



Emigration and development of  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

# BEST PRACTICES





Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Confederaziun svizra



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

# Emigration and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina

## BEST PRACTICES

*This publication encompasses twelve stories describing experiences of successful BiH emigrants who decided to support development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The stories were prepared as part of the “Migration and Development Project – Mainstreaming the Concept of Migration and Development into Relevant Policies, Plans and Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Government of Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).*

*The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Government of Switzerland or UNDP.*

# Introduction

According to official statistics, almost a million and a half of natives of Bosnia and Herzegovina live outside the country, amounting up to nearly forty percent of the total population. With the second and third generation of migrants included, estimates are as high as two million. These emigrants are often highly educated people, who have achieved significant success in the countries they immigrated to, yet still have an unrelenting interest in returning to their country of origin. Such successful people represent a huge potential for the country's development in various sectors, such as economy, agriculture, health, education and social sectors.

***“Migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Switzerland are very much present in societies of both countries”, said Joseph Guntern, Director of the Swiss Cooperation of the Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo. “They participate in social, economic and cultural life of our country, but are also interested in actively supporting the development of their homeland and its prosperity on the path of democracy”.***

Unfortunately, this potential is almost entirely untapped. The role of migration is crucial for developing countries for it can contribute to the growth of investment and establishment of developmental relations, as well as stimulate the exchange of ideas, good practices, cultural, business and other types of cooperation. Understanding migrants abroad as a driving force would largely change the image of Bosnia and Herzegovina and show the greatness of its potential for development and that the main key to this development lies in the hands of the people of this country, wherever they may be.

With that in mind, in the mid-2013 the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, the Swiss Embassy and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina launched the project Migration and Development: Mainstreaming

the Concept on Migration and Development (M&D) into relevant Policies, Plans and Actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project aims to contribute to creating a favourable environment for emigrants who are willing to promote and proactively support the development of the country in the relevant spheres of socioeconomic development on all institutional and societal levels. The project encourages the vertical harmonisation of national strategies and resources related to migration with local development strategies to link national and local efforts and sustainable development results.

***“There is awareness at the Ministry that migrants from BiH represent a huge resource for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there is also an awareness of their willingness and desire to support the development of their country”, said Ruzmira Tihic-Kadric, Assistant Minister in the Department for Emigrants of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina. “The needs and our current activities focus on ensuring a multisectoral approach, involving different stakeholders - institutions at different levels of government, civil society, private sector, donors, academia, migrants themselves and migrant associations - with the aim of creating sustainable mechanisms to channel a greater migrants’ contribution to the development of BiH”.***

Out of numerous existing examples of good practices, where migrants contribute to local development in BiH, twelve examples of successful entrepreneurs from five different sectors are selected since the work, commitment and personal realization and progress in these stories best reflect how this type of approach can serve individual development and business success, development of the country of emigration and, finally, the development of their homeland.

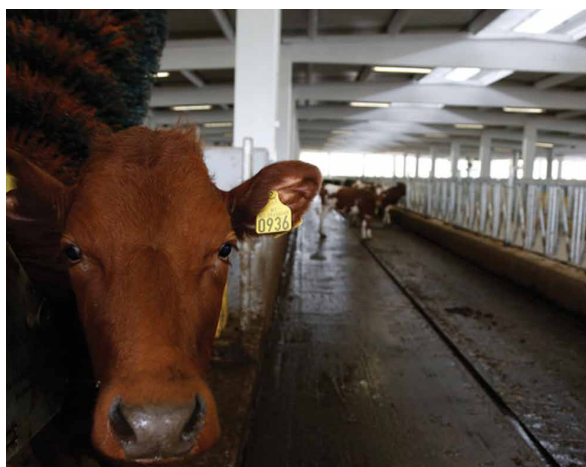
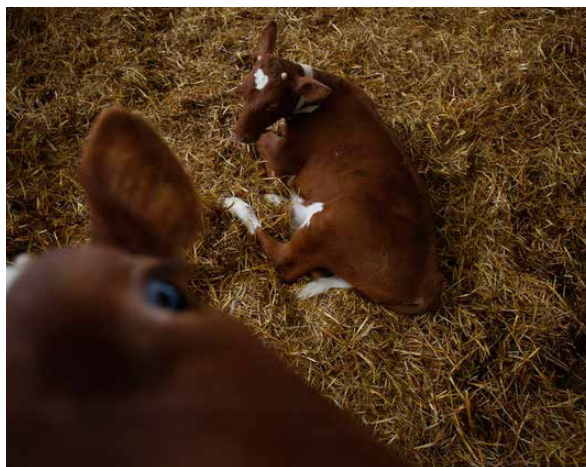
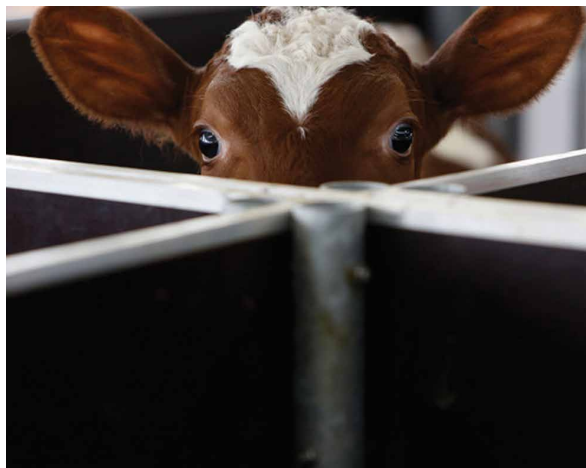
# ARIFAGIC Investment

*The concept that will change the face of BiH Agriculture*

*The breeding and selection centre for the Norwegian red ox, the only centre of its kind in the Western Balkans, was officially opened in the area of Prijedor, in November 2013. It is a project implemented by Jusuf Arifagic, a native of Prijedor, who decided to invest capital in his hometown and country of origin.*

Jusuf Arifagic was born in Kozarac, near Prijedor. He went to Norway with his family in 1992, where he soon established his first company, followed by a few others, progressively successful in business. After acquiring the first significant capital, Jusuf in 2008 realized his dream - he returned to Kozarac to share his success with the homeland and help it progress.

