
Mission

Last Updated Friday, 16 July 2010

SPARK supports people in post-conflict regions to provide for their own means of subsistence by building the capacity of local economic and educational institutions.

SPARK actively mobilises support for this within the Dutch Society, especially among economic and educational institutions.

SPARK is an independent non-profit institution and was founded in 1994. It has field offices in Belgrade, Mitrovica, Pristina and Skopje and SPARK-supported Business Start-up Centres in Bar, Bitola, Kragujevac, Pristina and Zenica. Our annual budget is over 10 million Euro and over 40 staff are employed.

Key principles in our work are:

- A demand-driven approach that pinpoints the needs and priorities of local beneficiaries;

In 2009 SPARK and Birzet University began the process of establishing an ICT incubator in the Business

and IT sector in Ramala, in the Palestine Territories with the aim to encourage students to practice their

entrepreneurial skills, enabling them to make the most of the local market potential and start a profitable

business in the future. The pre-incubation project will build a stronger, more cohesive entrepreneurial

environment that will encourage new business start-ups and spur an entrepreneurial spirit and self employment

attitude that will lead to job creation and increased local economic development. It will enable participants to

better understand the modern demand driven economy and market conditions as well as the positioning of SMEs in the

global economy.

- The promotion of local ownership as precondition for sustainability;

Our entrepreneurial support initiatives reached an important stage in 2009 when the SPARK-run Business Start-Up

Centres (BSC's) in South East Europe began their path towards becoming self-sufficient and independent. In 2009,

they created 706 jobs, helped start 163 new SME's and trained over 4,500 people. SPARK will remain involved in

these centres as an active donor, but it is a true testament to our mission of providing sustainable projects that

our local actors now take ownership of the BSC's. As the BSC's in South East Europe become independent, two new

ones were opened in 2009, one in Liberia's capital Monrovia and one in Birzeit in the Palestine Territories.

- A society-oriented focus that ultimately benefits society as a whole;

Transparency is a key value at SPARK and we believe that being open with our work and impact is beneficial for

everyone working with us and who are involved in our programs. Evaluations from our projects are continuously

presented on our website and with the launch of the TranSPARKency we now display all financial information for

anyone interested.

- The support of long-term cross-regional and international cooperation processes;

The Private Sector Development

projects in South Eastern Europe directly contributed to strengthening regional

cooperation initiatives by encouraging partners to create networks and work together through joint initiatives. It

strengthens national institution capacities hence having a long term positive impact in each country's development

and progress. The regional network adds value to the regional cooperation initiatives since partners are jointly

working on development of regional activities. This enables them to directly share experiences and knowledge that

can improve the private sector environment in their own countries.

Strategy

SPARK projects are developed in accordance with its main strategies for sustainable poverty reduction: Direct Poverty Alleviation through employment, Capacity Building of economic and educational institutions and Policy Making to support more effective participation of these institutions.

Partners

SPARK cooperates with academic and economic institutions, as well as Ministries of Education, Ministries of Economic Affairs, and a large number of NGOs and student organisations across Europe. [Click here to view SPARK's Partners.](#)

Projects

SPARK has developed projects in various parts of South East Europe, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Serbia. Since 2004, SPARK has also been working in Afghanistan. Columbia, Sudan, Iraq, Liberia and the Palestinian Territories are the focus of new project ideas. We currently develop new initiatives with our local economic and educational partners which will be developed over the year 2010. One of the most challenging endeavours is a private international vocational college in Mitrovica (Kosovo). [Click here here for an overview of our past projects.](#)

Quality management

SPARK's quality management system is ISO 9001:2000 certified with certificate number QSC 554.

Download the SPARK flyer