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**RRITJE ALBANIA**  
COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT



USAID Project Director at Graduation Certificate Ceremony

## Project Report “Increase sales and jobs” for Grand Hotel

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
IA. RELEVANCE .....	3
IB. DESCRIPTION.....	3
IC. SUSTAINABILITY .....	3
<b>II. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
IIA. INTRODUCTION.....	4
IIB. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT.....	5
<b>III. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
IIIA. PLANING.....	7
IIIB. DEVELOPMENT .....	7
IIIC. IMPLEMENTATION .....	7
IIID. PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR HR TOOLKIT.....	8
IIIE. CONSULTANCY .....	8
IIIF. OTHER ACTIVITIES.....	9
IIIC. METHODOLOGY .....	9
<b>IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND LESSONS LEARNED .....</b>	<b>10</b>
CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TABITA .....	9
<b>V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP.....</b>	<b>11</b>
VA. CONCLUSIONS.....	10
VB. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	11
VC. FOLLOW-UP .....	11
<b>VI. ANEXES TITLE.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **IA. Relevance**

Grand Hotel Palace in Korca, Albania is one of the largest Hotels in the central eastern region of Albania. Grand Hotel is a privatized former state tourism hotel located in the center of Korca city. The foreign customer base has increased every year and the hotel is used at about 80% occupancy in the summer and 33% in the winter season. Other services provided include workshops and weddings, especially in the summer season. The management (wife of the owner) works with Albanian and Greek tour agencies to bring in foreign tourists. The hotel also inherited a good image of the former state hotel and some links with German agencies.

In July 2009, the manager attended the job fair (LGPA supported) but was unable to recruit appropriate staff for the 5 vacancies in the kitchen and house-keeping staff. The manager finds that the graduates of the University (that include a tourism degree) do not have an interest in working in the hospitality industry as a career choice, but as temporary employment.

The primary goal of the Rritje Albania Project is to increase sales and jobs through removing constraints to growth and enabling Albanian private enterprises to expand their businesses and improve competitiveness. The goal is to develop a model for hospitality training and test that model by providing training to the Grand Hotel personnel with the goal of improving the quality of customer service to meet and exceed the requirements of foreign and distinguishing tourists.

### **IB. Description**

The project for Grand Hotel had these objectives:

- To improve Grand Hotel Hospitality for increasing sales.
- To provide assistance to GRAND HOTEL to develop HRM policies, practices, and procedures to help them recruit and retain employees
- To apply Training (TOT & Coaching) for Sustainability
- Identify and work with a local NGO and partners to strengthen the capacity for a business service provider to develop delivery of Customer Service Hospitality and Management Training for the Grand Hotel-Korçë personnel.

Activities included:

1. Training Needs Assessment of all staff based on expected competencies for each of the 3 groups;
2. Training materials developed and techniques chosen based on the results of the TNA;
3. Training (class setting and on-the-job) conducted for the entire staff and by job grouping;
4. Training of Trainers for supervisors in each of the three operational units;

5. HRM materials and procedures reviewed, drafted and finalized with Grand Hotel Management;
6. Consulting for Grand Hotel Management to improve their management procedures, quality control and performance review system;
7. Preparation of documentation in Albanian and final report in Albanian and English.
8. Graduation Ceremony for all staff at Grand Hotel.

## **IC. Sustainability**

One of the first and the most important pre-conditions for implementation of this project and its sustainability was to have a real partnership with the local community. Such a partnership was created through the relationship and rapport between Tabita, Grand Hotel, and the Regional Employment Office. The synergy and positive working relationship developed at the beginning of the project was very important for the successful implementation and follow up activities.

For this Reason TABITA was selected as the local NGO and business services provider to provide the support to Grand Hotel based on their proposal in response to Rritje Albania request for proposals to carry out the tasks identified above. This also met the objectives of the project to identify and develop the capacity of NGOs and business service providers so that activities could be sustained beyond the life of the project.

