

**WEAVING COURSE AND JOBS FOR WOMEN IN ZUZELJICA**



*Vesna Mitrovic and her colleagues create weaved materials for new customers*



*Scene from Zuzeljica Weaved Materials Exhibition in Bujanovac town*

ZUZELJICA, SERBIA – Through the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) program USAID and CHF supported a weaving course for women in Zuzeljica community and promoted economic development in this community. Nine women from Zuzeljica (housewives, IDPs and women who lost their jobs) had the opportunity to attend the course and to continue with weaving businesses to generate income for themselves and their families by selling these high quality materials.

Zuzeljica is a village close to Bujanovac town. Water supply system, street lighting, waste containers and a computer center have been completed as successful CRDA project so far in this community. The weaving course brought new interest of the citizens for CRDA program.

Vesna Mitrovic (36) is one of nine women participating in the weaving workshop. She is married, has two sons, Ivica and Zoran, and formally she is employed in a Bujanovac company that produces hand made carpets. Unfortunately, she hasn't received a salary for months. The needs of the family are very high. Her older son Ivica (16) is in the Technical High School in Vranje and younger son Zoran (11) is attending primary school in Bujanovac.

Vesna says that she personally doesn't have confidence that something good will happen to her factory. This situation

forced her to start thinking about beginning to work at home. "I was very surprised when I heard that one of the CDC project proposals was this weaving course, and even more when people from CHF said that they will support this project", said Vesna.

With USAID funding, CHF provided 200 weaving threads and trainings to these nine women. Bujanovac municipality bought three looms. Interested women provided space for trainings and work. This CRDA project also builds mutual trust between citizens and local Bujanovac government.

Since there is a great market for these kinds of products and people are very interested in these hand-made materials, Zuzeljica women used this opportunity for self-employment in a productive way. To promote their work they agreed to open and advertize through an exhibition of their products.

The opening of the exhibition of weaved materials occurred on September 22<sup>nd</sup> in Bujanovac. Around 100 people participated in the exhibition opening and many local and national media reported on the exhibition. After the exhibition, Vesna was invited to the "The Golden Hands" festival in Palic. CRDA program showed how good ideas and inspiration with some support can create excellent results.