



Technical Analysis and Policy Recommendations for Promoting Employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Legal and policy framework in Kosovo	4
3. Employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo	5
3.1 Demographic characteristics, education and training	6
3.2 Employment status, work satisfaction and preferences	8
3.3 Success factors, barriers and support	9
3.3.1 Labour market success factors.....	9
3.3.2 Barriers for employment.....	10
3.3.3 Access to labour market information and employment support	11
4. Lessons learnt from other European countries	13
5. Conclusions and recommendation	165
References	198

1. Introduction

The high level of unemployment and the low level of employment, remain Kosovo's main socio-economic problem. Based on Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for 2017, the unemployment rate stands at 30.5%, while a mere 29.8% of the working age population in Kosovo is employed (KAS, 2018). Labour market statistics for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are not reliable, or comparable with conventional measurements used by the LFS, however the ones available suggest that their situation is significantly worse than that of all other communities living in Kosovo. For instance, based on survey data in the municipalities of Obiliq / Obilic and Fushë Kosovë / Kosovo Polje, the level of employment of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is estimated at mere 7 percent, compared to 40 percent for Albanians and 21 percent for the Serbs (OPM, 2017, based on calculations based from UNDP, 2013). The quality of jobs held by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members is another concern, as they tend to rely engage on temporary/occasional, low-skilled and informal work (ILO, 2007; KFOS, 2010).

Against this backdrop, the aim of this report is to identify suitable and feasible policy interventions which would enhance the employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members in Kosovo in a sustainable manner. To maximise the chances for implementation (in the near future), particular effort is put on proposing and instituting policy changes that require the least additional budget (or none) for implementation (i.e. the focus in on mainstreaming the approach to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian into existing policy-making), and those that require legal/policy changes which can be realistically concluded in the short-term. Thus, where possible, entry point of suggested interventions will be in current policy and legal framework developments.

The analysis and recommendations draw on a combination of:

- a review of existing relevant legal framework, policies and strategies in Kosovo,
- a survey of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian working age men and women, focusing on their employment status and preferences, barriers to employment, their needs to improve labour market success, and previous experiences with employment-promotion measures,
- expert interviews with representatives of DLE and civil society organisation dealing with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian employment and integration issues, and
- a review of experiences of other European countries that have undertaken policy interventions to enhance employment of these communities.

The rest of this report is organised as follows. Section 2 analyses the legal and policy framework for employment promotion, with particular focus on measures addressing Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian employment. Section 3 provides an analysis of survey data focusing on key success factors for promoting employment, barriers to employment, and access to labour market information and employment-promotion measures. Section 4 provides a review of experiences from other European countries that have undertaken measures to enhance the employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members, and Section 5 summarises the key findings and draws policy recommendations.

2. Legal and policy framework in Kosovo

The Government of Kosovo has approved a Strategy for the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the Kosovo society (2017-2021), which line with the EU Framework on National Strategies for Integration of Roma until 2020, addresses four priority fields: education, employment and social welfare, health, and housing (OPM, 2017). In the field of employment promotion, this Strategy mainly focuses on increasing access of members of these members of society to employment services and active labour market measures (ALMMs) implemented by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), by increasing awareness of these services/measures among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities; ensuring their greater participation by instituting a quota for these communities; and designing/adapting services and measures that meet the needs of these communities¹. EARK, through its municipal level Employment Offices (EOs) and regional Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and provides registered jobs-seekers counselling services, employment mediation, information on migration for the purpose of regular employment, and participation in ALMMs such as modular vocational training courses, on-the-job training, combined (VTC and company-based training), wage subsidy programs, internships, public works, and self-employment and entrepreneurship training and support. Whilst EARK implements the services and measures, the policy for employment promotion is developed and monitored by the Department for Labour and Employment (DLE) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW).

