

## Success Story

# Supporting Young Advisors to Enhance MAP and NWFP Practices in Kosovo

Empowering farmers and farmer communities



*Young advisors learning about best practices in the field of MAPs and NWFP.*



*Successful certification of dedicated young agronomists.*

With a vision to enhance the MAP cultivation and NWFP collection practices in Kosovo, CNVP Kosovo is gearing up a dynamic network of advisors to empower local communities and farmers.

Six months ago, about 10 to 15 young agriculture graduates were carefully selected to go through comprehensive training and become dedicated advisors for Kosovo's farmers. Their mission? To help farmers elevate their planting and harvesting practices in the MAP and sustainable collection practices in the NWFP and sectors.

On July 1st 2024, twelve of these dedicated young agronomists were successfully certified for completing the training on "Organic Agriculture, Cultivation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs), and Sustainable Collection of Non Wood Forest Products (NWFPs)", with the aim to become advisors to Kosovo's farmers.

Leading this initiative is CNVP Kosovo's Sustainable Use of Natural Resources for Environment and Economic Development (SUNREED) project, funded by the Swedish Embassy in Kosovo (Sida). For this specific endeavor, the project has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) and the Organika Association, which has vast experience in the development of the NWFP and MAP sectors.

"Recognizing the shortage of advisors from the Ministry of Agriculture available to assist the development of the advisory service in these two sectors, a joint review with Organika revealed the need for more advisors in these areas," said Sebiha Ahmeti Ramaxhiku, environment and community development advisor at CNVP Kosovo.

The aim is to empower farmers and farmer communities to raise the quality of their products across these industries, through an increased involvement of young individuals that are showing a keen interest in its advancement.



*Young agronomists during field training.*

“The best thing about being part of these trainings is learning about organic certification, a topic which is rarely covered in schools. I was surprised to realize how little I knew about something so important in my field,” shared aspiring advisor Sihana Bokshi, a 22-year old graduate of Agriculture and Environmental Engineering.

As the training concludes, Sihana is eager to share her knowledge with farmer groups, hoping for a bright future where Kosovo's organic products are found in regional and global markets.

Under the guidance of the Organika Association, who is carrying out the training sessions and former preparations, the agronomists are being provided with expert knowledge in organic cultivation techniques, sustainable collection, post-harvest management, quality standards, and processing technologies of MAPs and NWFPs. Their training not only covers technical aspects but also teaches the importance of sustainable practices and organic certification, which builds a holistic approach to farming development.

Following the training, each agronomist contracted with Organika is tasked with going to the field and establishing connections with farmers for various consultations.

“Now that our network of advisors is to be dispersed across Kosovo, we will help ensure that their services reach those who need them,” explained Faton Nagavci, Director of Organika Association. All stakeholders shall build on this network of advisors in order for it to become instrumental in driving forward the agenda of sustainable agriculture at a national level, said Nagavci.

With each advisor serving as a driver for positive change, the partnership is paving a way for a stronger farming sector in Kosovo, empowered by community support.

CNVP Kosovo's Sustainable Use of Natural Resources for Environment and Economic Development (SUNREED) project, is a five-year project, funded by the Swedish Embassy in Kosovo and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).