By returning to BiH, Jusuf wanted to break the usual pattern of thinking of our people that it is possible to succeed and be happy only if one leaves forever and moves somewhere abroad. What Jusuf wanted to emphasise is that those countries have also gone through many difficulties before they became economically stable and developed, and that they have to thank their very own people for their success and development, people who migrated in search of business opportunities and subsequently returned to their country in order to improve it.





In 2008 Arifagic bought a large agricultural estate in the village of Trnopolje near Prijedor and three years later began building Arifagic Investment. It all started with the construction of a stable, with the capacity of 700 heads and the surface of 7.300 m<sup>2</sup>. The stable features the most modern equipment worth 2 million BAM, while, so far, over 6 million BAM was invested in the whole project.

In addition, five additional companies were registered, including one that will install and maintain all the necessary equipment for the stables, and the plan is to also open veterinary stations and agricultural pharmacies.

So, Jusuf Arifagic planned out and rounded up a concept which provides for all necessary support to agricultural production in the region and with all his heart hopes that the Prijedor region will set an example for the Balkans when it comes to agriculture. It is also planned to establish a cooperative that will provide all necessary logistical and technical support to the producers.

***Arifagic, with the simplicity of an ordinary man with unusually great deeds, says he made his first steps in Prijedor and intends to make the last ones in Prijedor as well.***

***Experience from abroad to take the homeland into the world.***

# AUSTRONET

*A dream come true through hard work*



IN THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS A 15.000 M2 CENTRE WAS CONSTRUCTED, WITH 8,000 M2 OF PRODUCTION HALLS. THE TOTAL OF OVER 10 MILLION BAM WAS INVESTED THROUGH THE ACCOUNTS OF THE TWO COMPANIES (BETA REAL AND AUSTRONET).

*Austronet company produces netting for different purposes, such as advertising netting for tennis courts and protective netting for the construction industry, and exports 97% of total production. The company cooperates with major construction brands in the world, such as Baumit and Strabag, as well as all brands in the tennis world: Nike, Adidas, Fisher, Head, BNP Paribas, etc. Austronet is the recipient of numerous awards in the small enterprises category.*

Enes Kahrmanovic left BiH in 1991 with his family, and in 1994 he started working with the Plastipack company. While working there, he noticed that certain components used in manufacturing, such as parts made of stainless steel and aluminium, were being imported from the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Turkey and other countries. He then decided to find out which of the components used by the Plastipack could be produced in BiH, and the path of business success opened for him. The first job was agreed with the company Topinox from Prnjavor, whose conditions regarding the price, quality and delivery were far more favourable to those of the companies Plastipack had cooperated with until then, to satisfaction of Austrian owners. After Topinox, cooperation was also established with the Gat company from Sanski Most, under equally favourable terms. Having found several other business partners in BiH, during a visit of the Austrian owners the decision was made to start companies in Kozarac, where Enes took full responsibility for the establishment and management of the companies.

In February 2007 two companies were registered: Beta Real, a construction company, and Austronet, a company manufacturing safety netting for agriculture and construction,

protective nets for the tennis courts, protective sun sails for Soliday brand and printing billboards of unlimited dimensions on different materials.

The decisive moment for Kahrmanovic was the purchase of a land plot in Kozarac, and hiring five people in 2007.

In the next seven years a 15.000 m<sup>2</sup> centre was constructed, with 8,000 m<sup>2</sup> of production halls. The total of over 10 million BAM was invested through the accounts of the two companies (Beta Real and Austronet).

Austronet experienced tremendous growth and now employs 68 people, with a total turnover of around 4 million BAM in 2013. The company nets 97% of export. All this, according to Enes, is the best proof that Austronet is in BiH to stay.

The company ranked first in 2010 among the small companies in BiH, for export performance, and also first for the net profit earned. At the end of 2013, Enes and Austronet company won the awards for the best manager and the best company in BiH for 2013.

***What Enes Kahrmanovic dreamed of and worked for diligently was achieved: new jobs were created, new technologies introduced, production experts were retained in the country, and additional revenues for the local government generated.***

Throughout the entire process of construction more than half the money of the invested 10 million BAM was spent in Prijedor, through engagement of local companies. Austronet, among other things, supported by other companies in the region, managed to keep the customs office in Prijedor, although it was scheduled for relocation to Banja Luka.

Enes encountered numerous obstacles in implementation of his plans. He spent whole days at the municipality building, collecting the necessary permits to start the production, and the entire process took a year. According to him, BiH has outdated legislation which (without delay) must be harmonized with the European laws, and coordination among relevant institutions must be improved.

However, what is very important to Enes is that some new ways of doing business were introduced, which are much more in line with the Western trends. In his opinion, the conditions in BiH are still very good to develop a business and make a good profit. He suggests to potential investors of BiH origin to consult with people who have already invested in the country before coming here, in order to be informed about all the positive and negative circumstances.