The recently-revised Regulation for Active Labour Market Measures specifies procedures, rights and responsibilities of institutions in the provision and monitoring and evaluation of ALMMs, and as well as design and (broadly) targeting of ALMMs². According to this Regulation, ALMMs are determined based on the three-year employment and vocational training policy document prepared by the MLSW. Based on this policy document, the EARK prepares an annual work plan detailing the type of measures and participants, expenditure, and monitoring indicators. Following consultations with the Advisory Board, EARK submits the annual work plan to MLSW by the end of January of each year. After a review by MLSW, the final annual work plan is published by the end of February. With the functionalisation of the EARK as an independent implementing agency (in 2017) and the clear division of this role from the policy-making and monitoring roles that remain with the DLE and MLSW, the prominence of the employment and vocational training policy document and the process of monitoring and evaluation are going to increase in the future.

The existing Employment Policy (2016-2018) document does not specifically treat the employment situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities or other minorities. In the framework for

¹ By 2019, the Strategy foresees that the share of ALMM participants from these communities reaches 10% (from 6% in the first half of 2016), and the share of women among participants of these communities reaches 25% (from 12% in the first half of 2016). Further, the target for ALMM participation is set at 13% for 2021.

² The Regulation does not foresee affirmative measures for any target group, but it prohibits “any type of discrimination based on race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, social or national origin, any community...”. Following the approval of the new Regulation for ALMMs, Operational Manuals for the provision of employment services and ALMMs will be revised. These manuals, derived from the Regulation for ALMMs, provide step-by-step instructions for the provision/implementation ALMMs. Currently, Operational Manual for the provision of OJT, Internship and wage subsidy foresee a 10% quota for minorities (not disaggregated by ethnic background).

monitoring and evaluation of public employment services (EARK), one of the indicators refers to the participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in ALMMs (with a target of 15% throughout the period), however it is not clear what measures will be undertaken to achieve this target. In 2016, participation of all non-Serb minority members³ was only 7.6% in vocational training and 9.6% in other ALMMs. Preparations for the new Employment Policy for the next three years are currently underway, and this process can serve as an entry point for mainstreaming the issue of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities into policy-making in the area of employment promotion.

Finally, the employment of non-majority communities in the public sector is regulated by the Law 03/L-149 on Civil Service in the Republic of Kosovo. This law specifies a minimal quota for the employment of non-majority communities at 10 percent at the central level, and a representation proportional to the demographic composition at the local level. However, previous reports have suggested that proportional representation is not observed at the municipal level, and that to the extent that the quota are respected, they tend to mainly benefit other non-majority communities (OPM, 2013; KDI, 2016). Whilst one reason for this may be the difference in the (average) level of education, other disadvantages of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian may be their (relatively) limited access to information, networks and social capital, i.e. links with employed family members and friends, political parties, etc.

3. Employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo

This section draws mainly from a survey of 182 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian working age men and women. A quota sampling technique was used to select survey participants⁴ in the 20 urban and rural residential locations across Kosovo where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are concentrated. The sample cannot be considered representative of the whole population of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, and the results cannot be generalised for the whole population. Rather, this should be treated as exploratory research aiming to shed light on the (self-reported) needs and experiences of these communities with regard to employment. The survey questionnaire focused primarily on barriers for their employment (in general and for women particularly), preferences for different types of employment arrangements, and experiences with ALMMs and/or other government or donor interventions which seek to promote employment.

³ Data is not reported at a more disaggregated level.

⁴ Quota were set for participation of different age groups, women (50%), and individuals who have benefited from some type of employment support (e.g. agricultural grant, training, public works, internship, etc., by 50%). However, the latter two proved challenging: women's participation due to cultural reasons and the employment support beneficiaries' due their low level of participation in employment supporting measures.

3.1 Demographic characteristics, education and training

The regional distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2 below. In each region (and municipality) where the survey was conducted, both rural and urban residences were covered. Among the surveyed, just over a third of the beneficiaries live in rural areas.

Table 1: Regional distribution

Region	Frequency	Share (%)
Ferizaj	15	8.2
Gjakovë	10	5.5
Mitrovice	39	21.4
Peje	33	18.1
Prishtine	45	24.7
Prizren	40	22.0
Total	182	100.0

Almost 60% of respondents belong to the Ashkali community, followed by Roma and Egyptian communities (Table 2).