Using the Quality Mark standards developed by USAID in Bulgaria, Rritje Albania and TABITA tourism experts conducted Training Needs Assessments of the hotel's staff. A deputy manager has been chosen to be mentored and built into the leadership role of human resource manager for the hotel, to ensure that the human resource management and training system put in place are sustainable

To ensure sustainability beyond activities at the Grand Hotel, Rritje Albania staff and consultants will assist Tabita in developing a business strategy for replicating the models and systems developed to provide to customer service and hospitality training to additional hotels in Korce and possible other cities.

## **II. INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW**

### **IIA. Introduction**

Grand Hotel is a privatized former state tourism hotel located in the center of Korca city. The foreign customer base has increased every year and the hotel is used at about 80% occupancy in the summer and 33% in the winter season. Other services provided include workshops and weddings, especially in the summer season. The management (wife of the owner) works with Albanian and Greek tour agencies to bring in foreign tourists. The hotel also inherited a good image of the former state hotel and some links with German agencies.

High season is in the spring through fall, with summer as the peak season. Winter tourism has some potential, especially with the improvement of infrastructure in the city and to two other points: Voskopoja and Dardha. When needed, the manager also organizes tours for tour guides of

tourist groups. SNV in Korca has supported the tourism sector by developing a calendar of events such as festivals, fairs, etc. The hotel receives orders by email and has invested in a hospitality software that helps in planning. Although the software can measure repeat customers, the manager and front desk staff have not set up the feature yet.

GTZ supported the training of new chefs and waiters with a 2 week course a few years ago. Trainees were identified through the Regional Employment Office. Trainers came from the Tirana School of Tourism and the manager spoke very highly of them. In July 2009, the manager attended the job fair (LGPA supported) but was unable to recruit appropriate staff for the 5 vacancies in the kitchen and house-keeping staff. The manager finds that the graduates of the secondary vocational school (that include a tourism degree) do not have an interest in working in the hospitality industry as a career choice, but as temporary employment.

Tabita Foundation is managing the development and delivery of Customer Service Hospitality and Management Training for the Grand Hotel-Korçë personnel. The goal was to develop a model for hospitality training and test that model by providing training to the Grand Hotel personnel with the goal of improving the quality of customer service to meet and exceed the requirements of foreign and distinguishing tourists. Tabita personnel worked with the Rritje Albania Tourism Specialist to link hospitality training to the Quality Mark Standards.

Training were developed and provided by Tabita through the specialist Mirela ANDONI for the Grand Hotel staff including three categories of personnel: front desk/ reception (5 staff), housekeeping staff (5) and wait staff (5). Training delivered to each of the personnel groups both together and separately for approximately 20 hours of training for all personnel at the Grand Hotel on the premises. Follow-up and reinforcement training also be provided in 2 -3 hour increments for each personnel group every other week for two months for a total of 9 weeks of training.

Tabita worked with and assisted the Grand Hotel owner and Rritje Albania Tourism Consultant to conduct a needs assessment for each of the personnel categories and design the training along with the owner of the Grand Hotel to meet the needs of each personnel category.

Participants received a certificate of completion at the end of the course and Tabita provided a presentation and the tools developed at the completion of these activities. Tools included a compilation of all of the training curriculum, evaluations, human resource management tools and systems to be used as a model for further training.

1. Catering service on bar and restaurant
2. Housekeeping training
3. Front office/ Receptionist training

## **IIB. Scope of the project**

The primary goal of the Rritje Albania Project is to increase sales and jobs by removing constraints to growth and enabling Albanian private enterprises to expand their businesses and improve competitiveness. The project objectives will be achieved through: strengthening trade

and investment capacity; increasing enterprise productivity; and improving workforce development.

The project for Grand Hotel had three major objectives:

- To improve Grand Hotel Hospitality for increasing sales.
- To provide assistance to GRAND HOTEL to develop HRM policies, practices, and procedures to help them recruit and retain employees
- To apply Training (TOT & Coaching) for Sustainability

Grand Hotel agreed to identify staff members that would be trained to train other staff members in the future and provide equipment, supplies and training for staff.

Tabita Foundation was selected as the local NGO and business services provider to provide the support to Grand Hotel based on their proposal in response to an Rritje Albania request for proposals to carry out the tasks identified above with Grand Hotel. This also met the objectives of the project to identify and develop the capacity of NGOs and business service providers so that activities could be sustained beyond the life of the project.

