

Article #15

EMERGING ICT STUDENT CLUBS SHOW TALENT AND COMMITMENT FOR PEER SUPPORT

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Alena Rama from University of Prishtina expresses enthusiasm for expanding ICT student club reach across Kosovo, to enrich university studies with valuable industry insights. *University of Iowa for USAID Kosova*

When students become involved in student career clubs, it enhances their job prospects by fostering innovation, proactivity, teamwork, and other essential soft skills. This is why USAID's Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education Activity is committed to supporting student clubs in providing experiential learning opportunities and complementing undergraduate studies to prepare students for the job market. This is a USAID-funded activity implemented by the University of Iowa in partnership with Iowa State University and Kosova Education Center (KEC).

This year, with USAID's support, 8 student clubs were established in ICT and Agriculture fields across University of Prishtina, University of Peja, and University of Prizren. These clubs have garnered significant interest, with over 300 students participating in events so far. Particularly in ICT, clubs have demonstrated remarkable dedication and talent. For instance, at the University

of Prizren, the ICT club has already attracted over 40 members and organized career-relevant events such as panel discussions and site visits with industry leaders. These engagements provided students with valuable firsthand insights into current industry trends and the entrepreneurial processes involved in launching and managing innovative ICT businesses.

The Prishtina Tech Community is also an ICT students club at the University of Prishtina that recently organized a peer-to-peer learning workshop focused on learning the basics of Git, which is a software for tracking changes in any set of files, usually used for coordinating work among programmers collaboratively developing source code during software development. The workshop was lead and facilitated by software engineering students at the University of Prishtina, who have the work experience and the willingness to teach other students the necessary skills needed in the job market for programmers.

Moreover, at the University of Prishtina, one of the newly formed clubs focuses on Cloud Computing, born out of a workshop sponsored by USAID and Polymaths, one of the activity's private sector partners. Following training on cloud computing, nearly 300 students globally competed for leadership roles with Amazon Web Services (AWS). Among them, 87 students earned "Club Captain" titles, including Alena Rama from the University of Prishtina who will lead the first AWS Cloud Club ever created in the Western Balkans.

"I am thrilled to be selected as the club captain for Amazon Web Services Cloud Club in Prishtina. This is a fantastic opportunity for us to delve deeper into cloud computing, learning directly from the world's leading service providers in this field. I look forward to expanding the club's reach to students in Kosovo, allowing us all to benefit from invaluable lessons that will enhance our university studies and prepare us for our future careers." - Alena Rama, 2nd-year Computer Science Student at University of Prishtina.

This achievement in supporting promising student career clubs exemplifies USAID's efforts to enhance partnerships between industry and academia, fostering economic growth. It demonstrates the power of collaboration between universities and the private sector in empowering students for career success and nurturing a proactive professional community in Kosovo's ICT and agriculture sectors.