Table 2: Ethnic background

Ethnicity	Frequency	Share (%)
Roma	51	28.0
Ashkali	107	58.8
Egyptian	24	13.2
Total	182	100.0

Around 60% of respondents are young individuals, i.e. up to 35 years old (Table 3). Although a quota of 50% for women was sought, the participation of women achieved was 37.5%. Among the surveyed, 64% are married and 34% were single⁵ (with no gender difference), and 60% have children.

Table 3: Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Share (%)
16-25 years	63	34.8
26-35 years	48	26.5
36-45 years	31	17.1
46-55 years	30	16.6
56-65 years	9	5.0
Total	181	100.0

⁵The remaining few are divorced or widowed.

The average level of education among the survey respondents is low, with only 2% having tertiary education as their highest level of education and another quarter having completed secondary education (see Table 4). Around 45% of men and 50% of women respondents have no schooling or have completed only some years of primary education.

Table 4: Level of education attainment (Share, %)

Level of education	Men	Women	Total
No schooling	19.3	22.1	20.3
Some years of primary school	25.4	36.8	29.7
Primary school	24.6	20.6	23.1
Secondary school	28.1	19.1	24.7
Tertiary education	2.6	1.5	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The surveyed women are twice as likely to be currently attending education compared to men, however this seems to be driven by age differences within groups in the sample: i.e. women respondents are younger (aged 31.8, on average, compared to 34.3 years old for men). When only the 16-25 age group is considered, results reveal that men in this age group are far more likely than women to be attending education and/or training (Table 5).

Table 5: Attendance of education/training (Age 16-25; Share, %)

Current status	Men	Women
Attending education	30.6	22.2
Attending training	13.9	3.7
Not in education or training	72.2	77.8

Men are also more likely to report having attended training in the past (26% compared to 19% for women)⁶. Women are most likely to report having been trained in hairdressing and sewing, followed by handicrafts and cooking and pastry (the training being provided mainly by Diakonie and Danish Refugee Council Kosovo, DRC). Men, on the other hand, have attended training in a wider range of professions, as well as training in business management, business plan development or project management. Apart from business management training, men tend to report training in the following professions: waitering, auto mechanics/electrics, plumbing, construction and carpentry (other include welding, traffic, education, musical equipment, cooking, traffic, electronics and IT). The most commonly reported training providers among men are DRC, EARK's VTCs and Don Bosko.

⁶ Note that these percentages are likely to be highly biased, considering that the sampling methodology for this survey sought to reach a minimum quota of 50% of respondents who have received some type of support promoting employment.

The gender differences are likely to be even larger in the population, considering the (likely) self-selection of women that are more educated (or attending education) into the survey sample.

3.2 Employment status, work satisfaction and preferences

Among the surveyed men, almost 1 in 5 are engaged in occasional employment (e.g. in agriculture, recycling, street/vendor selling, manual labour, etc.); another 20% are employees, whereas around 6% are owners and managers of a (family) business (Table 6). Women are far less likely to be engaged in any type of work, apart from part-time work (presumably the latter being due to their caretaking responsibilities).

Table 6: Self-reported employment status (Share, %)

Employment status	Men	Women	Total
Occasionally employed	18.4	2.9	12.6
Employee, full-time	14.0	4.4	10.4
Employee, part-time	4.4	7.4	5.5
Businesses owner and manager	6.1	2.9	4.9
Intern	0.9	0.0	0.5
Not employed	56.1	82.4	65.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The men that are not employed cite inability to find *any* work, followed by the inability to find work *with working conditions that they prefer*, and medical reasons (Table 7)⁷. Among women, on the other hand, not being able to find any work is followed by care-taking responsibilities which is cited by over a quarter of respondents.