# BONTEX

## *Shirts tailored with love*

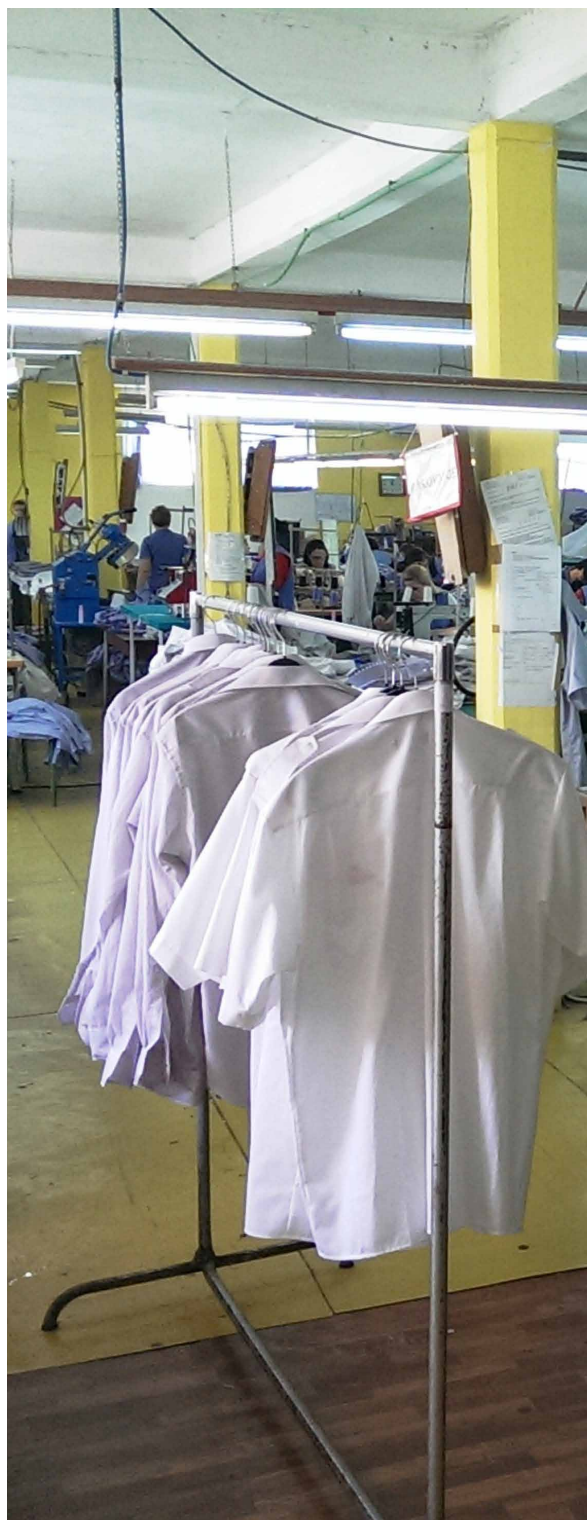
*Bontex Maglaj Company, founded in 2005, produces high quality shirts sold on the western market. Today the company has 200 employees, with plans to increase the number, and the ambition to become one of the European leaders in production of men's and women's shirts by 2017.*

Senaid Husic went to Switzerland in 1986, where he acquired knowledge and experience that he right away knew he wanted to use to help develop his place of origin, to which one day he will return.

Twenty years later he did it, realizing that Maglaj before the war had a developed textile industry and it is still an area worth investing in the postwar period. Husic then bought a prestigious Swiss company and its brands Ines and Danilo.

By signing partnership agreements with other foreign companies and moving the production to BiH, Husic built Bontex into a successful, innovative company that follows trends and consumer needs, with the monthly production volume of 25.000 men's and women's shirts.

**BONTEX ALMOST HAS NO COMPETITION IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET, AND ITS OWNER PREFERS DOING BUSINESS WITH LOCAL COMPANIES (NATRON FROM MAGLAJ AND GIRA FROM GRACANICA). ANNUALLY, BONTEX PLACES UP TO 700,000 KM TO LOCAL COMPANIES IN THE REGION.**

