



USAID
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

Life-Sustaining Raspberries

“Fond za podršku u razvoju biznisa marginaliziranim grupama žena”



Project title: Fond za podršku u razvoju biznisa marginaliziranih grupa žena

Project duration: 1. 10. 2016. - 28. 10. 2017.

Funding: 680.000 KM

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

Project summary: Cooperation between USAID/PPMG and its partners – local self-government units – fosters an environment conducive to establishing and improving institutional mechanisms for supporting businesses owned by marginalized women.

Every day, Jasminka Kojić climbs up and down a little hill 40 times, carrying a bucket of water to keep her raspberries alive so that she can feed her family. She doesn't mind, she says, because without raspberries they'd have nothing. This young woman lives in Zelinje, a town near Zvornik. She is a mother of three, and her raspberry business is the only income for her five-member household.

Jasminka couldn't find a job in Zelinje, and neither can her husband. They are putting two children through school and have another to feed. But how? This is what Jasminka is wondering, since she pays 150 BAM every month just to get her two schoolchildren bus passes. But how does she pay for everything else?

Throughout her life Jasminka didn't have much choice, but she knew she had to do something to feed her family. She saw her chance in growing raspberries, and hard work doesn't scare her. But she had to start somewhere. She had a piece of land and some planted raspberries, but not enough for a family of five to live on.

She was supported by USAID's Fund for Supporting Businesses Owned by Marginalized Women and the City of Zvornik. She used the funds she received to buy more raspberry plants and start her own business – a real small family business.

She planted her new raspberries last year, and now she's caring for them to maximise her crop and quality. Although it's arduous work, like mining, Jasminka says she does it willingly because there's nothing else to do. Growing raspberries takes a lot of work, and the crop depends on many factors, the summer and winter, drought and frost...

Jasminka gets up at dawn and goes to sleep late. Raspberries have to be planted, pruned, watered and picked. Harvest begins in June, and Jasminka picks them under the scorching sun, without much rest, because she has to sell them that same day.

“Raspberries are ruined if they spend the night outside of cold storage. We pick them all day and load them into the buyer's reefer truck in the evening. That's the only way to maintain the quality of the fruit, and make some profit.” – says Jasminka.

Jasminka's entire family cares for the raspberries. Her children help, and her youngest son keeps her company whenever the weather is good.

The support she received from USAID's Marginalized Populations Support Activity and the City of Zvornik means a lot to her, because she wouldn't be able to make a living in Zelinje otherwise. With the new plants, she is hoping to produce up to three metric tons of raspberries, weather permitting. She is hoping for better prices too, which would in turn improve the quality of her family's life. She would like to expand her business, but she doesn't have the funds. She does everything manually. She doesn't have an irrigation system or the tools necessary to properly till the land and care for her crops, but she's not giving up. She's grateful for the support and determined to seize this opportunity to grow.

Jasminka is one of a hundred women who received support from USAID's Marginalized Populations Support Activity and nine local administrations in launching and developing their own business, which will provide them with a livelihood, independence and restore their faith in a better future.