Table 7: Reasons for not being employed (Share, %)

Reasons	Men	Women	Total
Cannot find any work	76.3	54.4	48.9
Cannot find work with preferred conditions	21.1	3.5	6.6
Attending school/training	1.3	3.5	1.6
Medical reasons	13.2	8.8	5.5
Care-taking responsibilities	1.3	26.3	8.8
Other	1.3	3.5	1.6

Individuals that are engaged in some type of employment were asked in an open-ended question to cite one aspect of their work that they like and one aspect they do not like. Taken together, the responses on this question suggest that full-time employees are the most satisfied with their jobs and working conditions. Whilst they are least likely to cite any negative aspect of the work they do (these being the low wage, commuting and working hours), around 90% report some positive aspects of the

⁷ Some men cite more than one reason; hence the total is over 100%.

work they do, the most common of which are wage level, their work/profession, and relations with colleagues (e.g. “cooperation”, colleagues’ “attitude” or “respect”). Those who own and manage a business all report some advantage of their work, the most common being a sense of independence (e.g. “it is my business and I manage it” or “family business”), however some of them report also disadvantages which tend to be related to low/variable business-related income.

The occasionally employed are the least satisfied with the work they do. Around 60% of them report some advantage to the work they do, which is almost exclusively the level of income (or “profit”); however this group is also most likely to report dissatisfaction, for reasons which range from low income and uncertainty (sometimes expressed as a preference for a full-time job) to concerns about “hygiene” and “dangerous” working conditions⁸.

When asked about their preferences regarding employment status, having a full-time job is by far the most cited option (Table 8), however there are marked gender differences, with women being far more likely to prefer part-time employment, occasional employment and self-employment compared to men. This presumably reflects mainly women’s role as for care-takers at home and, in this particular study, partly the fact that a significant share of women respondents is currently attending education.

Table 8: Preferred employment status (Share, %)

Employment status	Men	Women	Total
Full-time employment	86.8	63.6	78.4
Part-time employment	6.6	18.2	11.1
Occasional employment	0.9	7.6	3.5
Self-employment	3.8	6.1	4.7
No employment	0.9	4.5	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.6

The preference for full-time employment is not in line with a common belief that Roma prefer casual employment; this is consistent with evidence from other countries which suggests that Roma tend to prefer having secure (even if modestly paid) jobs, to unsecure jobs with higher income (see Messing, 2014).

3.3 Success factors, barriers and support

3.3.1 Labour market success factors

The probability of not being employed (in any type of employment) decreases significantly with the level of education attainment up to secondary school (Table 9)⁹. The level of education seems to have a particularly strong effect on the probability of being engaged in full-time or part-time regular employment. Having participated in some type of training is also associated with being engaged in some type of employment, however the causality of this effect is not clear, as the probability of having attended training increases in the sample with the level of respondents’ education.

⁸The part-time employees are likely to report dissatisfaction at a similar rate, however in their case this is almost always expressed simply as a preference for full-time employment.

⁹ The number of respondents with tertiary education is only 4, therefore no inference is drawn for this group.

Table 9: Self-reported employment status by level of education attainment (Share, %)

Employment status / Education	No schooling	Some years of primary school	Primary school	Secondary school	Tertiary education
Employee, full-time	2.7	7.4	9.5	20.0	25.0
Employee, part-time	0.0	1.9	4.8	13.3	25.0
Intern	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0
Owner and manager of a business	2.7	1.9	4.8	11.1	0.0
Occasionally employed	5.4	11.1	16.7	17.8	0.0
Not employed	89.2	77.8	61.9	37.8	50.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The importance of education for labour market success seems to be appreciated among respondents. When asked to circle from a list up to three success factors that they think contributed to the employment of the members of their community that are employed or own a business, education was the top cited reason (Table 10). This was followed by motivation/ willingness to work, business start-up support and entrepreneurship, and professional and language (English) training courses. Participation in internship and wage subsidy schemes is cited relatively rarely, which could be a reflection of limited access (of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities) to such measures to date. Among ‘other’ responses, “nepotism” (or “connections”) was the most cited; others included “bribes” and “donor support”.

Table 10: Factors of labour market success

Success factors	Share (%)
Education	84
Motivation/ willingness to work	64
Business start-up support	43
Professional training	38
Entrepreneurship training	36
Language training (English)	32
Internship scheme	9
Wage subsidy scheme	5

3.3.2 Barriers for employment

When respondents are asked to choose up to three main barriers for the employment of *their community members* from a list, lack of education/skills/training comes is surpasses (though closely follows) discrimination and not knowing where to look for a job, how to apply for a job, present themselves in a job interview, etc. (Table 11) When asked about *women community members* specifically, the top barrier cited is lack of lack of education/skills/training, followed closely by lack of support from the family¹⁰.