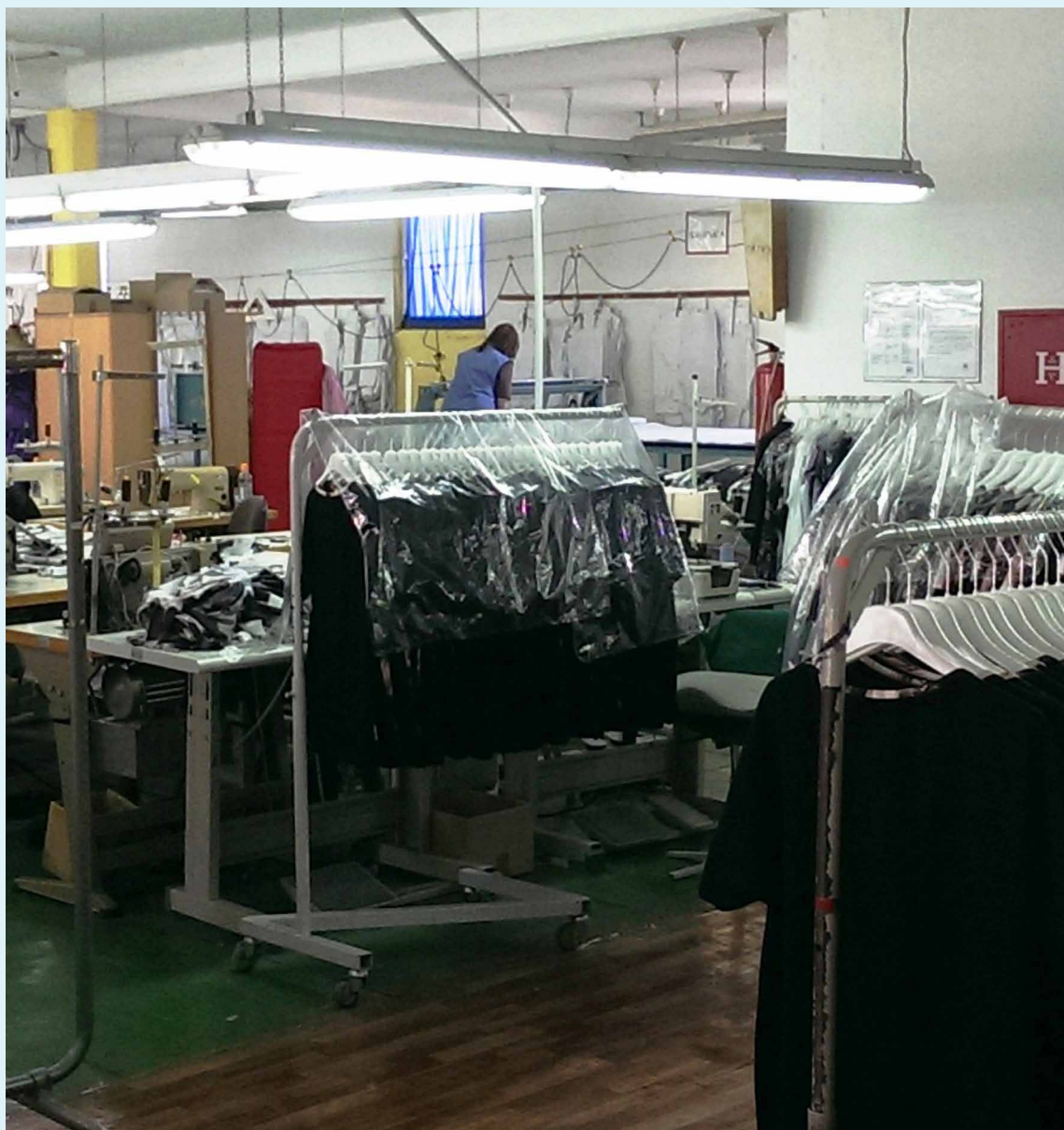




Bontex almost has no competition in the domestic market, and its owner prefers doing business with local companies (Natron from Maglaj and Gira from Gracanica). Annually, Bontex places up to 700,000 KM to local companies in the region.

Senaid Husic believes that BiH diaspora has an invaluable development potential and that 2 million people of BiH origin currently living abroad can do a lot for the development of this country and he is persistent in his mission.

***He says that the key to his success is making products with love.***



# BOSANA Fondacija

## Scholarship for a better life



THE FOUNDATION PROVIDES FULL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 38 STUDENTS FROM THE WHOLE COUNTRY.

*Senita Slipac from Banja Luka was 11 years old when the war started in BiH. After years of exile, the family eventually settled in the United States, but its ties with the homeland never disappeared. Four years ago she founded the Bosana Foundation to help disadvantaged children in BiH. The goal of the Foundation is to help children and young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, improve their economic and social status through education and help them prepare for employment.*

Senita Slipac was inspired to establish the Bosana Foundation by the mindset of children in the home for children without parental care in Zenica that she went to visit and support, and who, in fact, helped her understand that the most important thing for them is to provide them with education for a better future. Senita decided to establish a foundation that, through financial and mentoring support, provides an opportunity for education for young people from BiH who are in underprivileged or orphaned children, looking to obtain college education.

By establishing the Foundation, Senita fulfilled the promise she gave herself as a little girl in a refugee camp in the Czech Republic. The Red Cross from Boston visited children in Senita's refugee camp on one occasion to distribute clothes and toys. At that moment, just like the other refugees in the camp, she felt forgotten and useless. Knowing that someone, from some distant land, thinks of them and wants to help was invaluable. Then and there she decided to do the same thing for others if she ever gets the opportunity; hence, the establishment of the Foundation was the realization of her long-standing dream.

By 2013, the Foundation has doubled the number of scholars supported with every next year. In the first year, private donations helped collect \$20.000, in the second year \$42.000, and in the third year \$79.000. In the fourth year, the amount of funds collected remained at the level of \$80.000, because Senita decided in 2013 to return to BiH, where she got a job with the Basketball Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and she continued her work with the Foundation, on an entirely voluntary basis. The reasons for her return are multiple: to strengthen the presence of Bosana in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to acquire associates for the projects, to take better care of the students, and to better control the donated money.

Currently, the Foundation provides full scholarships for 38 students from the whole country. 2014 is a special year, because this year the first generation of seven students completes their education with the support of these scholarships.

The Foundation strives to provide the opportunity for young people to gain new knowledge and develop positive life values and become responsible young people who are willing to help others. The Foundation's scholarships are not only educational, but also life scholarships, allowing young people who have had a very difficult childhood to do what they are good at and what makes them happy.

***However, what Senita insists on the most is the establishment of the sense of interconnectedness of students, regardless of their religious or ethnic background.***

Fellows often say that they feel they are one big family and that, whatever city in BiH they go to, they know they have a brother or a sister there.

The plan of the Foundation for the near future is to start working with high school students, as well as children in primary schools, in order to help them find their way and find out what they want to do in life.



# GENERAL HOSPITAL Nevesinje

## *A venture that means life*



IT IS ESTIMATED THAT MR. LABALO, THROUGH THE FUND, INVESTED OVER SEVEN MILLION BAM IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOSPITAL.

*One of the most modern clinics in South East Europe was opened in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2014, in Nevesinje. The construction of the hospital in Nevesinje began twelve years ago. Funding for this project was provided by the Foundation Mihajlo Labalo, but the end of the construction became questionable after the death of Mihajlo Labalo in 2007. Half a million BAM was needed to complete the construction of this health institution, and, in the end, it was provided from a share of the profit of the Power Utility of the Republika Srpska, and allocated for the construction and interior work in the hospital. Funds for the modern equipment will be provided by the Health Insurance Fund and other institutions of the RS.*

Mihajlo Labalo was born in the village of Lukavac near Nevesinje in 1923. He lived in Nevesinje until 1942, and then he went to the distant Peru. After a few years in Peru, Labalo moved to the United States of America. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina he was extensively involved in humanitarian work and supplying the area he came from with food, clothing and medicines. In 1997, along with the Association of Herzegovinians from the United States, he launches an operation of providing continuous scholarships for children of fallen soldiers.