Tabita Foundation has six years of experience in the area of development and is involved in Health Education, Employment and Income, Vocational Education, Water & Sanitation programs in Korça city and District.

In the field of Tourism, Tabita is cooperating with different actors Regional Employment office, Vocational Economic School with branch of Hotel/Tourism with many investments in practical workshops of bar/restaurant and kitchen, Chamber of Commerce, University of Korca and other NGO's that are of good experience in this field, bringing a wider and close cooperation for the development and improvement of services that are offered to beneficiaries.

**VISSION: Building Pathways for Progress**

**MISSION:** We envisage the improvement of the social and economical life of the people in need, by offering them education, rehabilitation and developing programs providing a safer future for them.

**Final Goal**

**Doctrinal base:**

Every men is created by God and has the equal right to live a good life having normal condition for living such as food, drinking water, cloths, house and health care.

It is expected that the system developed for Grand Hotel will serve as a model for multiple clients as well. A detailed description of the Trainings and system developed are provided below.

## **II. Description of Activities**

### ***III A. Planning***

1. Study of data analyses of Rritje Albania.
2. Study of “Quality Mark” standards.
3. Assessment of the training needs (visit in Hotel)
4. Preparation the drafting of job descriptions.
5. Preparation the measure system of quality in training
6. Preparation the drafting of working procedures
7. Preparation the drafting of Check lists.

### ***III B. Development***

1. Preparation of the training program modules for sectors: (Deliverable 1.3)Waiting staff / Reception /Housekeeping/Laundry based on the required competencies for targeted sectors (see **Annex A**, in Albanian)
2. Preparation of the training program for three-day and two-day trainings (Deliverable 1.4) (see **Annex B**, in Albanian)
3. Preparation of the training methodology for grouped training and on-job-training.
4. Preparation of the “hands-on learning” (role play, practicing on spot, learning by doing, learning by example)
5. Preparation of the handout materials (presentations, documents, check lists)
6. Preparation of the training schedule and logistics in cooperation with Grand Hotel & Tabita.

### ***III C. Implementation***

1. Evaluation of the entering level in training for the targeted staff.(see **Annex H**, in Albanian)
2. Adaptation of the training program based on entering level.
3. Conduct grouped and on-the-job training in the restaurant based on the required competencies, through presentations (main duties in the restaurant, terminology, sales) demonstration by the trainer, practicing, role play and assessment (with check list) (Deliverable 1.4.) (See **Annex M**).
4. Conduct grouped and on-the-job training in the reception based on the required competencies, through presentations (main duties in the reception, terminology, sales) demonstration by the trainer, video presentation and discussions, practicing, role play for communication, selling, reservation, check in and assessment (with check list).
5. Conduct grouped and on the job training in the housekeeping based on the required competencies, through presentation (main duties in the housekeeping, terminology) demonstration by the trainer, video presentation and discussions, practicing, check in and assessment (with check list).
6. Training evaluation (see **Annex K**, in Albanian)

### ***III D. Preparation of documents for HR toolkit and creating sustainability and continuous improvement (Deliverable 2.4)***

1. Development of job descriptions. (see **Annex C**, in Albanian)
2. Development of working procedures (see **Annex D**, in Albanian)
3. Check lists for fulfillment of tasks. (see **Annex E**, in Albanian)
4. Evaluation form for three target sectors. (see **Annex F**, in Albanian)
5. Preparation of Tot program and Tot modules. (Deliverable 1.6) (see **Annex G**, in Albanian)
6. Conduct and evaluate of grouped TOT and on-job-training.

### ***III E. Consultancy***

1. Consulting the GM and the managers, whenever it was possible.
2. Preparing the policies and hotel rules (see **Annex O**, in Albanian).
3. HRM system (Deliverable 2.2, 2.3) (see **Annex P**).
4. Preparation of hotel documentation and how to use it (see **Annex I**):
  - price list
  - registration card
  - information on the room
  - laundry list
  - room and price list
  - Sample documents for implementation
  - reservation form
  - guest complain form
  - guest Claim Form for defects
  - usage of the sign “Do not disturb”
  - Guest Satisfaction Form.

