Kristiana’s Success story

Kristiana P. was born on May 1998 in Greece where her family emigrated in Athens looking for a better life for the children. In Athens Kristiana completed her Bachelor's degree in Jurisprudence (Law). Her first job and income source in Athens was in field as Employee in Real Estate for the sale and purchase of apartments. Later she worked for the protection of the interests of companies in the legal sector. In August 2025 she left Athens, Greece to return to Ksamil, Saranda with her family. The goal was to work in the country of origin and open her activity. After the presentation at the Employment Office, Kristiana was guided by the staff to continue a 2-week professional training course on Small Business Management. Through the cooperation of the Local Government and Local Consultant of IOM in Saranda with NAES, Kristiana completed the 2-week course on Small Business Management, successfully passed the exam at the end of this course and drafted a business plan, which she competed was won the competition with the right to be financed for new businesses. Thanks to it, she opened a clothing trading business in Saranda’s city. She travels every day 12 km from Ksamil to Saranda where she is running an open activity. Kristiana also has a series of other hobbies closely related to art and its products. She has attended a series of training courses for the products of: Clay, Ceramics and Wax (Candle). In her shop, she sells her own hand-crafted products, which she plans to expand sells at the Lungomare (walking market) during the summer. The Trade permit request is delivered in March to the Municipality; coordination and follow up will be done by the IOM Local Consultant together with the responsible group of work for project, which supports this process. Development of an Individual Employment and Education Plan (IEEP) ongoing, is helping her to achieve goals. Stakeholders offered opportunities for her and other people who want to complete their training and skills and start a business. The collaboration between NAES, IOM and Municipality of Saranda in order to coordinate better the process of my integration as a returnee was very successful. During the course, Kristiana learned the fundamentals of strategic planning, financial management and marketing. Hard and soft skills were learned during the training. What I learned about entrepreneurship and small business management was very valuable both at the time of learning and implementation. There were challenges with business terminology in Albanian, as Kristiana grew up in Athens and her knowledge in this field was more limited, but the trainer helped her to acquired all knowledge. She’s preparing for the tourist season, because in addition to the store she aim to expand her activity in the summer market as well. Kristina declares: The next step for me will be to apply for the Municipality grants as I aim to expand my business. With the support of IOM also through the local consultant I will orient myself towards successful and promising enterprises. That is why I am pleased to be included in the IEEP program that IOM is designing. It was especially difficult in the first days and months for all the reasons of reintegration as an immigrant in a society that has changes compared to the environment where I grew up, the mentality, the high cost of living in a tourist city, the insufficient infrastructure that brings traffic and the lack of parking, etc. The slang code of communication heard among the locals that conflicts with the civic culture in some cases. What I miss the most is the lack of activities for young people in particular... over time I began to adapt to the reality here. The support of institutions and organization: IOM and the Municipality have significantly helped with my reintegration. The expansion of my social circle, the capture of different opportunities and the perspective of the future have changed my life significantly.

My life at this moment has entered a new stage, filled with inspiration, with reintegration activity, with challenges, but the important thing is that I do not feel alone because I do not lack support. I look forward to expanding my activity in a productive summer season. I advise all the young people and everyone who wants to come back in Albania: To be informed as much as possible to make the movement as successful as possible, as in this way they will have the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities that IOM and local and national institutions offer in support of persons returned from external migration. This will functionally increase the professional level of individuals so that they can respond to the market according to demand/supply. To take measured and calm steps in their integration into Albanian society by offering and receiving the best values of both parties. To cooperate with IOM to receive the appropriate support in Cooperation with institutions through IEEP plans.

