, Kosova Business Alliance (KBA)
- 2001 - Board Member, Gjakova Economic Association
- 2001 - Deputy Chairperson, Local Enterprise Agency of Kosova
- 2001 - Local Expert of Economy group, European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI)
- 2000-2001, Board Member, Kosova Department of Trade and Industry NGO board.

## SHE ERA ESTABLISHES KOSOVA WOMEN'S BUSINESS NETWORK

APRIL 2002 - SHE ERA took the lead in establishing the Kosova Women's Business Network (KWBN) in order to support, protect and promote business-women's interests in Kosova through information and experience exchange, networking, research, advocacy, lobbying and services. KWBN incorporates the ideals of Flexibility, Strength, Creativity, Solidarity and Cooperation.

KWBN is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that supports business-women, by providing information, opportunities for partnerships and networking, training on business related issues, better access to loans and financing and advice on how to overcome difficulties, including gender based discrimination, corruption and bureaucracy. KWBN also advocates on economic development issues with a special focus

on women.

Network members include business-women from throughout Kosova, economists and women interested in issues of economic empowerment.

KWBN's creation is closely connected with the conference "Women in the Economy", which was held in Prishtina in November 2001. Before 2003 KWBN functioned as an informal network whose members met bimonthly to exchange information and experiences and to discuss important issues of common interest. In the fall of 2003 KWBN was registered as a NGO. Soon after, KWBN



*The first KWBN meeting, in which 65 women from throughout Kosova participated, was held in Prishtina. At the second meeting, 100 members joined KWBN.*

undertook efforts to strengthen its institutional capacity, to expand its membership and to enlarge its programs.

KWBN achieves its goals through a variety of activities that contribute to businesswomen's empowerment and the economic empowerment of women in general.

KWBN receives support from STAR Network of World Learning and the International Business Center.

## SHE ERA NOMINATES KOSOVA BUSINESS MANAGER OF THE YEAR

SHE-ERA took the initiative to nominate the most successful business manager of Kosova for 2003. This initiative was realized together with representatives from the business community, Chamber of Commerce, civil society and the media. Gjakova municipality local government and the U.S. Office in Prishtina supported the event.

The committee that nomi-

nated the best business manager included representatives from companies and organizations that have contributed to the development of Kosovar society. Representatives from governmental and non-governmental institutions and the U.S. Office in Prishtina gave the award following the competition.

In 2003, the three best managers of the year were:

Aferdita Saraqini Kelmendi, Manager of RTV21; Fahrije Bellanica, Manager of Juice Factory "FRUTI"; and Skender Blakcori, Manager of "Besholli Commerce".

The award ceremony will be organized every year. National representatives of the government, parliament and other respected figures in Kosovar society will present the prize to the winners.

## MISSION

SHE ERA's mission is to assist women entrepreneurship at all levels by instilling the importance of entrepreneurship as a means of empowerment in the general public, and to provide a forum for debate and discussion, the opportunity to interact with both local and international personnel as well as facilities for research and development.

## ABOUT SHE ERA

SHE ERA, an economic development NGO founded in 1999 as a non profit organisation, was the first women's business association established after the war. First concentrated in Gjakova, SHE ERA has expanded throughout Kosova. SHE ERA is primarily a training organisation that is quickly developing consultancy capacities in the fields of accounting, finance and economic development. While SHE ERA focuses primarily on women and business, SHE ERA does not discriminate against men and has many male members.