In 2001, Mr. Labalo establishes the Mihajlo Labalo Foundation, which was later renamed Charity Fund Mihajlo Labalo Nevesinje. The construction of the new hospital, in the near vicinity of the old one, was until 2007 funded solely by Mr. Labalo, through his donations, and the municipality provided documentation, land and infrastructure.

He did not live to see the completion of the work - he died in May 2007, at the age of 84, in his native village of Lukavac, just two days after his arrival from the United States. He was buried in the churchyard of his endowment, the Church of St. Basil of Ostrog, in near vicinity of the future hospital.

In 2009, the construction of the hospital continued thanks to the funds paid into the account of the Foundation from the USA, by the wife of Mr. Labalo and her daughter, in the amount of 2.7 million BAM. It is estimated that Mr. Labalo, through the Fund, invested over seven million BAM in the construction of the hospital, while another half million BAM is needed to complete all the works.

Thanks to a great deal of persistence of the staff working on the project and a lot of luck, the fall of 2013 brought the provision of the necessary funds, thanks to the Government of the Republika Srpska and the Power Utility of the Republika Srpska and the final works on the construction have been completed. Final activities related to the official opening are ongoing.

***Involvement of Mr. Labalo was invaluable for Nevesinje and the surroundings. According to Velibor Milivojevic, the Chairman of the Steering Board of the Fund, without the opening of the new facility, the hospital would have stopped existing in this area.***

As stated, more than half of hospital staff is the only employed ones in their families, and the lack of medical care, as well as lack of work, affects young people and they leave the region. The new hospital will introduce and apply new technologies, create new jobs, generate additional revenues for local self-government and provide the local health care professionals with the opportunity to gain new knowledge.

Mihajlo Labalo undoubtedly gave something of vital importance to all the citizens of Nevesinje. Unfortunately, he has run out of time to see the construction of his hospital through. However, humanity and loyalty to one's people and area do not have an expiration date and they surpass even the life itself.



# PERFETTO Plus

Perfect taste of tradition



SPECIALTIES THE COMPANY IS PARTICULARLY PROUD OF ARE THE CHEESE FROM THE BELLOWS AND THICK CREAM (KAJMAK) CHEESE, AND THOSE ARE ALSO THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER.

*Perfetto Plus is the most popular company in eastern Herzegovina in the manufacture and sale of ecologically clean, domestic, traditional and dairy products from the area of Nevesinje. Currently the company employs four staff and has approximately 150 contractors. Since this is a family enterprise, the production process involves members of the immediate and extended family.*

Brother and sister, Goran Pejicic and Gordana Kljatic, and their company, Perfetto Plus from Nevesinje, are one of those brave and valuable exceptions, raising hopes for a better tomorrow.

After five years in Italy, where he worked in a cheese factory, Mr. Pejicic out of love for his hometown Nevesinje returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with his sister Gordana, and, in 1997 he founded a company for production of cheese and other dairy products, Perfetto Plus.

A 20-liter container with which they began manufacturing is still used in the family house in Nevesinje, although the production increased, and the house was a subject of continuous adaptations in order to meet this growth.

The first cheese they produced was the Italian Fiocchi di latte. After that, they invested a lot of effort in the production of various cheeses from Nevesinje area on the basis of traditional recipes.

Today, Perfetto Plus is the most popular company in eastern Herzegovina, known for the production and sale of dairy products. The company produces a variety of cheeses and dairy products such as local kačkavalj cheese, thick cream (kajmak) cheese, mozzarella of Nevesinje, cheese for pies, dietetic cheese, torotan cheese, feta cheese, full-fat cheese from the bellows etc. and their customers have only words of praise for these products.

Specialties the company is particularly proud of are the cheese from the bellows and thick cream (kajmak) cheese, and those are also the most sought after. At first, the traditional products of this kind were sold in limited quantities in the market, and after the launch of Perfetto Plus they have become available to customers across Herzegovina.

Given that this is a family company, the production process involves members of the immediate and extended family, and the company employs four staff and 150 contractors. Customers are both large and small stores, retail chains in Nevesinje area and beyond.

In order to employ a higher level of production capacity of the Perfetto Plus company, it is necessary to primarily increase the production capacity of small producers to purchase from. Long-term plan of the company is to relocate the production to another location, which will allow for faster growth and better working conditions. Additional challenges for the company are the collection of payments and standardisation of quality and taste of the product produced in line with the most stringent criteria.

The company's success was achieved thanks to Goran's and Gordana's hard work, continuous improvement and a number of experiments that have been a great joy for this business enthusiastic duo, when successful.

***Gordana emphasizes that no place in the world is ideal, but that neither her family nor she wanted to be anywhere else than in their native land where they find it to be the most beautiful of all.***



# REGENERACIJA d. o. o.

*Success is the reward for hard work*

*Regeneracija d.o.o. company from Velika Kladusa was founded in 2005. The main activity of the company is the manufacture and installation of wastewater and rain water treatment devices and water supply systems. To date, the company has expanded its operations to the drainage of roads and bridges. The company employs 60 workers.*

Edin Miljkovic left Krajina in 1994 and went to Germany, where he spent most of his time in Frankfurt. Although he progressed in the automotive sector, his life's ambition to return to BiH and start his own business never subsided.

At the end of 2005 he meets the Slovene, Jozse Berganti, who at that time was looking for a business partner in BiH in order to start production in the ecology sector. After the initial meetings the cooperation was agreed upon and Regeneracija company registered in October 2005. The production started in January 2006. At that moment, the company had three employees.

The main activity of the company is the manufacture and installation of wastewater and rain water treatment devices and water supply systems. In addition, Regeneracija is engaged in trade through representation of companies from around the world. Edin is most proud of the production because, he says, the hardest thing to do today is to produce.







