



# Report 2019

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Monitoring of Sector Strategy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) on the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) for the employment of members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

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JUNE, 2019



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of members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

The views expressed in this assessment do not necessarily reflect  
the views of the Regional Cooperation Council or of its participants,  
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# List of Abbreviations

**EARK** - Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo

**DLE** - Department of Labour and Employment

**ALMM** - Active Labour Market Measures

**MLSW**- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

**MEST** - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

**OJP** - On-the-Job Practice

**VTC** - Vocational Training Centre

**CSW** - Centre for Social Work

**NGO** – Nongovernmental organization

**WS** – Wage Subsidy

**SAS** - Social Assistance Scheme

**OJT** – On-the-Job Training

**OCR** - Office for Communities and Return

**EO** - Employment Office

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# Introduction

## Executive summary

This report provides a summary of the monitoring of the sector strategy of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare regarding the effectiveness of active labour market measures for the employment of members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in four municipalities.

The report was compiled during May and June of 2019 and it included four municipalities according to the sample of population with more minorities: Gjakovë, Prizren, Fushë Kosovë and Obiliq. 2018 data and, where available, those the first three months of 2019 were taken into consideration. It focused on action areas that are addressed in the MLSW Sector Strategy, municipal strategies and action plans in the municipalities of Fushë Kosovë, Obiliq, Gjakovë and Prizren. For the purpose of this report, the "Sector Strategy 2018-2012", "Strategy for Inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in Kosovo Society 2017-2021", "Social Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in the Municipality of Prizren", "Local Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities of the Municipality of Prizren 2019-2013", "Law Against Discrimination," "Law on the Use of Languages" " etc. have been studied. The practical part of the work for drafting the report, where the current situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities on the ground as well as the commitments of the Government of Kosovo towards the achievement of the ALMMs implementation objectives have also been examined.

Findings of this report show that implementation of the Sector Strategy faces many difficulties and it is not close to fulfilling the defined activities, mainly due to lack of political commitment, insufficient financial and human resources to monitor the progress, poor coordination of activities of institutions at central and local level and, on the other hand, due to the limited capacities of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities on educational aspect, literacy, readiness to engage on the job, close connection with the family and unwillingness to leave the environment in which they live in and the heavy dependence on the social assistance scheme.

As far as the Employment Agency within the MLSW is concerned, as the responsible institution in charge of implementing and monitoring the Strategy, it is notable that it does not have sufficient human and financial capacity to effectively fulfil its mandate. This lack of capacity has adversely affected institutional coordination and the setting of a regular institutional system for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Sector Strategy at central and local level. Community empowerment by the Employment Agency and the Employment Office for communities is largely based on the support of non-governmental organizations, whether local or international, but also of government organizations, in the absence of adequate

staff to deal with communities in their own language, which often comes up as an obstacle.

Questionnaires were prepared for the compilation of this report, where all state and non-state stakeholders at municipal level went through the semi-structured interviews with the aim of collecting as accurate and source data as possible from policy implementers at the municipal level.

On the other hand, not all municipalities have developed action plans to fulfil the MLSW sector strategy. Even in those Municipalities that have developed action plans, conditions have not been created and funds have been allocated to fulfil the action plan. This was followed by a lack of professional capacities and political will which has directly affected implementation of the plan at a satisfactory level.

It should also be noted that the compilation of this report was done at a time when a large number of young people from Kosovo, including young people of communities, are leaving to other countries to seek better work and live a more dignified life on one hand, whilst, on the other hand, businesses and companies are looking for workers, especially those with any skill or profession - not excluding physical workers without education, but capable of work.

Certainly, the difference between offer and demand in the labour market is very pronounced, where only in 2018 and the first period of 2019 the number of

businesses started to notice the shortages of workers and to be much more interested than before in hiring workers, not selecting nationality or gender where possible. All these developments indicate that within 2-3 years Kosovo will face major changes in the labour market and intervention or change of the sector strategy will be necessary.

A lack of unification and standardization of jobs in all municipalities, Employment Offices, Vocational Training Centres, Centres for Social Work, Office for Communities and Return is notable same as the need to increase cooperation between these stakeholders to apply the national strategy on implementation of active labour market measures.

It is also worth mentioning that some of the institutions and NGOs were not willing to cooperate and share information with the report compiling team, probably in the absence of time or even information that is directly related to implementation of the active labour market measures.

## Active Labour Market Measures

- Institutional Training:** means the training provided by the eight Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) operating under the DLE umbrella. Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) provide free training for jobseekers in a particular profession focusing on application of practical skills and knowledge and using teaching in classroom, as well as various cabinets. There are 30 different profiles with a total of 60 workshops. A modular training system based on the individual skills of the candidate is applied. After each module the candidate undergoes a test and a final one at the end. The courses last six months and only after acquiring the skills, the candidate receives the certificate.
  - On-the-Job Training:** On-the-job training or OJT means training by an employer who was offered to the jobseeker while engaging in productive work that develops the knowledge or skills essential to perform a specific job with an adequate performance. This scheme includes monthly compensation not higher than the minimum wage set in Kosovo. (The period of two to six months).
  - On-the-Job Practice:** OJP is a labour market measure with the aim of giving participants the skills and knowledge needed to perform a particular job within the workplace and work environment. OJP supports new graduates with access to training opportunities and contacting employers in order to improve future employment opportunities and find a job. The scheme includes monthly compensation which is determined by the MLSW.
  - Wage Subsidy:** Is a 12-month employment program, whereby the employer receives a 50% employee subsidy for a 12-month period. Participants in the WS scheme are expected to remain in the workplace after the end of the subsidy period. These are direct
- transfers to employers in order to encourage them to hire certain groups with difficulty to find jobs. Employment subsidies can help employers expand their business and hire new staff, which will help them create more jobs.
- Public Work:** Provide short-term employment by improving the local infrastructure. The purpose of public work programs is to generate temporary employment for registered unemployed persons through the implementation of intensive projects that absorb the labour force as well as the maintenance and rehabilitation of municipal assets (public assets), as well as public spaces;
  - Self-Employment:** A self-employment program is a labour market measure that helps the unemployed to start a business, or become self-employed by providing training and counselling to develop and manage a business, same as financial support to help the unemployed start up a business activity<sup>1</sup>



1. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Department of Labour and Employment

## Key findings from the Strategy monitoring

# Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo

The National Strategy has foreseen several active measures regarding their implementation for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Of the measures foreseen, which include institutional training, on-the-job training, on-the-job practice, wage subsidy, public work or self-employment, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are largely involved to a certain extent, except of the self-employment measure, where there is the least application in practice.<sup>2</sup>

As part of the drafting of these policies and part of the strategy development, active measures are a priority for the Agency and involvement of other line ministries as well as other institutions, including Employment Offices and Centres for Social Work, is an unsurpassable necessity. The need for cooperation with the Ministry of Education is greater due to the coordination of vacancies within the Agency as well as the coordination of student recruitment, development of educational programs and curricula for labour market needs that remain vacant for longer periods of time, such as lack of jobseekers' application or lack of education. For this purpose, the Agency has designed informative brochures which are distributed to all

persons who show up at the Employment Offices. These brochures contain some basic information such as the Office addresses and contacts, Employment Office's general duties and responsibilities, jobseeker-specific services and training professions.

There are no reserved positions with organization chart within the Agency for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

Through the Cooperation Agreement between MLSW/EARK and VORAE, cooperation in supporting members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities for their inclusion in VTC training programs continued. In 2018, it was mainly cooperated in supporting these candidates for training in VTC Prishtinë, Ferizaj and Prizren.<sup>3</sup>

The financial resources allocated to the national strategy are scarce and they are around three million euros, therefore the Strategy cannot be considered as a development one because the amount of funds must be multiple times bigger to be considered as such.