¹⁰ The result on lack of language skills should be treated with caution. In the question this was specified as to refer to Albanian or Serbian, however the obtained result is surprising considering that almost all the

Table 11: Perceptions of community members' top barriers for employment (Share, %)

Barriers for employment	Community members	Women specifically
Discrimination	73	43
Lack of job search or job application skills	71	54
Lack of skills/education/training required	69	66
Lack of opportunities for networking or proving themselves	46	38
Lack of language skills required	32	24
Lack of support from family		61
Other (household work, early marriages)	2	8

Accordingly, when asked (in an open question) about what would help them and would help their community members in general in order to achieve employment, the most frequent responses were related to education (including education provided by Learning Centres), vocational training¹¹, entrepreneurship training and start-up support (grants, equipment, etc.)¹², equal treatment, motivation for work. When respondents specify the field of required training, their choices seem to be relatively well-aligned with labour market needs. E.g. training in fields such as IT, foreign languages (English typically specified), welding, sewing, automechanics, electric installations, construction and hairdressing are most likely to be mentioned, though most of these are not fields in which respondents seem to have had (access to) training. Less widely cited, but equally important form of support included access to work experience or internships (“practical work”, e.g. “in factories”, welding, auto mechanics, etc.), information about jobs/opportunities (including “job fairs”), [job] mediators, networking opportunities (“connections”) and, in the case of women support from family or parents.

These findings are largely in line with the findings from expert interviews.

3.3.3 Access to labour market information and employment support

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian respondents use a wide range of channels for getting information on job openings. The most widely used sources are TV and social media such as Facebook (Table 12). Among the ‘other’ sources, Employment Offices, Youth Action Groups, Internet websites/portals (e.g. Portal pune and Merrjep), newspapers and municipalities were most cited.

respondents report they themselves know (i.e. can follow a training in) Albanian. The question may have been misinterpreted by (some) respondents to refer to any foreign languages required in the market (e.g. English).

¹¹ When asked about the training language, 98% responded that they would be able to attend a training in Albanian (followed by Serbian, 14%). German and English, which are considered very relevant for obtaining a job, were cited by only 2% and 1% of respondents, respectively.

¹² Notably, these are more widely cited in the question about potential support to respondents themselves (as opposed to support for other community members), which could be an indication of this choice is often driven by individual preference rather than an objective opinion that this is the best way to fight unemployment.

Table 12: Sources of information on job openings (Share, %)

Information channels	Share (%)
TV	65
Social media (e.g. Facebook)	41
Learning Centres	13
Friends or family members	8
Political parties or community leaders	7
Religious institutions	2
Other	6

Around 60% of the respondents have heard about Employment Offices, of which over half are (or were at some point) registered as unemployed, but only 2% (i.e. 1% of the overall sample) report having received any other service from them. Knowledge of VTC is lower, at around 40%; 17% of those who know VTCs (i.e. 7% of the overall sample) have received some training from them, however this result should be treated with caution: some of the respondents may have been referring to other training providers or to training provided in cooperation between donors/NGOs and VTCs.

The survey also sought to shed light on experiences of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members with different types of ALMMs or other employment support, e.g. in terms of access, conditions, perceived usefulness of measures, and which measures have been more successful in promoting employment. However, despite a deliberate attempt to interview individuals who have had such experiences (through quota sampling), the level of data obtained was limited and did not allow such an analysis. Some patterns that could be observed from this data are summarised below:

- Training is the most frequent type of employment support that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members apply and have access to. Other measures respondents have applied to are businesses, start-up grants, agricultural grants, internship schemes, and public works, followed by entrepreneurship training and on-the-job training. Very few respondents have applied for wage subsidy schemes.
- Members of these communities are most likely to participate in measures that are provided or supported by local NGOs and donor projects. Exceptions in this respect are agricultural grants (provided mostly by municipalities) and public works, wage subsidies and on-the-job training (provided mostly by EOs).
- Self-reported reasons for not applying for different measures tend to be related to: their level of schooling or skills which does not match the eligibility criteria (including preparing business plans for some measures); now knowing about the measures or application deadlines and eligibility criteria; and not knowing how to apply or fill out application forms (appropriately). Other reasons cited are the unfairness in selection (“manipulated process”) and, for agricultural grants, lack of land.

