

## Article #14

# GUIDANCE FOR KOSOVA'S AGRICULTURE AND ICT STUDENTS: CAREER-BOOSTING

## EXTRACURRICULARS

MARCH 2, 2023

For more photos on this article go to this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1JUcKVa-Sf-OJesPwZyXIGhO6AMnFtF-h>

Agriculture and ICT students in Kosovo are receiving guidance on planning for and executing extracurricular activities to enhance their career development. Through USAID's Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity, the University of Prishtina, University of Peja, and University of Prizren are encouraging students to create and engage in diverse extracurricular activities alongside their bachelor studies. Zoie Schares, a Student Affairs expert from the University of Iowa and Senior Project Manager for the Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity, collaborated closely with students and career centers at partner universities to develop Student Career Clubs and discuss student organization best practices. This is a USAID-funded activity implemented by the University of Iowa in partnership with Iowa State University and Kosovo Education Center (KEC).

The Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity also conducted tabling sessions and classroom visits to inform students about available extracurricular opportunities, including online soft-skills training, mentoring programs, internships, and student club involvement. These efforts resulted in increased student engagement and registrations on Kosovo LEARN, the Activity's online learning platform, offering career planning courses and professional profile-building guidance. Many students expressed interest in mentoring programs, eager for the opportunity to receive advice from industry professionals in the agriculture and ICT sectors and build professional networks.

*"It's exciting to see Kosovar students embracing career development opportunities, particularly as they organize and develop their own student career clubs. With many students already completing extracurricular courses on Kosovo LEARN and enrolling in the Activity's mentoring program, we're thrilled to see them prioritizing professional development. Their eagerness to utilize university career centers and our Activity's offerings reflects students' drive towards and commitment to shaping their professional futures."* - **Zoie Schares, Student Affairs Expert, University of Iowa**

In addition to tabling and recruitment sessions, the Activity team conducted workshops on student club management and administration, particularly for newly established clubs. These workshops focused on good practices for maintaining club productivity, participation, and longevity. Student club leaders and members discussed their plans, leadership schemes, organizational structures, and upcoming activities, reflecting students' enthusiasm for expanding opportunities for engagement with the private sector and exploring contemporary trends and challenges in ICT and agriculture.

*"I'm thrilled to be part of a student initiative uniting ICT students to expand engagement opportunities with the private sector and innovation in ICT. Student clubs offer us the freedom to*

*design activities as we see fit, supported by career centers and USAID's assistance. The autonomy and responsibility we experience almost feel like running our own business, which is incredibly exciting."* – Asdren Pervizaj, **TIT Community Club Member, University of Prizren**

PEJA Quote: "Through our student club, we aim to create opportunities for practical learning experiences. We aspire to visit factories, organize laboratory experiments, and conduct research aligned with our career goals. We express our gratitude to the USAID activity for igniting our passion to engage with student clubs and guiding us on how to take a proactive role in learning from and collaborating with the private sector. " **Dafina Bajraktari, Smoka Food Technology Club, University of Peja**

*"Research tells us that student organization involvement, like student career clubs, enhances students' job market prospects by fostering soft-skills development including effective communication, time management, and organizational skills for career development. I'm delighted to engage with these inspiring young leaders from Kosovo's student clubs."* - **Zoie Schares, Student Affairs Expert, University of Iowa**

This spring marks one-year since the launch of the Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity and we couldn't be more delighted to witness students from our three partner universities enriching their university experiences with extracurricular opportunities. We extend our gratitude to all the private sector partners who have demonstrated exceptional commitment by participating in student club events, serving as mentors , and contributing to online training sessions designed to prepare students for upcoming experiential learning activities. Witnessing the Activity's goals come to fruition fills us with joy and serves as further motivation to empower students to take charge of their career development, nurturing a community of proactive and innovative young professionals in Kosovo's ICT and agriculture sectors.