## Unemployment registered according to ethnicity <sup>4</sup>

Entiteti	2018	(%)	Ndryshimi te 2017	Femra	Meshkuj
Shqiptar	80142	83.6%	0.9%	36400	43742
Serb	7358	7.7%	22.1%	3493	3865
Boshnjak	1642	1.7%	3.1%	841	801
Kroat	65	0.1%	-5.8%	30	35
Rom	1753	1.8%	-2.3%	744	1009
Ashkali	2639	2.8%	-0.1%	956	1683
Egjiptian	838	0.9%	16.4%	364	474
Malazez	9	0.0%	12.5%	8	1
Turq	508	0.5%	0.2%	257	251
Tjetër	936	1.0%	-14.2%	454	482
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,890</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>43,547</b>	<b>52,343</b>

2. Shpëtim Kalludra – Acting Director of Department of Labour and Employment, 10 May 2019

3. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report, Shpend Kalludra interview, 10 May 2019

4. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report

## 10 Monitoring of Sector Strategy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) on the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) for the employment of members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

Based on EARK 2018 report data, it is notable that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities participate in unemployment registration such as Roma (1.8%), Ashkali (2.8%) and Egyptians (0.9%). These figures indicate a small but not satisfactory engagement having in mind the unemployment rate in these communities. The total number of employees of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is 5.230.

### Regular employment according to ethnicity<sup>5</sup>

Entiteti	Punësimi	(%)	Shp	Nryshime te 2017
Shqiptar	3430	91.1%	4.3%	16.7%
Serb	102	2.7%	1.4%	25.9%
Boshnjak	44	1.2%	2.7%	76.0%
Kroat	-	-	-	-
Rom	38	1.0%	2.2%	31.0%
Ashkali	40	1.1%	1.5%	0.0%
Egjiptian	45	1.2%	5.4%	9.8%
Malazez	-	-	-	-
Turq	22	0.6%	4.3	-12.0%
Tjetër	43	1.1%	4.6%	38.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3764</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>

Based on EARK 2018 report data, it is notable that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities participate in unemployment registration such as Roma (1.8%), Ashkali (2.8%) and Egyptians (0.9%). These figures indicate a small but not satisfactory engagement having in mind the unemployment rate in these communities. The total number of employees of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is 5.230.

### Regular employment according to ethnicity<sup>6</sup>

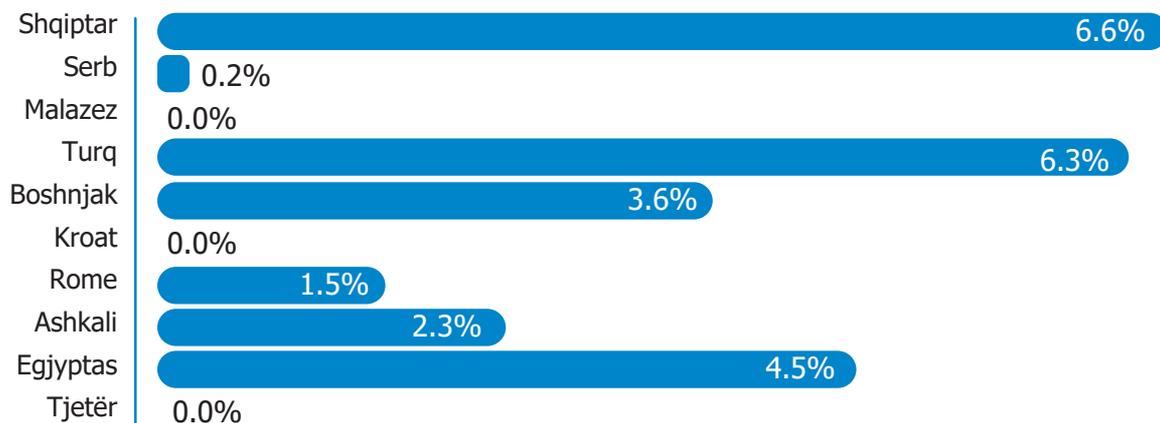
Entiteti	2018	(%)	ShA	Të Çertifikuar	ShÇ
Shqiptar	5267	95.8%	6.6%	4129	78.4%
Serb	15	0.3%	0.2%	10	66.7%
Boshnjak	-	-	-	-	-
Kroat	32	0.6%	6.3%	28	87.5%
Rom	59	1.1%	3.6%	50	84.7%
Ashkali	-	-	-	-	-
Egjiptian	26	0.5%	1.5%	20	76.9%
76.Malazez	60	1.1%	2.3%	54	90.0%
Turq	38	0.7%	4.5%	34	89.5%
Tjetër	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5497</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>4325</b>	<b>78.7%</b>

The data presented in the table above show that Roma and Egyptian communities during this reporting period managed to employ several dozen persons in employment mediation, but as for the Ashkali community, the figures remain zero, but at the number of 40. A total of 123 persons have benefited mediation.

5. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report

6. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report

### Professional skill building according to ethnicities <sup>7</sup>



The need for vocational training is high for all persons without adequate vocational training and data show that in 2018, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities were engaged in 124 cases.

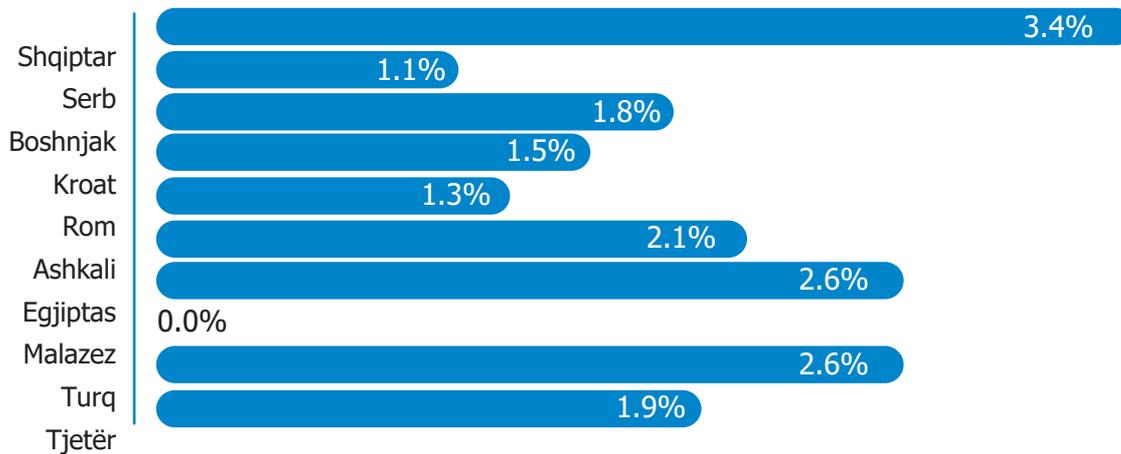
### Active Labour Market Measures according to ethnicity<sup>8</sup>

Entiteti	MATP	%	Ndryshimi te 2017	ShA
Shqiptar	2760	92.0%	10.3%	3.4%
Serb	79	2.6%	-49.0%	1.1%
Boshnjak	30	1.0%	66.7%	1.8%
Kroat	1	0.0%	-50.0%	1.5%
Rom	22	0.7%	-18.5%	1.3%
Ashkali	55	1.8%	-22.5%	2.1%
Egjyptian	22	0.7%	46.7%	2.6%
Malazez	0	0.0%	-	0.0%
Turq	13	0.4%	62.5%	2.6%
Tjetër	18	0.6%	-35.7%	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

7. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report

8. Work and employment in Kosovo –2018 Annual Report

### Activation rate in ALMP according to ethnicity<sup>9</sup>



# Municipality of Fushë Kosovë

## Employment Office in Fushë Kosovë

With the aim of obtaining as accurate information as possible, the Employment Office, which operates within the Municipality of Fushë Kosovë in a relatively narrow space for performing its duties, in a small office with three officials within it, was contacted. This Office faces a high frequency of people who come to seek unemployment certificates, most of whom are from minority communities. The distance between the Employment Office and the CSW is not far away, which enables the beneficiaries to have easy access to collection of documentation, different from the distance to the Vocational Training Centre located in Prishtinë.

During the meeting with the Employment Office' officials, necessary data were collected for conducting an assessment on the implementation of active labour market measures.

The Employment Office is responsible of implementing active labour market measures. The records show the work done in this Office by the Agency officials.