These findings are consistent with inputs from expert interviews.

4. Lessons learnt from other European countries

The employment rate of Roma communities is generally lower than that of other communities, but it differs among European countries depending on a range of factors such as: cross-country differences in Roma communities' level of education, the structure of the economies (with Roma being more likely to be employed in sectors that provide jobs for lower-skilled individuals, such as construction, tourism and agriculture); the high cost of hiring employees formally in some countries; and the degree of racial discrimination (particularly in Central and South East Europe) (Messing, 2014). Some countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, etc.) undertake targeted measures to improve the inclusion of Roma communities and/or have national Strategies and Action Plans for this purpose, however in practice coordination and implementation of policy often remains weak and these documents are not translated into priorities in the field of employment policy and/or do not lead to tailored measures that meet the needs of Roma communities (Bartlett et al., 2011).

In the field of employment, the most commonly used policy measures are active labour market measures: direct employment creation through public works or public employment programmes, wage/employment subsidies, training and career guidance, and measures to support self-employment and business start-ups (including cooperatives and social enterprises) (Bartlett, 2011; Adamecz et al., 2013; GoRC, 2012). Key challenges in the design and implementation of these measures have included: the low participation of Roma in such measures, which is partly due their limited access considering that information channels and institutional framework for delivery of services does not ensure outreach to Roma communities; lack of – or poor – assessments of needs of Roma communities and hence lack of tailored programmes that meet their needs; disregard for demands of the local economy (e.g. provision of training courses specifically for Roma in crafts they are traditionally known for, such as basketwork, for which there is no market demand); lack of engagement of stakeholders in the design and implementation of policies; lack of trust of Roma communities in employment-promotion structures, which partly stems from ineffective measures provided in the past and sometimes even due to having experienced discrimination from the staff; lack of proactive action to change the attitude of employers towards Roma or anti-discrimination measures and campaigns (Bartlett, 2011; GoRC, 2012; Messing, 2014; ILO, 2016). Generic (i.e. not Roma-specific) challenges such as the lack of reliable and regular information on the labour market and mismatch of training courses with the needs of the labour market are also significant challenges in the effective employment promotion among Roma (ILO, 2016).

Evidence on the impact of ALMMs in Roma employment promotion is limited, but it does provide some indicative conclusions. Public work programmes, in which Roma jobseekers tend to be concentrated, are short-term interventions which have not shown to be successful in promoting sustainable employment among beneficiaries, partly because they provide no (obvious) pathway to jobs in the 'regular' labour market (Kuddo, 2009; GoRC, 2012; Messing, 2014).

Quota are sometimes used to promote Roma's access to ALMMs (ILO, 2016), however the quota by itself does not ensure access and it can prove difficult to reach, as suggested e.g. by the experience of previous programmes implemented in Kosovo and Macedonia (Kavanagh, 2012; O'Higgins and

Kirevska, 2012). Inclusion of Roma in services and measures open to all citizens requires additional efforts in terms of targeting, outreach and often additional support¹³. Rather, experience suggests that because Roma individuals often face multiple vulnerabilities, providing a combination of services according to the individual's needs enhances the probability of success in employment promotion. Examples of successful implementation of such programmes can be found in Hungary and Spain. In Hungary, successful programmes have included *Improvement of employability of the disadvantaged*, which provided a personalised combination of subsidies and services, ranging from labour market counselling, mentoring, vocational training and wage subsidies; and *One step ahead!* which provided general or vocational training to participants who had primary education or less (in exceptional cases, vocational retraining to those with a vocation considered outdated), as well as a cash transfer during the programme (Adamecz et al., 2013). In Spain, the *Acceder (Access)* programme providing a range of labour market services and measures in an integrated manner and in close cooperation with companies. According to ILO (2016), key success factors in this case are provision of integrated services through service centres in the communities where Roma live; tailored individual support towards improving the skills and overall employability of the participants (e.g. vocational training, counselling, job mediation, and mentoring, even after being employed), training directed towards real job opportunities and developed in close cooperation with companies; teams of both Roma and non-Roma professionals (mediators, counsellors working with individuals; and intermediators working directly with companies); a combination of targeted support and mainstreaming, i.e. targeted measures for inclusion of Roma in training, and employment services and ALMMs open to all citizen, hence promoting de-segregation.