The company currently has 63 employees and almost all of its turnover is done in BiH, in which Edin takes particular pride.

In the coming years, the company wants to focus on the further development of its staff and to invest in local communities wherever possible. Thus, Regeneracija participated in numerous projects in Mostar, Sarajevo and Bihać, which, in various ways, help children with special needs.

THE MAIN ACTIVITY OF THE COMPANY IS THE MANUFACTURE AND INSTALLATION OF WASTEWATER AND RAIN WATER TREATMENT DEVICES AND WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS.

***As Edin says, the company was founded in BiH and there are no plans to move it anywhere. In the coming years, Edin is sure that, with a bit luck, he will be able to realize all his plans because he believes that hard work always brings success and always pays off.***

***Travel in pursuit of knowledge,  
return in pursuit of heart.***

# ThermoFLUX

## Ideas heat BiH

*ThermoFLUX company for installation of heating systems was founded in 2007, starting from a small family craft with three employees. The company is engaged in the production of hot water boilers and pellet and coal fireplaces, witnessing a steady growth from year to year, and exporting over 30% of its production. ThermoFLUX currently employs 68 workers.*

When Tomislav Ladan left his home Jajce in 1992, with his parents and four siblings, due to unfortunate circumstances, he never dreamed that he would be back 22 years later, running the most successful company in domestic property in the region.

In 2006 Mr. Ladan founded the ThermoFLUX, beginning to produce pellet boilers once realizing that boilers using mostly solid fuel (coal and wood) did not meet the requirements of his customers for whom he installed heating through company Tremag. Tomislav has managed to buy off the facilities of the completely devastated halls of the former Sedinac company for 1.5 million BAM, and he spent additional 800.000 for renovation. The company expands 17.000 m<sup>2</sup>, and the halls - 6,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

*THE COMPANY IS ENGAGED IN THE PRODUCTION OF HOT WATER BOILERS AND PELLET AND COAL FIREPLACES.*



Due to the global rise in oil prices and the increasing popularity of environmentally friendly fuels, ThermoFLUX company is experiencing explosive growth, given that most of those who were previously heating with fuel oil are increasingly deciding to buy pellet boilers, because they do not see an alternative in coal and wood.

In 2013, 41% of the total production was exported, mainly to the countries of former Yugoslavia, mostly Croatia and Macedonia, although some of the export went to Germany, Greece, Portugal, Austria, Denmark, France and Great Britain. In addition, ThermoFLUX emerged as one of the market leaders in this segment in BiH, as a company that is competitive in the European market.

Tomislav Ladan believes that our country offers many opportunities, and that one only needs to remain faithful to one's idea. His optimism is based on the fact that in 2013, 59% of his overall production was made in BiH, in a country that is small and relatively poor. In the future, he plans for a production of parts for other companies, and sale of wood-chip boilers.

***Tomislav has never regretted his return to his hometown Jajce, and says that, if he could go 15 years back in time, he would still choose Bosnia and Herzegovina.***



# DDC

## Global leaders use services of a Sarajevo-based IT company



ADNAN MANDŽO WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS NATIVE COUNTRY BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IT HAS BIG POTENTIAL WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS DOING AND PROGRESS.

*Adnan Mandžo was born in Sarajevo in 1977 and, due to the sequence of unfortunate circumstances in 1992, he fled to the Netherlands. Today he owns the IT company DDC which has been steadily growing every year. His motives to return to BiH, says Adnan, were private, emotional, and financial. He wanted a change and a new beginning, and also to contribute to the development of his native country because he believes it has big potential when it comes to successful business doing and progress.*

Having worked for two years as a human resources manager at the DevLogic company, he accepted the position of director with the DDC. Subsequently, under Adnan's leadership, the company consistently grew.

DDC provides administrative services to foreign companies, mostly related to data entering and processing (Business process outsourcing). Adnan believes that there is a huge range of services that can be provided and that most foreign companies can save by entrusting some parts of the work to someone else, such as DDC, who is cheaper and faster in doing it for them.

***The strength of the company, according to Adnan, is its diversity in terms of the number of languages the employees are actively using.***

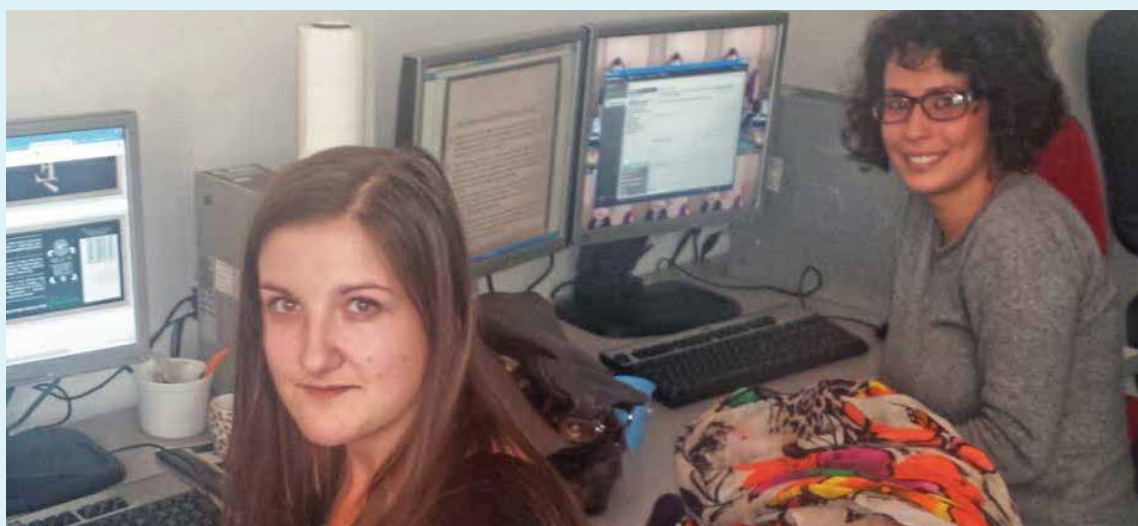
The company mainly employs young people, and the number of employees often varies, given that most of the staff is hired on a project basis. On the average, the company employs between 20 and 30 people, 70% of whom are women.