Punëkërkuar të regjistruar	278
Punëkërkuar të riaktivizuar	446
Punëkërkuar të transferuar	35
Këshillime	2212
Këshillime në karrierë	268
Këshillime intensive	113
Punëdhënësit të regjistruar	237
Vizita të realizuara	190
Vendet e lira të rregullta	372
Vendet e lira MATP	71
Ndërmjetësime në punë të rregullta	102
Ndërmjetësime në trajnime të rregullta	0
Ndërmjetësime në punë publike	7
Ndërmjetësime në trajnime në punë	5
Ndërmjetësime në punësim	8
Ndërmjetësime në subvencionim	7
Ndërmjetësime në praktikë	15
Referimet në QAP	0
Punësimet pas trajnimit	0
Punësimet pas praktikës	1

However, 2018 data show that the number of beneficiaries of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in these activities is very low. Only five cases benefited from the active labour market measures, all of them from the Ashkali community, with four were subsidies and one on-the-job training.<sup>10</sup>

The reason for this small number is because community members lack the basic education, which is also a criterion for attending courses and engagements in one of the active labour market measures.

The Employment Office within the MLSW under each circumstance makes efforts to inform citizens about active labour market measures, by distributing information brochures, placing advertisements in the building as well as trying to disseminate information through different announcements in different situations.

Organizations do not have any organizational charts that have reserved seats for communities. All cases that come and ask for proof of completion of social

## CSW Fushë Kosovë

CSW Fushë Kosovë is a municipal institution mandated with provision of professional social services and the social assistance scheme. To assess implementation, the work mainly based on the service of the social assistance scheme department, therefore, the interview was conducted with the CSW staff responsible for providing these services.

The Centre for Social Work faces a large number of families benefiting from the social assistance scheme, where a significant part of them belong to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Of the approximately 840 families, 430 belong to communities, and 300 of them belong to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.<sup>13</sup>

A major concern is that most of them, or about

assistance documentation are issued the certification, because we as an Office have never been able to offer them a job that they refused so that we do not issue the requested certificate.<sup>11</sup>

The Employment Office also lacks information on the number of students enrolled in studies, be it in private or public colleges.

The Employment Office data show that there are registered members from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who are waiting for jobs – respectively six Roma, 50 Ashkali and five Egyptians, all of whom are unfortunately without education.<sup>12</sup>

There are some companies that work more closely with the Employment Office, such as “Euroloni”, “Electro Jaha”, which hire workers through our Office and seek workers from us, such as for the plastic recycling plants, for which no education is required.

Since many of the jobs offered are short-term, most of the community’s population are reluctant to engage in fear of being cut off the social assistance and returning to this assistance again takes

90%, belong to the second category,<sup>14</sup> are obliged to apply every six months at the Centre for Social Work. One of the basic criteria for the second category is to have a family member capable of working. Application every six months is a major issue not only for the CSW staff but also for the Employment Office having in mind that each re-application requires a certificate from the Employment Office.

When it comes to the active labour market measures envisaged in the national strategy, social assistance officers are very little aware of these measures, since most of the beneficiaries do not have the possibility to get informed about these measures at the Employment Offices upon receiving the certificate. There is no informative brochure at the CSW to notify them on the active labour market

10. Nexhmije Pllana – Employment Office, Municipality of Fushë Kosovë

11. Interview - Teuta Brisku, 13 May 2019, Employment Office

12. Teuta Brisku – Employment Counsellor

13. Bajram Marolli – Social Assistance Officer, CSW Fushë Kosovë, 13 May 2019

14. Teuta Brisku - Këshilltare për punësim

measures, which is considered by the staff members as very useful to have. “We are not informed and no one informs us through training or alike,<sup>15</sup>” the social services officer says.

The municipality and social services are also facing major challenges due to the large number of readmitted persons within the municipality.

It is worth stressing that Roma families also face other problems, where, according to the social assistance officer, many of them being illiterate, as there are persons who have not even attended primary education, are obliged to fill in the documents with fingerprints instead of their signatures.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian families face with large numbers of children on one hand, while on the other hand the legal criterion is that the family must have a child under the age of five in order to receive social assistance from the second category. But this often comes up as a problem for families of communities, as there are many families who have children under the age of five, but they also have more than one family member capable of working over the age of 18, which is a legal obstacle for provision of the social assistance.

Several campaigns carried out by the NGOs on informing them about the possibility of attending courses at Vocational Training Centre have failed

## Office for Communities and Return - Fushë Kosovë

The Office for Communities and Return is located within the Municipality and very close to the Mayor’s Office. The OCR deals with the readmitted persons’ issues, including the three Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, starting from food, shelter, but also training on employment through the active labour market measures in cooperation with Vocational Training Centres and the Centre for Social Work, on the other hand, for the provision of social assistance and professional social services.

utterly because they do not have a single year of education and having basic education is a criterion for the training. The municipality of Fushë Kosovë faces a large number of persons who have also migrated within the country, including the readmitted persons, too.

Within the CSW there was no case of a family being taken out when the Employment Office, including one of the active labour market measures, offered them employment twice in a row,<sup>16</sup> as provided by the Administrative Instruction and someone that refused was taken out.

The recommendation from CSW Fushë Kosovë is that the Agency and businesses should make efforts to create as many jobs that do not require a higher education qualification, because by doing so the possibility of engaging communities would be much greater, taking into account that vast majority of them do not choose the job, but they do not have the opportunity. The municipality of Fushë Kosovë has about 10% of minorities, whilst only 0.5% of them are employed. Another recommendation is the access to the Employment Office’s database where the CSW would be able to extract the employment documentation itself as well as removal of the re-application every six months, as it is a huge burden for the CSW staff, consequently the opportunity to work in the field is very small.

The Office for Communities and Return is not familiar with the national employment strategy. There are about 125 people, including families and individuals, who have returned only within 2018. They include 20 Ashkali, three Roma and three Egyptians.<sup>17</sup> The OCR has a number of cooperation agreements with several non-governmental organizations, but even in this situation the underlying problem lies with these persons, namely the lack of professional training, or to better say it, most often the lack of their primary or secondary education. All the

15. Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law no. 2003/15 on the Social Assistance Scheme in Kosovo, Article 4, point 4.5

16. Bajram Marolli – Social Assistance Officer CSW Fushë Kosovë, 13 May 2019

17. Zoran Mikic – Office for Communities and Return, Fushë Kosovë

persons in need in order to benefit must develop a business plan and members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities do not have the necessary preparation to put together a business plan. On the other hand, many individuals and families have made positive decisions, but they never received the promised grants. The municipality of Fushë Kosovë has recently signed an agreement with Caritas, where the latter will allocate 21.000 euros while 9.000 will be allocated by the

Municipality.<sup>18</sup> Significant problems are also present at the Vocational Training Centre as the large number of returnees and others has resulted with the inability to provide training for all. The municipality is sending 10 people to attend these trainings. The municipality, in cooperation with another NGO, has also started a literacy project for communities, but this has not resulted very positive thus far.

## Municipality of Obiliq

### Employment Office - Obiliq

The Municipality of Obiliq is a municipality with a composition of different nationalities and communities. Within the municipality there is an Employment Office, which is near the Centre for Social Work. The Employment Office in the Municipality of Obiliq is active towards its role and responsibilities and is cooperative with all partners within the municipality, with businesses and its citizens. Its officials are well-informed and they implement active labour market measures into practice, for as much as the capacities of businesses offering and seeking employees are concerned.

Within the Employment Office it is worked on implementation of active labour market measures, while they possess data, which were also presented in this assessment.

All the measures, including the ones under, are in function:

- Institutional training
- On-the-job training
- Internship at work
- Wage subsidy
- Public work
- Self-employment

The number of beneficiaries of active measures within Obiliq municipality during 2018 was 124 in total, four of whom were Roma, one Egyptian and eight Ashkali.<sup>19</sup> When it comes to implementation of active labour market measures, based on the MLSW national strategy, the Employment Office is in many cases forced to make exceptions to the criteria set for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, as well as for the readmitted persons. The reasons for this are: inadequate school preparation or deferred age as a criterion that excludes them. The Office's efforts are to include as many applicants as possible.<sup>20</sup> The active measures implemented so far for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are 15 out of 124. Employment Office - the criteria for active measures do not apply to communities and the readmitted, same as for the Albanian community. Many times, even without adequate education, they access active measures because they know they lack preparation and are not of adequate age.

Regular employment is going harder and it is affecting the regular employment because companies want to take advantage of an Employment Agency benefit of 150 or 250 euros, which directly affects it. As far as communities are concerned, the education or age criteria, we have overcome and did not apply them to others in order to also activate them in work and training.