Employment policies typically focus on vulnerable groups such as the unskilled or long-term unemployed. However, in the case of Roma communities, the highly educated also face dire employment prospects. For instance, GoRC (2012) notes that among the Roma community unemployment is even higher for persons with higher levels of completed education. This suggests that enhancing employability of Roma individuals is not sufficient, and unemployment among this group should be treated also an issue of limited networks and social capital, which is in some countries further worsened by prejudice and discrimination. Accordingly, and recognising that the level of education among Roma youth are increasing over time, the *Integrom* programme in Hungary targets young Roma with secondary or tertiary education to facilitate their access to quality jobs, particularly white-collar jobs at leading companies, which they would not have access to otherwise (ILO, 2016 provides more information). In addition to information on job opportunities and direct job mediation, the programme offers career guidance, general skills training (e.g. IT and communication), and support to participants in the application process and mentoring after they are employed. The contribution of the programme is considered to be beyond the direct impact in terms employment: helping to fight prejudices in society and providing role models of successful young Roma who attain successful careers through higher education, hence incentivising educational attainment of others¹⁴. Similar to

¹³ Practical considerations such as scheduling can also significantly affect entry into training programmes, regular attendance and completion (Adamecz et al., 2013). Care should be taken to avoid scheduling of programmes during high casual work seasons (usually in the summer), as suggested also by the experience of NGO Voices of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE) in Kosovo.

¹⁴ A low motivation to complete schooling among Roma is partly attributed to lack of successful highly-educated role models these communities (e.g. GVG, 2008; GoRC, 2012).



the Spanish *Acceder* case above, one-on-one relationships with companies are considered essential in the mediation process and for overcoming discriminatory attitudes.

Apart from active labour market programmes, other initiatives have included: facilitation of access to land for Roma potential farmers (e.g. on lease or as a donation), along with subsidising inputs in order to promote their engagement in agriculture (*Social Land Programme* in Hungary); support for local economic development for Roma communities; formalisation of informal employment; enhancing capacity of employment offices' staff to engage with Roma issues; and training and appointment of Roma officials in public employment services (Bartlett et al. 2011).

5. Conclusions and recommendation

The labour market situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is worse than that of all other communities living in Kosovo, with concerns regarding both level and quality of employment. This is a result of a combination of relatively low education/skill levels, and a range of other factors, including lack of access to information and social capital which could facilitate their engagement in (quality) jobs, and labour market discrimination. The aim of this study was to identify suitable and feasible policy interventions which, in a sustainable manner, could help Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian men and women to access employment opportunities, and particularly decent employment opportunities. Drawing from a review of other countries' experiences and the policy context in Kosovo, a survey of 182 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian working age men and women, and expert interviews, the following conclusions and recommendations are summarised.

Kosovo's policy framework for the employment of minorities, and these communities in particular, is relatively advanced compared to many European countries. The quota for representation of minorities in public sector employment mandated by the Law 03/L-149 on Civil Service in the Republic of Kosovo, is one initiative in this respect. Improved efforts to fully implement this law, as well the specification of the quota for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, could help to promote these communities' access to stable full-time employment opportunities which they typically cannot access¹⁵. Another important policy document is the Strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in the Kosovo Society (2017-2021) which foresees a range of activities to address employment of these communities, mainly to increasing participation of these communities in ALMMs. The experience of other countries shows that implementation of similar strategies in practice can suffer from poor policy coordination, lack of translation of these documents into priorities in employment policy and/or results in tailored measures that meet the needs of these communities. Accordingly, it is recommended that efforts are focused primarily on mainstreaming the issue of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian employment into employment policy-making processes. In particular, it is recommended that inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members is treated in the upcoming Employment and Vocation Training Policy (2019-2021).