Not only that the company contributes to creation of new jobs, it also offers opportunities for employment and easier integration to members of the diaspora who have decided to return to the country, but also to young people who are beginning their careers and want to learn something new, and stay in BiH. In addition, the company often hires people who have been unemployed for a long time and DDC is often a springboard for them, to find employment more easily in other companies, and higher positions.

Paperwork and bureaucracy is a major obstacle that DDC encounters on a daily basis, as do all other companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina: it is very difficult to come up with incentives, for example, for employment of young people and women.

The company plans to introduce the provision of documents' digitizing services. "Damages are considerable in hard times, as was the case with the recent fires or floods, which can partially or completely destroy the invaluable archives", said Adnan. "For all of us, as well as our children, it is of utmost importance to preserve our heritage and prevent that such documents disappear forever".

The IT sector, according to Adnan, has ideal potential for incentives and investment, and does not require any physical transport of goods. What is needed is the IT infrastructure and high-speed internet connection, which is on a quite high level in BiH. He concludes that we need not go far to see the examples of good practices, such as the case of Poland, that has benefited enormously in this sector, and which in 2013 organized the world's largest IT conference, previously held in Germany.



# BHAAAS

## *Global Approach as a catalyst for change*



THE IDEA OF THE ACADEMY IS TO SERVE AS A CATALYST IN FINDING TALENTED PEOPLE AND HELPING THEM USE AND EXPRESS THEIR INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

*BHAAAS is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and develop the science and art in Bosnian diaspora in the North America, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the Academy there are five sections that operate separately: medical, humanitarian, scientific, artistic and technological sections. Bearing in mind that the majority of the members of the Academy are healthcare workers, BHAAAS has made a significant contribution to the development of the health sector in BiH. President of the Academy is Gordan Srkalovic.*

President of the Academy, Gordan Srkalovic was born in Sarajevo, where he graduated from the Medical School in 1982. After the outbreak of war Gordan moved to the United States, where he specialized in internal medicine and then successfully completed subspecialization in the field of vascular and malignant diseases.

During the war Gordan participated in various initiatives to collect medical equipment which would then be sent to BiH. When he learned of the initiative of forming BHAAAS's, he joined without hesitation. In fact, part of his American dream was the love of the home country that never left him, the country he wanted to share his American dream with.

The main reason for starting the Academy was emotional in nature, because all the members are Bosnians and Herzegovinians, people who feel that way and identify themselves as such. The Academy is aware that smart people and rare talents live in BiH and believe it would be a tragedy not to use those people to contribute to their community, and the world.

The idea of the Academy is to serve as a catalyst in finding talented people and helping them use and express their intellectual abilities as much as possible. Gordan believes that this is the greatest contribution that BHAAAS can do.

## ***The Academy operates on a long term basis and was launched with a big and bold idea to contribute to the positive transformation of BiH.***

The Academy has been organizing the international biomedical symposia BHAAAS days for five years now, a three- or four-day event that brings together distinguished experts and scholars in the fields of intensive care medicine/anesthesiology, neurosurgery, orthopedics, oncology, psychiatry and psychology, pediatrics and genetics, general medicine and family medicine, all with the aim of exchanging experiences and new knowledge.

BHAAAS closely cooperates with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Gordan highlights the significant cooperation with the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra. The Academy feels sorry that the cultural institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (museums and other public cultural institutions) are going to waste. Although BHAAAS is not able to support each one of them, the Academy has estimated that the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the institutions that seek to preserve and maintain the cultural identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and decided to cooperate with and assist it.

There are many obstacles for the work of the Academy, and they are mostly political or financial in nature.

However, Gordan is convinced that every country that has invested in knowledge, talent and development succeeds. A brighter future for our country lies in the system that will provide full support for capable and talented people to stay at home and realize their plans here. Regarding the global approaches to the issue, the Academy has the intellectual potential to help the development, but the solutions and the application of those solutions are still a problem that must be solved within the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

# *Out of sight but in mind.*

# LASTAVICA Association

*Culture lives through the understanding of self and others*

*Association Lastavica was founded in April 2009 with the intention to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of the countries of the former Yugoslavia in the Czech Republic and encourage its expansion. In addition, the Association seeks to develop and support research and education in the Czech Republic and the former Yugoslavia, particularly in the fields of medicine and engineering. President of the Association is Edib Jaganjac.*

Perhaps the only association of its kind in the world, the Association Lastavica brings together citizens (approximately 300) from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. President Edib Jaganjac was born in Sarajevo in 1957. In the early nineties Edin left Sarajevo and moved to the Czech Republic, which today has a population of 6,000 persons originating from the former Yugoslavia.

At the same time, Association Lastavica was established in Sarajevo, to provide for easier operations in this area. Head of the Association is Dr. Dragisa Djogovic, living and working in Sarajevo in the General Hospital Prim. Dr. Abdulah Nakas, as the Head of Surgery.

Lastavica is exclusively financed through donations of its 300 members. The Association was founded as a result of the wish of people to join in together, with the same goal, but also trying to change the image people from the territory of former Yugoslavia had in the Czech Republic, refugees away from



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their homes due to the war and inter-ethnic clashes.

Nowadays, events organized by the Academy Lastavica are well appreciated and followed by the media.

