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# SUCCESS STORY

## Cluster Academy Supports ICT Industry Growth in Kragujevac, Republic of Serbia

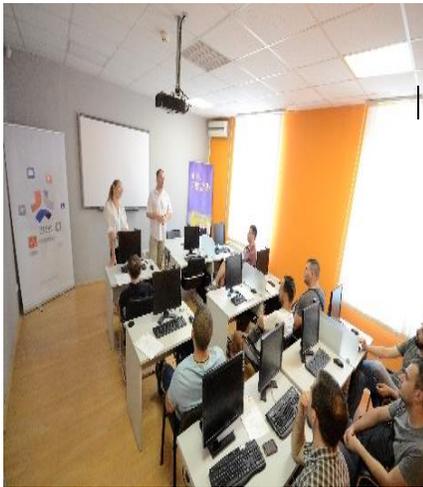


Photo by B. Dzenopoljac, July 2017

*Certification Day, HTML5 / CSS3 (Gr. XI) & JavaScript (Gr. V) courses, Cluster Academy, Kragujevac*

**The ICT Cluster of Central Serbia in Kragujevac has initiated and sustained a Cluster Academy in order to solve the major constraint for the growth of the ICT industry in the town -- the lack of qualified ICT specialists.**

As the ICT sector in Serbia continues to grow, it requires a skilled, motivated workforce of IT professionals. The ICT Cluster of Central Serbia in Kragujevac -- a key business association for Serbian ICT companies -- has created Cluster Academy to better meet this demand. Cluster Academy is an innovative program developed in conjunction with Cluster member companies to “react to the “turbulent and constantly growing IT industry, both globally and in Serbia.” A better-qualified workforce positions member companies to be more competitive in offering their services both domestically and abroad.

Cluster Academy participants have access to professional courses, trainings and practical opportunities. The course content is developed in association with the member companies so that it best reflects their specific personnel requirements. In the interest of promoting sustainability and fomenting solid relationships, local trainers lead the courses. The range of programming addresses the needs of students along the full ICT spectrum, from novices in need of introductory courses to active developers looking to improve through advanced courses in various technologies or certifications. With co-funding support from USAID’s Regional Economic Growth (REG) program, Cluster Academy organized 6 trainings for more than 60 trainees.

This initiative is already producing encouraging results for ICT member companies. Dejan Milosavljevic, CEO of Singleton Solutions and 4 IT, affirmed the experience as “absolutely positive” and noted that in the past 18 months his companies have hired three graduates of the Cluster Academy. To Dejan, the mutual benefits are clear:

*“...This program is a great opportunity for young people to acquire knowledge and get opportunity for internships and for employment afterwards. For a member company of the Cluster, the Academy provides opportunities for talent acquisition and for influencing course content with technologies from practice.”*

Given the interest by participants and companies in continuing and expanding Cluster Academy, the Academy will look to become self-sustainable as it works to develop the local workforce and increase firm competitiveness in the regional and global market for IT products and services.