### ***III. F Other activities***

1. Conduct training for bar section.
2. Recommendation on practicing marketing techniques
3. Organizing and working by ourselves in real activities. Training the trainees how to behave as customer in the restaurant.
4. Consulting the preparation the certificate list of the competences (see **Annex N**)
5. Consulting the preparation of final graduation ceremony
6. Preparation of mission report.
  
7. Graduation Ceremony

The graduation ceremony ended the last phase of the project (training the Staff). The ceremony was organized at Grand Hotel Hall. Invitations were sent to USAID Project Director,

Employment Office Director, Education Department Director, Dorcas AID international Director, Local Media and staff of Grand Hotel.

Certificates of training were given to each of the staff by Mr. LUBOYESKI director of the Project Rritje-Albania and Mr. REZHDA Director of TABITA. Representatives of the Rritje Albania and partner organizations and institutions expressed their positive opinion for the achievement of results. Expert Mirela ANDONI moderated the presentation of the developed activities in a professional way in PP.

At the end of the ceremony the staff of Grand Hotel organized a Cocktail. Local media covered this event on its News program.

### **III G. Methodology**

The trainers moderated each phase by starting with presentation and demonstration of topics and planned skills. During each session were included discussions and exchanging experiences between participants and then proceeding with practicing in group and individual work for each specific competence that was to be demonstrated at the end of the training. The trainings were organized in three sessions of 90 minutes each. Each single day included training on one common issue for the staff of the Hotel and then three groups of work were created according to the skills and processes they had to learn.

## **IV. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Capacity building for TABITA**

In addition to supporting the Rritje Albania client, Grand Hotel, this activity was designed to also build the capacity of a local NGO or Business Service Provider in the process. Toward that end, the Rritje Albania Team, Workforce Development Advisor, Dr. Gwen El Sawi, and the Rritje Albania Monitoring and Evaluation/Communications Officer, Elona Toska, all played important advisory roles to Tabita and to Grand Hotel.

The following comments are provided as the TABITA feedback on the experiences gained through managing this process with Grand Hotel in Korçe:

- The implementation of the project increased the experience of Tabita in providing better services to businesses/OTHER HOTELS in the community.
- JBC staff involved in this activity also gained experience; understanding USAID processes for Employment, Reporting and Evaluation, dealing with the way staff of Hotels need to be trained and followed-up during the duration time of the project.
- Working and exchanging ideas with Rritje-Albania project staff has been another added value for Tabita with their coaching through each of the activity phases.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS and FOLLOW-UP

### VA. Conclusions

- The Grand Hotel implementation plan was successfully defined to achieve of objectives.
- The Grand Hotel management and staff were motivated to fulfill the training competences based on profession standards.
- The evaluation of staff entering level has contributed for reviewing the training program and training methodology.
- The grouped training contributed to all participants on better understanding the Grand Hotel's positioning in the hospitality industry within Korca region, which is their market segment, who are their clients what means to create the image and the corporate identity and how to contribute to improve it. This provided information and practical rules on how to deal with guest's requests and complains. Some general knowledge on menu preparation, sales techniques, responsibilities on guest's security and safety.
- The methodology used in the grouped training with the whole staff at the beginning and at the end of the day resulted very successfully, because it created the possibilities to link the department with each other, to understand the role and cooperation between department to understand that their work was part of the working process that could be successful when everybody do its work, as well as it makes understandable the role and the responsibilities of the staff and the management.
- The usage of the visual media for demonstration of rules, terminology and best practices of foreign expertise had very good impact for the whole staff to create another point of view for their competencies, quality and the demonstration of the professional working procedures as well.
- On-job-training contributed in defining gaps and problems that needed support in three target sectors, but especially in understanding that missing knowledge on management in regard to organization and coordination functions to improve services and activities
- The supervision on work, organization and working together on real everyday work in the different catering events give a high impact and was a good methodology on the job training.
- The "specific homework" given to practice for each week during the training period provides a gradual improvement, without stress of the Grand Hotel' staff.
- The lunch break aimed at making the staff feeling as guest in the hotel, understanding the basic rules of costumer behavior and ethic on the table, as well as to practice service rules in the restaurant.
- The examples of mise-en-scene, decoration with flowers depending on different activities opened the staff imagination to practice their creativity.
- Demonstration and supervision on housekeeping and laundry based on the profession standard and quality raised the awareness and capability to work professionally apart from the house cleaning.
- The introduction and practice of documentation was important tools to facilitate the communication between management and sectors, among sectors and between staff in the same sector as well as a very good example for the quality control system.