Through its activities, Lastavica seeks to celebrate the common cultural heritage of the nations, the people, and focuses on the activities that will contribute to their rapprochement, while avoiding those that would cause division.



That is why an ethics committee was established to decide on the events for the Association to participate in.

In 2009, Lastavica won the publishing achievement award at the 22nd International Book Fair in Sarajevo, for the Selected Works of the Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andric, in the Czech language. Andric's works were handed out to the eminent personalities from the cultural and political life of the Czech Republic and students of Slavic languages and 119 Czech libraries with over a thousand members. The Association also published the collected works of Krleza, and the same is planned for Mesa Selimovic, Isak Samokovlija and Mak Dizdar, whose works have already been translated into the Czech language. Other events included exhibitions of painter Izet Alecković from Sarajevo, painter Pedja Djakovic from Derventa, as well as Dubravko Mokrovic, a painter from Zagreb, and great media attention was raised by the seven-day retrospective of films by Lordan Zafranovic, who is also a member of the Association.

The Association has been active within the humanitarian sector. Lastavica and its members make it possible, through private donations, for the children from the SOS villages from the former Yugoslavia to visit the Czech Republic. Each year, about 60 children from these villages visit Prague.

***Although its members believe that “their Yugoslavia” disappeared during the war, after which new borders and countries were created, they did not change much themselves. Members of Lastavica live “business as usual” in the microcosm of friendship and love and try to build a world based on the principles of tolerance and understanding.***



# HUB 387

## IT sector as an area of possibilities



HUB 387 OR AS EDIN CALLS IT “DISNEYLAND FOR IT”.

*Edin Saracevic left his native Sarajevo in 1995 and settled in the United States, where he founded his first IT company, and three more later on. He returned to BiH in 2013, committed to establishing his first information-programming HUB (HUB387) in Sarajevo. This increasingly popular business concept involves bringing a large number of IT companies to one location. HUB 387 currently consists of 16 companies, such as: Mistral Technologies, Authority Partners, Starting Point, NEST 71, OliveBH and others.*

By setting up the HUB, Edin seeks to prevent the departure of talented and valuable experts to foreign countries and cities such as Berlin, known for its HUBS, thus contributing to the development of the domestic economy, with a focus on the IT sector.

Edin considers Sarajevo his home and a place he is very emotionally attached to, which is the reason that the HUB was set up right here. He considers his stay in the USA a temporary solution, even though he spent twenty years there.

HUB 387 or as Edin calls it “Disneyland for IT” seeks to house the entire IT industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina under one roof and on an area of over 2,400 m<sup>2</sup>, provide superior education to IT specialist and allow the people of Sarajevo to work on the largest IT projects in the world. The basic advantages of doing business in HUB are opportunities for intensive cooperation, faster exchange of knowledge as well as joint activities of small and medium IT companies.

Through networking and strengthening competitiveness, this would be a way to access new and larger markets and enable the creation of new jobs. Other benefits, according to Edin, including significant savings in the cost of renting space, heating and utilities, actively participating in and attending various training courses, seminars and hackatons, etc.

There is also room there for IT freelancers NEST 71, for those who do not have already formed teams. Edin, as a co-founder, says that this concept is reminiscent of Google's. The Nest 71 now has the incubation of eight start-up companies that will introduce new ways of doing business and will have mentors from Silicon Valley, California, as an area with the highest concentration of important high-tech companies in the world. In addition to mentoring, these companies will be provided with necessary financial and all other support infrastructure.

Edin has recognized the importance of the work and education of young people. For this reason, HUB 387 has launched some courses/trainings for high school students and also plans to work in primary schools, so as to popularise the IT industry among the younger generation. In his opinion, IT segment can become one of the major strategic, developmental pillars for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to Edin, young people are reluctant through no fault of their own; instead, it is the legacy of the former system, where we were used to not taking responsibility. But in general, Edin thinks that BiH has many smart and talented young people, and that we are creative and able to improvise as people, which is highly appreciated as a quality in the IT sector.

In BiH, as in any other country, it is impossible to work and operate without problems, says Edin, but too much energy and resources are spent on time consuming administrative procedures. In Edin's view, the key is in mutual cooperation between the diaspora and youth in BiH. Firstly, it is necessary to find out who our diaspora is and how they can contribute to our development. Next, it is necessary to develop a platform that will allow for an easier flow of financial and human resources to diaspora community in BiH through concrete pilot initiatives. If this proves useful, these initiatives should be further developed and improved.

***The new digital world, especially IT, according to Edin, opens up new and incredible possibilities. In his opinion, popularization of IT should be done in a far more systematic and organised way, rather than being reduced to sporadic initiatives.***

# Conclusion

These examples of good practices from different sectors where people with vision and ideas are joined in the tireless work and commitment, have shown that the cooperation of emigrants and subsequent returnees to BiH strengthens not only the domestic economy, businesses, culture and education sectors, but also strengthen and increase visibility of communities of our people abroad.

In all the stories, it is important to note that they all had to deal with excessive bureaucracy and overcomplicated regulations and paperwork. That however did not stop these people from moving forward. In addition, their experience showcases deficiencies in the functioning of administration, at different levels and how it adversely affects the desire, willingness and ability of individuals to achieve their business plan.

In careful reading of their stories, one may also observe their astonishment and disappointment with the fact that the potential for development offered in the strengthening of links between emigrants and homeland remains untapped.

***Their faith in BiH as a country with emerging opportunities, and not a place where opportunities end, stems from the fact that they themselves were convinced of these opportunities and potentials, and had used them positively.***

No business venture is easy, and in no country is the road to success easy and fast. Instead it is accompanied by hard work and perseverance. Good and useful experience that can be transferred to their home country is invaluable in order to eliminate obstacles to development, strengthen the links between our people abroad and those living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and connect people from different professional fields in a common effort to build their homeland by developing themselves as individuals.



Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*