18. Right there

19. Isak Ahmeti – Employment Office, Municipality of Obiliq 14 May 2019

20. Interview with Emine Berisha – Employment Office, 14 May 2019

## Active measures

Regular employment - 30 companies over 130 times have sought employees through the Employment Office and the number of workers they have been looking for is large enough, but we have not been able to provide them with as many workers as they sought. In most cases we were unable to respond positively in the absence of trained and certified workers, or even registered at the Employment Office.

- On-the-job training - 19 cases
- Subsidy - 14 different companies have requested 18 times, 26 jobs in wage subsidy
- Interns - 23 jobs
- Self-employment - 18 cases

The system does not have the possibility that in case someone was twice offered the job, to automatically restrict the possibility to issue a social assistance certificate. The counsellor does not have a button that deletes it, except in cases when the person turns 65.

Cooperation with companies has been achieved through the counsellor's work and promotion of work in the field, as well as regular meetings with companies of the area. Once we went out in the field and then the companies themselves showed up at the Employment Offices.<sup>21</sup> The dedicated work of the employment counsellor has contributed to achievement of these results.

The Employment Office also provides information about the service and the opportunity through the internet, cell phone, direct meetings, thereby adapting to the needs of the employer.

The unemployment rate in Obiliq is high, with 1,694 active registered unemployed jobseekers. Of these, 177 are Roma (128 males and 49 females), Ashkali 82 (72 males and 10 females), and four are Egyptians (three males and one female)<sup>22</sup>.

The total number of jobseekers, including the passive ones, is 4,187, some of them employed through subsidies, have short-term contracts.

There are cases when the company does not accept members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. All this because the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities do not have sustainability at work, do not maintain their jobs and leave, which has created insecurities within companies as they quit their jobs very quickly.

Those who do not plan to go into self-employment do not need to go to the VTC<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, the Office is also working closely with MEST to make language and literacy courses compulsory.



21. Interview with Emine Berisha – Employment Office, 14 May 2019

22. Interview with Emine Berisha – Employment Office, 14 May 2019

23. Intervista me Emine Berisha - Zyra e punësimit, 14 maj 2019

## Centre for Social Work - Obiliq

The Centre for Social Work is a local level institution providing professional social services, but also the social assistance scheme for citizens in need of social assistance.

890 families are beneficiaries of social assistance in the CSW Obiliq.

Out of this this number, there are:

- Roma, 198 families
- Ashkali, 62 families
- Egyptians, five families<sup>24</sup>

When it comes to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities who are beneficiaries of the SAS, the second category is particularly pronounced – respectively, the families that have a family member capable of working and unemployed. This poses a challenge for social assistance officers, because the second category has to reapply every six months and the large number of documents and letters to be filled causes difficulties for CSW staff and limits field work of an already small number of staff employed in the CSW.

While the Employment Office offers a large number of jobs, in CSW Obiliq, there is no evidence that a family was not be able to obtain an unemployment certificate from the Employment Office.

In the majority of cases, the CSW collaborates with the Employment Office to exchange information and involves CSW staff to identify and invite family members to engage in jobs offered by businesses operating within the

municipality.

The CSW staff did not have any training or information on the MLSW national strategy, which is seen as a shortcoming.

CSW officers insist in every situation to have proof of school attendance for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, so that they meet the criteria set out in the Law on SAS and this is in the interest of families for the future.

Recently, some information brochures have been placed in the halls within the CSW and they are accessible to all clients, including the SAS beneficiaries.

Many of the SAS beneficiary families see this assistance as a monthly wage, although it is quite small, and many cases fear that if they are employed for a short period of time, they will be left without social assistance, as they count on it a guaranteed and safe income.<sup>25</sup>

However, on the other hand, it is a major concern for the community, as low educational preparation does not enable good positions in companies seeking workers. Whereas, there are also cases where companies looking for workers do not select or prefer persons from Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities.

When contacted by the CSW, families are reluctant to be hired by companies outside of Obiliq municipality, although many of these companies also provide transportation, food and safety at work. Salaries offered in each case are two to four times higher than the amount of social assistance for the entire family.

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24. Fatime Halimi – Head of Social Assistance, CSW Obiliq

25. Intervista me Emine Berisha - Zyra e punësimit, 14 maj 2019

## Office for Communities and Return - Obiliq

The Office for Communities and Return operates within the Municipality of Obiliq. It is composed of staff of different nationalities. The staff members engaged at the OCR, within their responsibilities, provide services to all returned citizens, without distinction.

The municipality of Obiliq has a predominantly Roma community, Ashkali and very few Egyptians. The number of readmitted families during 2018 is 34, of which seven are Roma, three Ashkali and one Egyptian individual.<sup>26</sup>

Systems are in place, but they are not well supplied with information and not all employees know the system, so there is often a lack of information.

The number of those who benefited from the business plans was 33, while from 2016, about 10 cases have benefited from the business plans.<sup>27</sup>

We are well-acquainted with the measures and now, after amending the regulation, Regulation 13/2017 applies to each case in the Employment Office.

Business plans are about 40% sustainable, especially those that have benefited livestock or equipment have been successful, while some others have failed.

The cooperation between the CSW, EO and UNDP is a very good interrelation which should continue in the future.

We have flyers and fact sheets for parties and give them to stakeholders like URA, DIAKONIA, GIZ, and UNDP. There are no reserved seats for employment of communities in the Municipality's organizational chart.

There is a very good cooperation with the Directorate of Education and this has a very good impact on identifying and informing jobseekers.

Municipality of Obiliq has developed the local strategy for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities 2017-2021, respectively two strategies, one is one-year and the other five years.



26. Shaban Berisha – Office for Communities and Return, Municipality of Obiliq

27. Shaban Berisha – Office for Communities and Return, Municipality of Obiliq

## Vocational Training Centre - Prishtinë (Fushë Kosovë and Obiliq)

The Vocational Training Centre in Prishtinë is responsible for training in Prishtinë region, which includes the municipalities of Fushë Kosovë and Obiliq. Location of the Office enables citizens in need of vocational training to have easy access, as it is close to public transport for the two aforementioned municipalities. Here are some of the findings of the interview conducted with officers of the Centre.

Courses provided in CSW - Prishtinë (Fushë Kosovë and Obiliq)

- Tailoring
- ICT - Information and Communication Technology
- Industrial electronics
- Administrative Assistant
- Business Administration
- Office equipment servicing
- Confectionery
- Baker, pastry
- Water supply and sewage
- Central heating
- Auto-electric
- Construction
- Construction profile with eight occupations
- Self-employment - entrepreneurship mainly for the readmitted, two-weekly training or 50 teaching classes

VTC capacities range from 800 to 100 maximum.

During 2018 there were about 659 beneficiaries, of which 418 were males and 241 females. 32 people have been certified from the communities, of which 19 are females and 13 males.<sup>28</sup>

Community members mainly attend the courses: two on construction, two on confectionery, two on ICTs, 12 on tailoring, one in auto-electric, three in bakery and pastry, four in heating, one in water supply and five in self-employment.

All countries that have recognized Kosovo also accept certificates in the bakery profession. There was a large influx, where in 2016 alone, we certified over 400 people and most of them were working in Hungary. The Hungarian state conditioned them to obtain a certificate and there has been an invasion to be certified in order to save their jobs.

In Fushë Kosovë are rather oriented towards active on-the-job training measures and this has been relatively successful. The education level of communities is zero. They do not know mathematics, they come and stay a few days and leave. Those who quit the training are not issued a certificate, while those who attend it are certified like everyone else.

Majority of them initially go into crude professions. By crude professions we mean water supply, construction, heating, auto-electronics, all of the things that are not done with computers and theories, where much more literacy is needed.

There are two types of professions certified and unverified and they were for the first time accredited by VTC in 2012. The four verified professions are - Administrative assistant, ICT, water supply and heating, so certificates are recognized and therefore those professions are not verified.

The advantage of verified professions is that there are criteria that the National Qualifications Authority requires. In 2015 we were re-accredited and now again in 2018 we have re-applied and this

re-accreditation is necessary to be done every three years.<sup>29</sup>

The certified professions come across difficulties in getting involved and often fail to do so because the key criterion is high school and the community face this obstacle, so most are oriented toward crude professions where high school is not required, since the rules and criteria of authority are such.

