



ANNUAL REPORT

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CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION *of your valuable contribution and dedication during your time with Germin*

FJOLLA VUKSHINAJ	LIRA HAXHIJAKUPI	SHPETIM SHUJAKU	FLORIDA KUQAJ
SELVJE KURTI	DONJETA ELEZAJ-KRASHI	NAIM ROBELLJ	GENITA REXHEPI
ARBOR MJEKU	KALTRINA KUSARI	LEONORA CERRETI	BURBUQE MUHADRI
DIANA	BLERINA SHKILLAJ	HANA HALILAJ	DONIKA GASHI



10 Years of Germin

This year, Germin celebrates 10 years of dedication and impact, strengthening the ties between the diaspora and the homeland, while creating opportunities for Albanians around the world. Over the past decade, Germin has launched key initiatives that have directly improved conditions for the diaspora, including organizing important events like Diaspora Flet, supporting women in politics and entrepreneurship, expanding opportunities for youth, and building platforms that connect diaspora professionals with local and central institutions, as well as businesses in their places of origin.

In collaboration with the Global Albanian Foundation, we have raised over \$1 million through philanthropy and supported more than 50 organizations in Shqipëri, Kosovë, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

Programs like OriginAL and the Diaspora School have created valuable opportunities for youth and professionals from the diaspora, helping them invest in professional and educational growth in the region.

As we mark this milestone anniversary, Germin expresses deep gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey. We remain committed to growing and strengthening diaspora connections, while creating new opportunities for Albanians worldwide in the years ahead.

We look forward to continuing this journey with you, growing stronger together, and achieving even greater impact.

Thank you for being part of our story.

The Germin Team



Peer-to-Peer Mentoring with the Diaspora



The “Peer-to-Peer Mentoring with the Diaspora” program, funded by USAID and implemented by IREX and Germin, strengthened the capacities of Workforce Development Councils in the Wood Processing, Agribusiness, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Energy sectors through mentoring and virtual technical assistance from diaspora professionals.

In 2024, the program engaged 21 mentors from the diaspora who provided strategic expertise, enhanced the professional skills of businesses and individuals, and fostered international collaboration.

Renowned mentors such as Dr. Fatbardh Veseli, Serena Nikolin Leka, Ariona Jupi, and Ilda Bruzja made direct contributions to the advancement of these sectors, promoting economic development and connections to global markets.



Dr. Zamira Pode Hirsch, based in Luxembourg, mentored the Association of Wood Processors of Kosova (AWPK), offering guidance on best practices and alignment with European standards.

This program proved to be a successful model of diaspora engagement for the sustainable economic development of Kosova.



Engaging Diaspora Professionals in Local CSOs

Germin implemented the Diaspora Professionals Engagement Program (EDP) as part of the Civic Engagement Program.

This program aimed to give civil society organizations the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of diaspora professionals to support the growth and development of their activities, focusing on the specific needs of each organization.

All civil society organizations operating in Kosovo are eligible to apply and engage experts who can help strengthen their capacities and activities.

In 2024, six professionals from Sweden, Belgium, and Austria were engaged with local civil society organizations.

Working closely with their host organizations, these professionals contributed in various areas, including project writing and management, identifying networking strategies and partnerships with relevant local, diaspora, and international stakeholders, advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, and advocating for environmental protection.

This collaboration helped build stronger civil society efforts through meaningful diaspora engagement.



Diaspora for Women in Politics

The “Diaspora for Women in Politics” project, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), aims to empower women in local politics in Kosovo through mentoring and training. Diaspora professionals mentor women from the municipalities of Shtime, Istog, Vushtrri, Suharekë, Lipjan, Rahovec, and Podujevë.

The main activities include mentoring sessions, training workshops, an online campaign promoting women in local politics, and three-day trainings on topics selected by the participants themselves. In addition, seven diaspora professionals were engaged with the gender equality offices in the project’s target municipalities. The project also organized thematic meetings with women assembly members and local citizens in Vushtrri, Shtime, and Istog.

These efforts helped strengthen women's capacity to influence local policies and led to initiatives that addressed gender-based violence, advanced women’s rights, raised awareness on mental health, and improved health-related policies.

Throughout the year, the project carried out meaningful activities to empower women and promote gender equality. Diaspora professionals contributed directly to the work of gender equality offices in Istog, Lipjan, and Vushtrri.



During their three-week engagements, diaspora professionals collaborated closely with local gender equality officers to shape future work plans focused on advancing gender equality at the municipal level. They also participated in meetings with women assembly members and municipal officials to promote gender equality in decision-making processes.

