



USAID
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Do You Know a Boy Called Dejan, From Derventa Near Milići?

“Fund for Supporting Businesses Owned By Marginalized Women”



Project title: Fund for supporting businesses owned by marginalized women

Project duration: 1 October 2016 - 28 October 2017

Funding: BAM 680,000

Project implemented in: Zvornik, Livno, Kalinovik, Visoko, Rudo, Tešanj, Teslić, Konjic and Prijedor

Project summary: USAID's Marginalized Populations Support Activity in cooperation with 9 local units of self-government provides support in developing businesses to marginalized women. Funds are intended for SMEs run by women with disabilities, mothers of children with disabilities, women from rural areas, women victims of violence, young unemployed women...

Dejan is a boy living and growing up in Derventa near Milići. Like most other boys, he is passionate about soccer, and dreams of one day playing for Partizan. Dejan wants to be in the same club with the best, which is why he trains several times a week at the soccer club “Birač”. This soccer club is the only refuge for children and youth in this small town, for both boys and girls.

Dejan says that his only activities are going to school, training and playing video games.

There is no high school, movie theater or youth center where he lives, so he and his peers can't spend quality free time there, and the soccer club is the only place they have. A handful of local enthusiasts - soccer fans and former players - are fighting to keep this club afloat. The Soccer Alliance of RS gives them some money for playing games, and they scrape up funds themselves for everything else.

For jerseys they often use sponsor T-shirts they're given by kind people, or that they win in games, and their club only trains pioneers and seniors. They don't have cadets, because there are not enough young people there. Until recently, their matches couldn't always be played, because their facilities for players and referees were unfurnished. USAID's Marginalized Populations Support Activity helped them renovate the facilities and continue hosting matches, by providing them with the necessary funds. For them the renovation meant survival, for the children it meant joy – not only for children from Derventa, but from neighboring towns as well.

Boys and girls, young and old play and celebrate victories in the soccer club “Birač”. They only want one thing – to play and to keep the club alive, because it's the only place they can socialize in the small town of Derventa, which feels more deserted by the day.

All that Derventa has are the soccer club “Birač” and the church committee – according to locals, who use every soccer match as their only opportunity to get together, socialize and brighten their day.

The managers are happy that the facilities were renovated and that matches continue, and so are Derventa's youth. Now they have a reason to train even more and become even better. Losing the club would take away what little liveliness is left to those who haven't left this small town yet, where every year sees fewer schoolchildren, fewer jobs and less joy.

But, the enthusiasts from the beginning of the story are not giving up on the club. They're continuing to search for ways to keep the club running and progressing, because they want to keep the smiles on the faces of youth – they want life to stay in this small town. They want to keep helping talent flourish and give boys and young men the opportunity to learn to play soccer, so that someday they may play for a big club. They want to help them make their dreams come true, because there have already had players who started in this club and moved on to bigger ones. It means a lot to those fighting for this club, who now watch them play in other cities and other countries.

They've survived for now, and they say they'll keep forging ahead. They have the necessary facilities, field, and young players eager to give their best, and they'll find a way to get everything else they need, said the locals, who live for this club.