Communities have priority and advantage in access to training unlike others, and we always leave a certain number free for them in every case. This represents discrimination for persons who wait a long period while we involve a member of minority communities with urgency and without criteria.<sup>30</sup>

We try to offer them a lot. They come and look for professions for which they are not the adequate ones for them. We are worried by the fact that they are not educated for the professions they are looking for and being literate is the minimum requirement. MEST offers a literacy training course which is helping us because if they do not know how to measure, read a manual, and make the simplest calculation possible....<sup>31</sup>

Taking into account the overall number, the number of 32 people is satisfactory and they are employed in the community where they live and distribute the craft to their members, as well as to the communities.

The EO counsellors direct them to the VTC and register them. The VTC works through trainers to persuade them to stay in the training, where they initially have a probationary job.

The trainers are professionally trained, but the VTC needs trainers who know their language. Some know only Serbian. There is no Serb trainer and they do not know Albanian. The case is the same with the Roma language. The entire literature is in Albanian.

On-the-job training is often conducted in different companies and VTC always has a trainer engaged who deals with them. The trainer starts the engagement after the end of the activity with candidates and the trainer's duties are to get the individual plan from the EO, cooperate with the supervisor of the person who will be trained in the company and depending on the professions they make the training plan for what they will be trained, respectively the supervisor of a client/worker supervisor agree on what they will learn during their stay in the workplace. Following the plan, he monitors the candidate at least once a month over a three-month period. After the monitoring he does the evaluation. The trainer and the supervisor evaluate the candidate's achievements in the workplace and in case the results were not achieved they recommend a continuation of the training for a certain period of time. During this period he is paid 150 euros. If he has achieved the expected results then he is certified by the VTC. The certificate indicates who has supported this - MATP, UNDP, LUX, or anyone else.

Regarding the transportation and dissemination of information, or any other logistical assistance, there is cooperation with various NGOs that are ready to support communities, which greatly facilitates the process of MATPs implementation.

The VTC in Prishtinë/Pristina, as well as the VTC in the Municipality of Gjakovë and Prizren, has good cooperation with the Employment Offices, while the cooperation and exchange of information with the CSW and others is very poor.

Community members mainly ask for moto-cultivators for work on the field and waste collection, as there is no condition from the state for work and it is evident that many of them survive and provide family income from this.

29. Zejnullah Rrustemi – VTC Prishtinë

30. Zejnullah Rrustemi – VTC Prishtinë

31. Zejnullah Rrustemi – VTC Prishtinë

# Municipality of Gjakovë

## Employment Office - Gjakovë

Municipality of Gjakovë is composed of different nationalities, where the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are an integral part with an equal estimate proportion between them.

The number of businesses registered at the Employment Office in Gjakovë is 838. As far as the occupations are concerned, the most sought ones at the Employment Office are: Construction, carpentry,

tailoring, metalworking and maintenance of facilities through cleaning.

Based on the MLSW national strategy implemented for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the active labour market measures are: On-the-job training - two cases, wage subsidy - two cases, public work - three cases and seven self-employment cases. There are 14 cases in total.<sup>32</sup>

Tabela <sup>33</sup>

1	Trajnimi në punë	dy raste
2	Subvencionimi në pagë	dy raste
3	Puna publike	tre raste
4	Vetëpunësimi	shtatë raste
Gjithsejtë të angazhuar gjatë vitit 2018 nga komunitetet rome, ashkali dhe egjiptiane		14 raste

The Employment Office visits businesses and informs them in three ways: through site visits, telephone and email, however we mostly do information of businesses via email.

In recent months businesses are much more interested due to lack of workers, young people are leaving and every day we have calls where they seek hiring people. It is very important to note that there is no selection of nationalities and the engagement of communities is very much desired by businesses, just as it is the case with the Albanians.<sup>34</sup>

Subsidies from UNDP and MLSW go on for nine consecutive months. So far we have never had a case where we have twice informed a person of work, be it from the communities or others, and we did not stop certification issuing in any case.

For the first time we had training on national strategy and active labour market measures by WYG International and we were briefed on them, since prior to this training we had no information on what the national MLSW strategy stipulates.

Campaigns have been occasionally carried out, especially in recent months, including the GIZ job fair. But not only during campaigns, have counsellors dealt with each case where the parties go for unemployment verification which is also used to carry out the counselling part.

"We had a case where we had requests for tailors from different companies where they asked for hundreds of people and the Employment Office was not able to provide them. Communities and others have also been invited, and we have notified them over the phone, especially those who have completed the course or have expressed their interest in tailoring."<sup>35</sup>

32. Arbër Zhubi – Employment Counsellor – Employment Services Officer, 20 May 2019

33. Arbër Zhubi – Employment Counsellor – Employment Services Officer, 20 May 2019

34. Arbër Zhubi – Employment Counsellor – Employment Services Officer, 20 May 2019

35. Arbër Zhubi – Employment Counsellor – Employment Services Officer, 20 May 2019

Various projects ask for nurses and nurse technicians, as well as other professions; however the Employment Office has had very little few chances to offer support because such people are not on the job waiting list.

Courses provided by the Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre for Employees and Jobseekers, based on the modular systems offered at the Training Centre in Gjakovë are:

1. Tailoring
2. Management of micro and small enterprises
3. Self-employment
4. Hairdressing
5. Make-up artist
6. Electric installer
7. Welding
8. Administrative assistant
9. Accounting

The Employment Office staff considers that they are sufficiently informed about the ALMMs and they have constant consultations with stakeholders promoting the active labour market measures. The cooperation of stakeholders such as CSW, OCR and VTC is satisfactory as regular meetings are held.

The total number of jobseekers for 2018 at the Employment Office in Gjakovë from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is 16.

Challenges of the Employment Office are many. A challenge in itself is the non-registration of jobs by companies to the Employment Offices, since only for those jobs that cannot be filled by the company they come and ask for them at the Employment Office. Another challenge for the employment service officials is the unwillingness to hire those who receive social assistance, because they lack the will to work and wish to live with benefits, or they wish to receive these benefits and work without reporting to TAK. Another recent challenge is the migration of young people to European countries where there is a noticeable lack of

labour force throughout the Republic of Kosovo, but also in Gjakovë.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of community employment it is evident that they need more education and vocational training because there are numerous cases when they do not have vocational education and training. As far as institutions are concerned, I believe that they are consistently encouraged enough for their engagement in the labour market, regular employment and ALMMs.

### Centre for Social Work - Gjakovë

The Centre for Social Work in Gjakovë is a public institution at the municipal level responsible of providing professional social services and social assistance. The large numbers of cases in need of social services and social assistance as well as lack of adequate professional staff members are some of the difficulties that CSW Gjakovë faces. This has led to limited knowledge of active labour market measures and the need for more information. We will present the interview data as follows.

The number of beneficiaries of social assistance in the municipality of Gjakovë, namely in the CSW Gjakovë, is 1,023 families, out of which 376 families belong to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Of this number, 92 are Roma, 173 Ashkali, and 111 Egyptians. Gjakovë municipality has over 35% beneficiaries of these three communities.<sup>37</sup>

Cooperation of CSW with the Employment Office is very good and we are informed about the possibilities. We select the lists and then they deal with them.<sup>38</sup>

Since most beneficiaries from the community belong to the second category and we have a small number of staff members, this has resulted in us not being able to handle them in the best possible way, or even doing field verifications.

From time to time in CSW Gjakovë there are companies that have sought workers with salaries of up to 350 euros and when

36. Arbër Zhubi – Employment Counsellor – Employment Services Officer, 20 May 2019

37. Pranush Komani – Head of Social Assistance Service, CSW Gjakovë

38. Pranush Komani - Head of Social Assistance Service, CSW Gjakovë

community members have been contacted, there has been some kind of reaction - why are we just being called and not others, and have used this as a pretext for refusing the job.

Although there are job offers under the active labour market measures, CSW Gjakovë has never had a case where the Employment Office has not issued an unemployment certificate, or it has been removed from the social assistance scheme.

The CSW has also faced problems of non-attendance of community children, but in no case it has removed families from the communities due to lack of school attendance verification, because the absence of attendance verified was justified by a statement of parents about the reasons of non-attendance and in order not to aggravate the situation of the families further, the CSW tends to find methods and ways for non-interrupting the social assistance.

In each case, when a member of a family becomes active in the active labour market measures the CSW quits social assistance and we restore the family to the scheme immediately after termination of employment.

Despite good relations with the Employment Office, they never inform the CSW on family engagement and all this may be due to a lack of systems linkage and information exchange between institutions. Even when there is communication, it is verbal and not through official written form.