Before the diaspora professionals were engaged, Germin signed memorandums of cooperation with each municipality to define mutual responsibilities and lay the foundation for long-term partnerships beyond this project.

Beyond local-level engagement, the diaspora mentors held a total of 60 virtual mentoring sessions over eight months. Each month, the seven mentors met with women in politics from the target municipalities, covering topics such as political empowerment, public speaking, election campaigning, public policy, advocacy, and local initiatives.

Diaspora Engagement for Advancing Policy-Making in Kosovo



GERMIN implemented the project “Diaspora Engagement for Advancing Policy-Making in Kosovo,” funded by SMART Balkans (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), with the goal of improving policy-making through diaspora contributions.

The project included an in-depth analysis of diaspora needs, six public discussions in European cities, and the creation of an Advisory Board composed of eight diaspora professionals. In collaboration with the Board, six advisory meetings were held and six policy briefs were developed on key topics.

Five diaspora professionals were physically engaged at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Assembly of Kosovo. Additionally, ten professionals moderated eight virtual discussions and authored eight thematic blogs, covering topics such as national identity, the Albanian language, investment, and women's empowerment in the diaspora.

As part of the project, GERMIN signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with government institutions and hosted a final conference featuring prominent panelists who addressed advocacy, public diplomacy, and the role of the diaspora in advancing Kosovo's presence on the international stage.

All activities were actively promoted across social media channels.



Diaspora4Innovation



In May 2024, the EU4Innovation Program, in partnership with Germin, launched the Diaspora4Innovation project with the goal of activating the global knowledge of the diaspora to generate local impact in Albania. The project aims to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem by empowering students, academics, and start-up actors through the involvement of academic and professional diaspora members.

Under Diaspora4Education, the main goal is to use the expertise and knowledge of diaspora scholars to update existing university courses by integrating innovation and entrepreneurship concepts into various study programs across Higher Education Institutions in Albania.

This approach seeks to improve students' skills and foster collaboration among academics for scientific research and applications to EU-funded programs.

Through Diaspora4Entrepreneurship, diaspora professionals will mentor start-ups and young entrepreneurs by sharing their knowledge and skills to support the growth of entrepreneurship in Albania.

At the same time, Diaspora4Promotion will mobilize diaspora members to promote the local start-up ecosystem by acting as ambassadors and building links with international innovation networks.



The project kick-off event featured a panel discussion on the role of the diaspora in entrepreneurship education. Leaders from academia and industry emphasized the importance of innovation and state support for students and start-ups. Panelists shared inspiring examples and highlighted the need for inter-institutional collaboration to build a strong support system.

The project was described as a major step forward, offering mentorship and knowledge from the diaspora as a key driver in shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Diaspora Support for Albanian Women Entrepreneurs



In 2024, Germin implemented the “Diaspora for Albanian Women Entrepreneurs” project with financial support from the U.S. Embassy in Tirana’s Democracy Commission Small Grants Program. The project created a strong platform for mentoring and professional development for women-led start-ups in Albania.

Over a four-month period, 15 women-led start-ups received 100 hours of intensive mentoring from 10 diaspora experts. The sessions focused on innovation, digital strategy, technology, and leadership skills.

The project significantly impacted the entrepreneurship ecosystem for women in Albania. It improved the managerial skills of 70% of participants and enhanced their ability to pitch to international audiences by 60%. Additionally, 50% reported better access to financing opportunities and international networks.

The Pitching Conference enabled direct connections with diaspora investors, resulting in several follow-up investment conversations. One start-up, Commercey/Bot Medics Care, after mentorship with diaspora expert Arta Statovci, achieved a 25% increase in ROI, a 20% expansion in its client base, and a 30% reduction in operational costs within the first 100 days.

The project concluded with the “Bright Mind Albanian Worldwide Awards 2024” gala, organized by the Albanian Diaspora Business Chamber in Tirana. The start-up Amëza e Dheut won the audience award, standing out among other innovative ventures such as Cyber Morphosis, Doll’app, and Rat Tech.

This project served as a source of inspiration for women entrepreneurs and reinforced the powerful role of the diaspora in Albania’s economic and social development.





Closing of the “Diaspora for Local Economic Development” Project

This project aimed to strengthen the local economies of Kosovo's municipalities by leveraging the expertise and financial resources of the diaspora. It created direct links between diaspora members and local institutions, promoted investment opportunities, and supported partnerships between Kosovo's municipalities and their counterparts in the European Union.

Funded by Caritas Switzerland under the project “Municipal Action for Reintegration and Diaspora – MARDI,” this initiative helped activate the diaspora's potential to boost local economic growth.