- The job description, working procedures, check lists, evaluation forms was a toolkit that brought transparency between the staff and the experts and facilitated the training process, consultation and ensured the sustainability and continuous improvement.
- The grouped training, on-job-training was a solution for selecting the proper staff as future trainer to convey the working skills to new employees.
- On-job-training was a good opportunity for coaching train-the-trainers, regarding the usage of job description, working procedures, check lists as a tool for training need assessment, training plan and training in the future. ToT training Methodology used on the training on the job and grouped training is a good tool to maintain the sustainability.
- The coaching process draw our attention on missing of the necessary documents, which was the reason for some difficulties, misunderstanding, evidencing of work, application of hotel rules. Therefore the project creates a written document with the hotel rules and policies.
- In cooperation with Hotel's GM, was discussed on staff promotional scheme, policies on HRM and it is produced a document on HRM system, which includes the processes from recruitment, selection, interviewing, orientation, training, controlling and evaluation of work performance, based on the documents produced by this project. Also there are included some incentives schemes to be applied by the management.
- As the result of the waiting staff training was identified a need on bar training because of the non-professional preparation of the hot drinks and cocktails as good offer for catering activities.
- The presentation submitted at the premises of Rritje Albania for design and preparation for the envisaged activities generated a positive feedback for achievement of the main goals. (Deliverable 1.3) (see **Annex J**)
- The final presentation our submitted at the end of activities in the premises of Rritje Albania was found successful in fulfillment of the objectives. (see **Annex L**)
- The high level of logistic and coordination support provided by Grand Hotel's General Director of and Tabita's staff has positively contributed to implement successfully the activities.

## **VB. Recommendations**

- To establish a systematic monitoring approach for at least six months in term of using the documentation, control system, professional competencies, training of new staff.
- To support the management in long term for better performance in marketing, organization, coordination, directing, controlling.
- To support, adapt and update the food management safety, as well as to keep on working in accordance with the trends in nutrition, Albanian and region tradition.
- To support the generalization of this experience designing of a generic training manual based on the basic professional service in the restaurant and bar.
- The JBC staff is able to share the experience gained from the Rritje Albania project, to train the staff of this organization and work with them to facilitate their services. Expansion to help additional Hotels in Korce

## **VC. Follow-Up**

- The trained staff of Grand Hotel will be followed continuously every quarter of 2010 till April 2011 to evaluate the development on the Grand Hotel services.
- The new HMR toolkit will be evaluated every 6<sup>th</sup> month to see the impact on the business, and how the new system fit the business needs.
- Grand Hotel will be supported in its attempt to receive quality Mark.

## **VI. Annexes**

- Annex 1. Modular programs (Albanian)**
- Annex 2. Training programs (Albanian)**
- Annex 3. Job descriptions (Albanian)**
- Annex 4. Working procedures (Albanian)**
- Annex 5. Check lists for fulfillment of tasks (Albanian)**
- Annex 6. Evaluation form and Results (Albanian)**
- Annex 7. Tot program and Tot modules (Albanian)**
- Annex 8. Entering level in training for the targeted staff (Albanian)**
- Annex 9. Hotel documentation (Albanian)**
- Annex 10. Training evaluation sheet (Albanian)**
- Annex 11. Progress and Final Presentation to Rritje Albania (English)**
- Annex12. Participants list and hours (Albanian)**
- Annex 13. Certifications for three sectors (Albanian)**
- Annex 14. HRM Materials: Hotel rules and policies & HRM Manual (Albanian)**