Lack of legislation and administrative instructions in the CSW is notable, since they are not provided with the necessary policy documents for their work by the policymakers.

The CSW had no awareness campaigns; there is no document or brochure within the CSW that informs the parties about possibilities of engaging in any of the ALMMs.

It is recommended to increase the cooperation with employment offices, to provide timely notification on the possibility of second category employment and to act according to the law and administrative instructions that in case the client does not accept the employment twice he will not be issued a certificate of unemployment and this will also facilitate our

work as well, since families have become dependent on SAS and many are suspected of working in informal employment and cannot be identified.<sup>39</sup>

## Vocational Training Centre - Gjakovë

The Vocational Training Centre in Gjakovë was interviewed in the framework of assessing the implementation of active labour market measures, based on the MLSW national strategy. The Vocational Training Centre has a well-trained and highly active staff in preparing citizens with the training available.

Courses provided by the Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre for Employees and Jobseekers, based on the modular systems offered at the Training Centre in Gjakovë are:

1. Tailoring
2. Management of micro and small enterprises
3. Self-employment
4. Hairdressing
5. Make-up artist
6. Electric installer
7. Welding
8. Administrative assistant
9. Accounting

During 2018, 560 trainees have attended trainings at the Vocational Training Centre, who have also completed the course and got certified. Of these, 36 were from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. During 2019, so far there are 320 trainees, seven of whom come from the communities.<sup>40</sup>

The professions where most minorities are involved are hairdressing and tailoring, while as far as other professions are concerned, lack of literacy skills and basic math for courses remains a challenge. "But there were cases when they started courses and withdrew; they quit the course, for which we did not issue certificates without completing the course."<sup>41</sup>

The VTC also faces a lack of professional staff for training the jobseekers and the staff needs to be completed as well as new occupations to be considered for the future based on labour market needs, that is, to update the professions.

39. Pranush Komani - Head of Social Assistance Service, 20 May 2019

40. Shaban Laha - VTC Gjakovë

41. Shaban Laha - VTC Gjakovë

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# Municipality of Prizren

## Employment Office Prizren

Municipality of Prizren is composed of different nationalities, where the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are an integral part with an equal estimate proportion between them, where the Roma community dominates.

The municipality of Prizren reserves an employment quota of around 10 percent for minorities although communities in general exceed this quota.

Regarding implementation of the MLSW national strategy, Prizren also faces some obstacles and difficulties, and one of the major or major obstacles to the implementation of active measures is low education among the communities.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities usually respond to training invitations and are in line with the labour market, where the Employment Office makes efforts to match requirements with labour market needs, as market changes have also enabled them to engage more after preparation and training.

On-the-job training is supported with financial support of 150 euros per month, but accurate data are not recorded in the database. It is characteristic that many times the employees that the Employment Office sends to various businesses go to benefit for only three months, but after attending the three-month work and with our mediation, there are many cases where they stay at job as they become familiar with the workplace as well. They also build relationships with the employer to the extent that the employee keeps them for the long term, which is also our goal.<sup>42</sup>

The Employment Office maintains very good

relations in the field with some of the businesses, but it is an interesting that very few businesses go to the Employment Office to seek employees. From several meetings with them, it has turned out that one of the factors of non-cooperation is that the company management staff is weak in this regard and does not follow the press, information, brochures and campaigns organized by the Employment Office and our partners. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there is also a lack of professional work in the Employment Office to include and foster businesses to inform them about the cooperation opportunities. The municipality of Prizren is known as a town of crafts and the shortage of professional workers is major in Prizren. "I had the case when a company asked me for six carpenters, an assistant carpenter and two maintainers at once. He gave me two weeks to find them and we couldn't find them because there are no professionals of this field registered with the Employment Office".<sup>43</sup>

Following conversations and studies by the Prizren Employment Office, it turns out that every company in Prizren dealing with the craft is able to receive at least one employee with profession/crafts, but the Employment Office does not have one available. Prizren has over 15,000 registered businesses, of which in the Employment Office in 2018 only about 300 businesses have registered to seek employees.

The Employment Office in Prizren, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, has organized meetings years ago where there were over 30 large businesses. The debate was based on two points, where the key complaint of businesses was that they are not identifying professional workers but also with secondary education, whereas on the

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42. Hasil Fetahu – Employment Counsellor, 15 May 2019

43. Hasil Fetahu – Employment Counsellor, Employment Office in Prizren

other hand, workers' complaints were that companies are not respecting working hours, where workers have to work prolonged working hours, on weekends, the annual leave and maternity leave are not respected, no job safety, which are some of the factors that they do not show any interest in engaging in their companies.

As an Employment Office we have never had a case that we prevented them from certifying unemployment benefits for social assistance and this is not good from our part.<sup>44</sup>

The CSW does not cooperate with the Employment Office, which is a major flaw. The system of Kosovo Tax Administration (TAK) is also very often dysfunctional. At first it worked for a few months, it was interrupted after, and now even this communication is missing.

This non-cooperation with the Centre for Social Work has a very bad impact, because even when we ask for help from them, they do not provide us with assistance in identifying second category workers, and such an obstacle directly affects implementation of the national strategy of MLSW on active labour market measures.

Communities have no problem with the spoken language, but businesses often choose and are not interested in hiring members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, especially for some jobs where they have to appear in front of their clients and have direct contact with them, either at the cashboxes where the payments are made, or the reception. As an Employment Office we organize awareness campaigns, but we also work with partners. One of them is the local NGO "Romano Avazo" where radio advertisements and announcements are aired in several languages, especially in Roma language.

Collaboration with the Office for Communities and Return is very good, and they come to us very often to seek information, but they also send information when we need it.

Over the recent years there have been major changes and there are very few [ethnic] distinctions. Communities have been integrated, we have accepted them and no distinction is made between us, while the job issue unfortunately remains the same.

As for the minimum standards developed years ago, they are only applied by themselves, because there is no means of measuring them in the field as to what percentage they were or were not met.



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44. Hasil Fetahu – Employment Counsellor, Employment Office in Prizren

## Centre for Social Work - Prizren

The Centre for Social Work in Prizren operates within the municipal competencies and it is responsible for providing and handling social cases and citizens in need of social assistance. However, CSW Prizren does not have much knowledge and information regarding the active labour market measures.

The number of beneficiaries of social assistance is 891, out of which there are 126 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, respectively 88 Roma families, 28 Ashkali and 10 Egyptian families.<sup>45</sup>

Different from other municipalities, re-application of families mainly belonging to the second category of social assistance and who have to report to the CSW every six months presents no to problem to CSW in Prizren, because they consider that by doing so they have more control over the situation, although for each re-application of these families they must update all the documents required under the Law on Social Assistance Scheme.

The biggest problems during the re-application phase, but also throughout the re-application process among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, come up with the school certificate, through which it must be proven that children up to the age of 18 attend school, because the failure to attend automatically implies termination of social assistance. In the most serious cases, social

assistance officers try to make exceptions in order to raise awareness that they should continue their education, but there are also some cases where they have been terminated for this reason.

During these years the CSW Prizren has not had any cases of exclusion of a family in the absence of an Employment Office certificate of unemployment, thus resulting in a gap in the implementation of active labour market measures.

There is no information brochure within the CSW on employment opportunities and the type of active measures available. The lack of information and campaigns also comes as a result of the non-cooperation between CSW Prizren and the Employment Office in Prizren, which is also confirmed by both parties that they do not have adequate communication and are asked to work more in this regard.

Also, the social assistance officers were not satisfied with the promise and the campaign carried out by the Government of Kosovo, where the families with social assistance were publicly promised that each family would have one member employed, which would be a great help both to them and to the social scheme, and to date there has been no positive move in this direction. This promise was in the context of materialising the national strategy on the implementation of active labour market measures.



45. Hamit Krasniqi – Social Assistance Officer. Social assistance database, CSW Prizren, 16 May

## Vocational Training Centre - Prizren

Vocational Training Centre in Prizren is a regional centre where preparations are made for persons in need of vocational training as part of the MLSW national strategy. The trainings held at this centre are directly linked to the active labour market measures.