On February 29, 2024, GERMIN organized the project's closing event, bringing together institutional actors, investors, and business leaders from the diaspora. The goal was to discuss Kosovo's investment climate, identify promising sectors for foreign investment, and explore twin-city partnerships between Kosovo's municipalities and diaspora-concentrated regions.

The project demonstrated that diaspora engagement can play a strategic role in unlocking local potential and attracting international partnerships for sustainable growth.

The one-day event featured two focused sessions:



The first roundtable, “International Partnerships and Diaspora Investment at the Local Level,” gathered key institutional actors, investors, and experts from Kosovo and the diaspora to analyze the current investment climate, including opportunities and challenges.

The second roundtable, “Driving Local Development through Diaspora Engagement and International Partnerships,” included representatives from municipalities, institutions, and civil society, discussing how coordinated efforts can strengthen local development through sustained diaspora cooperation.

OriginAL

Find your roots



As part of the OriginAL program, a joint initiative between GERMIN and the Global Albanians Foundation, more than 150 young Albanians from around the world took part in an unforgettable experience that connected them to their roots in Kosova and Albania. The program drew over 1,500 applications from young people eager to explore their heritage and learn more about their culture and history.

On October 17, in the heart of New York City, the Albanian-American community gathered for a celebration highlighting OriginAL's achievements and impact. It was a night filled with inspiration, where alumni shared powerful stories about their personal journeys. A message from the President of Kosova, H.E. Vjosa Osmani, emphasized the importance of preserving our national heritage.

Thanks to our generous supporters and advocates, we continue to build meaningful and lasting connections between the new generation of Albanians and their homeland.





Opening of the Albanian Cultural Center in Zagreb

On February 24, Germin Co-Director Lirim Krasniqi attended the official opening of the Albanian Cultural Center in Zagreb. This new space will serve as a multifunctional hub for cultural, educational, and youth activities for Albanian associations in Croatia. During his visit, Krasniqi also met with the only Albanian MP in the Croatian Parliament, Ermina Lekaj Prljaskaj, and the President of the Union of Albanians in Croatia, Esad Çollaku, to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Albanian community in the country.



"Diaspora Edits Wikipedia" Campaign

The Wikimedians of Albanian Language User Group (WoALUG) launched the campaign "Diaspora Edits Wikipedia" from February 20 to March 20, 2024. The campaign aimed to promote Albanian-language content on Wikipedia, increase the number of Albanian-themed articles in other languages, and build a diaspora community engaged in Wikipedia editing. Throughout March, WoALUG held open office hours every Wednesday to assist participants.

Germin Earns ISO 9001:2015 Certification

Germin received the ISO 9001:2015 certification for quality management, ensuring continuous improvement of services, enhanced transparency, and stronger relationships with donors and partners. This achievement marks a key milestone in Germin's commitment to building strong connections and representing the Albanian diaspora with credibility and professionalism.



Aktivitete të tjera

Germin continues to carry out various activities that support and promote cultural, historical, and social values, as well as diaspora engagement for Kosovo's development. These recent visits and activities strengthen connections with communities and enrich the organization's knowledge and experience.



From April 5 to 7, Germin's board of directors and staff gathered to review the achievements of the past four years and to guide the organizational strategy for the next four years. This meeting involved in-depth analysis of results and lessons learned, preparing the organization for a new, more successful chapter.



Another important activity was the Germin team's visit to the Hertica House-School, a symbol of resistance and the preservation of education during the difficult parallel education system period in Kosovo. Azemine Hertica, the daughter of the house owner, shared the story of this extraordinary support for students of the "Sami Frashëri" high school. This visit was part of Germin's volunteer initiatives to preserve and promote cultural and historical heritage.



The team also visited the Prishtina Prison Museum, where survivors of the harsh experiences faced by Albanian prisoners under the Serbian regime shared their stories. This visit took place within Germin's volunteer efforts at socially and historically important sites, highlighting the need to safeguard memory and heritage.

To mark Diaspora Day, Germin organized a working breakfast in Prishtina with diaspora professionals from Europe and the United States. The event focused on exploring ways to strengthen the diaspora's contributions to Kosovo's development and to create closer cooperation opportunities with the homeland.



To conclude the activities, the Germin team visited the city of Manastir to commemorate the 116th anniversary of the Congress of the Albanian Language Alphabet. This historic moment was celebrated with a donation of books to the Linkest Library, enriching its collection and promoting the Albanian language.



These activities reflect Germin's ongoing commitment to strengthening ties with communities and advancing the cultural, historical, and educational values of the diaspora and Kosovo.





Our mission is to serve as a vibrant, dynamic bridge that connects Albanians worldwide to inspire leadership and innovation, enhance engagement and entrepreneurship, and to facilitate and build strategic connections.

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