In accordance with the strategy for the Strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in the Kosovo Society (2017-2021), the Employment and Vocation Training Policy (2019-2021) should foresee a quota for the inclusion of men and women of Roma, Ashkali (and Egyptian) background in ALMMs. The targets foreseen in this Strategy seem feasible if efforts are made in terms of targeting, outreach and additional pre-programme support provided to these participants. Particularly, the following practical considerations should be taken into consideration:

- Channels of information on jobs and professional development should be diverse and include also low-cost (or no cost) but effective channels such as Internet-based ones (especially social media and job portals) and institutions and organisations that are active among these

¹⁵ Note that concerns are voiced with regard to the relatively low level of education among these communities, however the level of education is increasing over time, and not all positions in the public sector are high-skilled.

communities (e.g. Learning Centres, Youth Action Groups, NGOs working with these communities, etc.).

- Apart from ensuring that information on available opportunities and eligibility criteria and deadlines for application reaches these communities, additional support should be provided to support and encourage their access to measures. Depending on the type of opportunity, this could entail a combination of simple support in the process of application (e.g. support in filling out application forms and access to additional advice), soft-skills training (e.g. preparing for a job interview, preparing a CV/resume, etc.) and additional preparatory courses. Mentoring continuing throughout participation in the ALMM or during early regular employment experience could also be useful to increase attrition.
- To enhance recruitment, regular attendance and completion, trainings and other measures (e.g. internships) should be scheduled so that they do not coincide with high seasons of casual work (typically summer, and to some extent spring and autumn).
- Employment-promotion activities, including information, recruitment, application support, delivery of services and ALMMs, etc. should, to the extent possible, make use of organisations and institutions working Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians who enjoy good access to these communities (e.g. NGOs and Learning Centres). A range of forms of cooperation are feasible, ranging from just outreach and application support provided by these organisations, to joint implementation of the scheme (and/or sharing of resources) or even outsourcing.
 - The experience of NGOs such as VoRAE in both provision of services and their cooperation with public institutions (including EARK's VTCs) can provide useful lessons in this respect and it can potentially be expanded. Considering the apparently low participation in some ALMMs provided from EOs (apart from training and public works), one area of immediate importance seems to be increasing the cooperation between Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian organisations and EOs.
 - Staff delivering services and measures should include members of these communities. These serve as role models and also facilitate better outreach, communication and trust among the communities and implementing organisations
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that ALMM Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community members have access to a variety of measures and services, in accordance with their individual needs and skills.
 - While public works programmes (which are typically offered to them) can serve to provide unskilled with short-term employment and a means to strengthen labour market attachment, work habits and motivation, they do not tend to provide pathways to sustainable employment.
 - On-the-job training should be continued to be used, as means of developing practical industry-relevant skills and facilitating links of participants with the private sector which they would not otherwise have.
 - Wage subsidies and targeted at these community members can help to support their employment in the private sector, fight prejudice and discrimination.
 - Internships for secondary and tertiary school graduates in leading businesses and other organisations can be similarly used to facilitate school-to-work transition

- Self-employment promotion can be a useful measure particularly for those who have some vocational training (e.g. those who have been trained in plumbing or pastry making) and/or work experience and have some knowledge of the market demand.
- Inclusion of women of these communities in ALMMs should be particularly increased:
 - Design of ALMMs should take into account also the average lower skill levels among women (hence more remedial programmes should be provided), as well as their preferences for part-time or other flexible work arrangements. The latter means that occupations/industries that tend to offer more part-time jobs can be targeted for training and placement of women. However, self-employment and business support for a smaller target group should also be provided (to date this type of support seems to have been limited to men).
 - Given the cultural barriers to women's employment, promotion of successful role models is particularly important.
- Close ties with businesses are required to enable regular job mediation and placement into business through ALMMs. For this:
 - One-to-one communication and relation with businesses can be used to encourage businesses to accept Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian jobseekers and to fight prejudice and discrimination.
 - Initially, leading companies with an established reputation for corporate social responsibility should be approached.
 - Public recognition (e.g. awards for workforce diversity) should be given to businesses involved in ALMMs, thereby encouraging and disseminating good practices.

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