Courses offered in this training centre are:

1. Business Administration
2. Auto-electrics
3. Auto-mechanics
4. Bartender
5. Waiter
6. Cook
7. Mechanics of hydraulics and pneumatics
8. Electro-mechanics of household appliances
9. Hairdresser
10. Make-up artist
11. Industrial electronics
12. ICT
13. Tailoring
14. Bakery
15. Welding
16. Self-employment

During 2018 there were 1.608 persons for vocational training in the VTC, 19 of them Roma, three Ashkali, no Egyptian, 44 Turks, 48 Bosniaks, 11 Serbs and 1.483 Albanians.<sup>46</sup>

Cooperation with the Employment Office is primary and works very well, while cooperation with other institutions is not of a satisfactory level. The law also provides for this form of cooperation, so that the parties can come to the Vocational Training Centre only through the Employment Office, regardless of the type and category they belong to.

The major challenges for VTCs in terms of communities are education, literacy, or even inadequate age where VTC is often forced to go beyond the criteria for the sake of understanding and incorporating into these three communities. The Vocational Training Centre is in stable condition with training. VTC training capacity is 1.200 trained candidates, but it can afford up to 1.500 within the

year.<sup>47</sup> For some professions there are more requirements, i.e. hairdressers, make-up artists, cooks, welders, bakers and tailors. The least demand is for electro-mechanics of household appliances and mechanics of hydraulics and pneumatics, although the market has a high demand for these two professions.

Collaboration with businesses is rather linked through the Employment Office and their needs are identified by the MLSW, while they complete their combined training, protection and safety with us. We often send them for internship in companies, when possible, while they complete their theoretical part at VTC. So, this happens in cases where we come across understanding with specialized companies and it becomes a combination of values that is in the interest of the beneficiaries. With the new programs we are trying to be on trend in terms of dual learning, that is, in two directions at once - in two different professions/crafts, as this has already turned into a contemporary trend.<sup>48</sup>

The population of Prizren mainly deals and survives with the crafts, and even persons employed in the public sector and administration, in addition to their primary job, spend the rest of their time on the crafts, which greatly contributes to implementation of the active labour measures. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continue to attend training until the end and there were no cases of interruption of their vocational training at the VTC.

There are many cases where community members also engage in professions like waiters and cooks, although their employment opportunities appear to be lower.

Regarding implementation of the national strategy, we cannot say that it is being fully implemented, because many members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have the impression that if they engage in any work, they will automatically be terminated the social assistance and then it will be difficult for them to get back into the system, which is having a very negative impact. The creation of multi-year dependence on social assistance continues to directly impact the implementation of measures.

Certificates issued by the Vocational Training Centre are certificates that are recognized both within the country and abroad.

46. Sinan Gashi – Vocational Training Centre, Prizren

47. Sinan Gashi – Vocational Training Centre, Prizren

48. Sinan Gashi – Vocational Training Centre, Prizren

## Office for Communities and Return, Municipality of Prizren

Within the Municipality of Prizren there is also the Office for Communities and Return, which employs a mixed staff of different nationalities and provides services to all readmitted citizens within the municipality of Prizren. Moreover, the engagement of the OCR and cooperation with various NGOs within the municipality, but also with NGOs functioning at the national level, has managed to develop some important documents and be part of much training in professional capacity building as well as drafting of local politics.

Prizren Municipality has a developed Local Action Plan on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities of Prizren 2019-2023.

The plan covers five areas: Education, employment and social welfare, health, housing and culture, media and information. A total of 1.276.750 euros are envisaged for implementation of this five-year plan, of which 995.005 euros are foreseen to be covered by the municipal budget and 281.745 by donors.<sup>49</sup> Three challenges have been identified in the employment sector: 1. extremely high unemployment rate, 2. Employment Office does not have a mandate for employment, therefore it may not have it as a priority, and 3. limited budget for social services due to numerous demands.<sup>50</sup>

This plan also envisages some activities such as: Analysis of the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian employees in public institutions, awareness raising campaign on the importance of Employment Office and the services it provides, support for starting new businesses, provision of vocational training, business start-ups for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, advocacy campaigns for respecting employment quotas in public institutions, and awareness campaigns on social schemes and forms of their usage.

Number of the readmitted during 2018 is 22 families with 55 members out of them seven families of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities with 33 members.<sup>51</sup>

17 families have benefited by 2018 as self-employed by the business plan from the active labour market measures supported by GIZ, where they have received only funds and earlier there were about 40 families who have benefited financially, but this assistance was discontinued to

them. The repatriation campaign has significantly impacted communities not having to migrate without documents because they also note what the difficulties are. On the other hand, businesses do not offer basic working conditions such as safety, we see construction where months do not pass without any dead and many injured in the workplace.

Cooperation of OCR with the Employment Office and the Job Centre is very good.

The Employment Office identifies workers and builds their skills. We have addressed our parties to the Vocational Training Centre and they constantly cooperate with us. We send people who meet the criteria to the Vocational Training Centre for training and certification. Exceptions are made to the criteria for communities, especially when it comes to school preparation and age criterion.

Recent changes in business plans and their funding have relieved the OCR of many of its obligations and now the OCR feels more comfortable as all the funding has been transferred to MLSW and Employment Offices, where families are being provided with working tools rather than non-material means, which has helped reduce the misuse of material resources, and families that have obtained working tools are now managing to work with them.

It should be noted that within the municipality of Prizren five persons were employed from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, but two of them left - one for retirement and the other for other reasons, and they were never replaced by the communities, while now there are only three employees from these communities.<sup>52</sup>

Language is not a problem in communication and employment, and the OCR's request has been, and remains, for Roma to be officially used and recognized as a traditional language.

About 95% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children attend school, which is good, although occasionally there are school drop outs.

49. Local Action Plan on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Prizren Municipality, 2019-2023

50. Local Action Plan on Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Prizren Municipality, 2019-2023

51. Islam Elshani – Communities and Return Officer, Municipality of Prizren

52. Islam Elshani – Communities and Return Officer, Municipality of Prizren

## Local NGO “Romano Avazo”

“Romano Avazo” is a local non-governmental organization and it has a very good cooperation with the Employment Office in Prizren. This organization carries out various activities, training young and interested persons in journalism, technology and editing, as well as field work. In each of the announcements made by the Employment Office, the organization applies for provision of training, but also grants and subsidies under active labour market measures in order to train and engage members of Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities. During each year, this organization has engaged one or two persons for training and capacity building and some of them have been permanently employed.

The organization depends on donations as it has not yet transferred into business, as the plans are to transfer into a social enterprise.

Employees engaged in the NGO “Romano Avazo” benefit a 150 euro subsidy from MLSW and during this period the organization only increases its capacity.

However, it is very important to note that within the organization there is a local radio station called “Radio Romani” and through various shows with different guests, especially in the area of employment and other opportunities, they organize debates and invite guests who promote jobs, announce opportunities and all this is done in two languages - Albanian and Roma<sup>53</sup>

Organization’s activities are also of a practical nature, from direct meetings in the neighbourhoods that are mostly populated with the Roma community and the effort to connect them has proved to be successful.

However, this organization, too, has its dissatisfactions with the allocation of subsidies and support from the Employment Office.<sup>54</sup> It considers that support is not sufficient and often benefit some community organizations that do not produce good results, or are even abuse with the funds, or even work with

extended hours and no additional assistance is done from the companies that hire those workers, without adding any support from them, where the only amount is 150 euros from the MLSW subsidy.

In addition to radio announcements, the organization has also developed a website as well as a Facebook page that regularly posts new announcements and changes, as well as announces meetings where communities can be informed.

NGO “Romano Avazo” also has a very suitable working space where community members make use of it and are assisted by the organization’s staff to write business plans, fill in applications, write their resumes, etc. to get employed, or receive grants. As a success story, there are two readmitted families that have benefited precisely from the support of the NGO “Romano Avazo”.

None of the local television stations have minutes for communities; therefore the operation of this radio station is very important.

“We inform citizens about any changes in legislation and regulations, or strategic plan by inviting guests to the radio, various personalities, where we have included the Mayor, director of labour and social welfare and other relevant officials.”<sup>54</sup>

The organization constantly applies to various calls for support as it depends on donations.

It is important to note that the trainings are not very much based on the citizens’ needs, especially in specific areas such as water supply and sewage, central heating, although there are many requests for them and the job is very easy to find. Changes to training programs need to be made; as some programs are outdated one can hardly find a job after certification at VTC.

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53. Romano Avazo – interview, 15 May 2019

54. Romano Avazo – interview, 15 May 2019

## Recommendations:

- To develop information brochures on active labour market measures and distribute them to Centres of Social Work where they apply for social assistance, to Health Houses - where they receive health services, to Offices of Communities and Return, to the Civil Agency and Documents' Issuing Offices, announcements through media, direct meetings with communities, etc.
- To distribute brochures to various business premises where the communities in the municipalities mostly visit
- To foster cooperation between the Employment Office and the Centre for Social Work in Prizren municipality, as there is a lack of necessary cooperation between them, such is the case in other municipalities.
- To train and build capacities of employment counsellors at Employment Offices where they receive unemployment certification for social assistance and apply for a job, or refuse the job
- To prepare a list for all those who receive the brochure and sign for it, in order to evaluate in the future how many of them signed and how useful the brochure was.
- To link database systems between the Vocational Training Centre, the Employment Office, Centre for Social Work and the Tax Administration of Kosovo, through which information would be coordinated and exchanged, as well joint activities would be developed.
- Media campaigns to raise awareness of jobseekers and employers, because high engagement during the day often does not provide the conditions for their proper information, or even lack of focus on receiving information
- Awareness-raising campaigns with businesses and the public on accepting communities into positions where they have direct access to clients and non-discrimination
- To increase professional capacities in the Office for Communities and Return and strengthen cooperation with central and municipal stakeholders
- To remove the discriminatory criterion for employees who just started their work, the criterion of two or three years of post-graduate work experience as it is a major barrier for communities and others in joining work
- Lack of professional staff for advanced training based on labour market requirements and adaptation of occupations based on the capacities of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Vocational Training Centres
- Lack of internships and the refusal of some companies to hire members of communities, especially in visible places such as cashboxes or reception
- Adequate orientation on occupations, based on market demands, and the work with community members to accept and engage in different jobs
- To fill vacancies in municipalities where community members have left jobs or have retired, as it is the case with the Municipality of Prizren
- To set Roma language as an official language for use in the Municipality of Prizren as well as closer cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in training people of communities in learning, as one of the first barriers toward skill building
- To encourage children from minority communities to attend school and reject

parents' excuses for not attending school by engaging children in different and heavy jobs

- Centres of Social Work to work harder through their services to persuade and stimulate communities to attend school and to take measures in case of social assistance benefit and ensure that each family brings their school attendance certificates, in close cooperation with school principals and municipal education directorates
- To work more towards removing the dependency created by social assistance and various packages, which continue to be regarded as secure, albeit very low, incomes for community families
- Having in mind that VTC certificates are accepted both within the country and abroad, all those planning to leave Kosovo must attend courses and be provided with certificates in order to have a profession and find employment easier even in the case of migrating
- To raise awareness about dual vocational education, in addition to studying and orientation to vocational training in one of the areas available to communities
- To enhance coordination between vocational schools and identify market demands, through the possibility of changing occupations and course, thus adapting to the labour market
- To allocate funds from taxes to both private schools and private vocational schools to finance and provide vocational training to

communities

- To ensure sustainability at work for community members, as there are often times when they leave the job within days or weeks
- To create jobs according to their education, since the majority of them are uneducated and they would do such jobs and possibly within the Obiliq municipality
- To provide officers in all public institutions with the relevant legislation, since many of them do not possess the applicable laws and administrative instructions
- To extend the mandate for readmitted families because they are no longer able to engage in active labour market measures and are recovering or adapting to the environment. We request that this deadline be extended to at least two years.

## Annex

# CALL FOR APPLICATION WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), announces an open call for applications for support from the Wage Subsidy Program (WSP) for enterprises (employers) interested in the private sector and for jobseekers in 18 municipalities of Kosovo: Prizren, Pejë, Gjiilan, Gjakovë, Ferizaj, Suharekë, Rahovec, Dragash, Istog, Klinë, Kamenicë, Viti, Deçan, Malishevë, Junik, Kaçanik, Shtime and Shtërpçë.

## About the Wage Subsidy

The aim of the Wage Subsidy Programme is to create employment opportunities for job-seekers in Kosovo by subsidizing employers who are willing to hire them on a long-term basis. It is a unique opportunity to support gradual growth of Kosovo enterprises.

To benefit from the WS program, the employer must sign a 12-month employment contract with the jobseeker in accordance with applicable legislation. During this period, the employer will receive a nine-month subsidy in the amount of 50% of the employee's gross monthly salary, in which case the amount of this subsidy may not exceed 150.00 euros per month. EOs will support enterprises in identifying the best candidates registered as jobseekers according to the specific needs of the employer.

In addition to supporting enterprises by subsidizing employment, the WS program assists the entire recruitment process for new vacancies. Given the difficulties that private enterprises face in identifying and hiring the qualified staff needed to expand their business activities, the WS program will use the WS's expertise to tailor any vacancy with the right jobseekers in the country in compliance with the criteria set by the enterprises. WS Programme is implemented according to the following steps

First step – Expression of interest to benefit from the WS programme

All interested private sector companies can express interest to benefit by downloading the online application form at: [www.aprk.rks-gov.net](http://www.aprk.rks-gov.net) or [www.mpms.rks-gov.net](http://www.mpms.rks-gov.net). In addition, application forms are also available at the EO in all municipalities. The application form must be accompanied by the business registration certificates and the fiscal number of the company applying.

Second step – Selection of the employee and agreement signing:

The employment counsellor will provide a list of potential candidates according to the needs of the enterprise. The enterprise selects the best candidates from the list and signs an agreement with employees for at least 12 months, while the wage subsidy will be nine months within the 12-month agreement. Payments will be made in the first quarter, the second quarter and the fourth quarter. The third quarter is covered by the employer.

Who can apply?

### 1. Private enterprises

All interested enterprises (employers) registered in the EO can apply for participation in the programme. Enterprises must be registered with the Kosovo Business Registration Agency (KBRA) and be an active taxpayer in the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK).

Businesses operating in all types of economic activities are eligible to apply for the WS program. Priority will be given to the following six priority economic sectors (selected by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) as they have the highest potential for economic growth in Kosovo), respectively:

- food processing and packaging industry;
- ICT along with outsourcing of business process and customer support centre sector;
- metal processing industry;
- textile industry;
- tourism;
- wood processing industry.

The application form can be found online at: [www.aprk.rks-gov.net](http://www.aprk.rks-gov.net) or [www.mpms.rks-gov.net](http://www.mpms.rks-gov.net) and at the EO in each municipality.

## 2. Unemployed jobseekers

All jobseekers registered at the EO can benefit from the WS programme. Priority will be given to long-term unemployed (unemployed for more than 12 months) during the selection process, with a focus on:

- women,
- ethnic minorities,
- people with disabilities,
- single parents.

All the interested ones should register with the EO in their respective municipalities. Those who possess vocational training certificates provided by MLSW, or who have previously participated in on-the-job training, will be given priority in the selection process.

Cases of conflict of interest with the parties involved and decision makers of the WS programme are not eligible to benefit from this programme.

Job seekers that have previously benefited from this programme are not eligible to apply.

Application deadline 14 - 24 May 2019

Financial support for enterprises

The WS programme will provide the employer with a 50% subsidy on gross salary for any newly employed

unemployed person whose amount cannot be higher than 150.00 euros per month. The duration of the subsidy for all regular jobseekers, clients registered with the EO is nine months out of a total of 12 months of the duration of their contract. For the remaining three months, the full salary of the employee is up to the enterprise.

How to apply?

- Interested private companies should submit the completed application form in person or via e-mail to the EO in their municipality. The application form is available online at [www.aprk.rks-gov.net](http://www.aprk.rks-gov.net) or [www.mpms.rks-gov.net](http://www.mpms.rks-gov.net), as well as printed in each EO throughout Kosovo. Applicants must attach their business registration and fiscal number certificates to the application. Enterprises will be contacted by the EO with a list of potential candidates.

- Jobseekers interested in vacancies should register with the EO in their municipalities or visit the EO where they are already registered and inform their employment counsellors of their interest.

Other information

For more information please contact the EO in your municipality. If you have any questions about the WS programme, please contact the ALMP2 project at the email: [almp.ks@undp.org](mailto:almp.ks@undp.org).

About the ALMP2 project in UNDP Kosovo

The main objective of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) is to improve the capacities of the labour market institutions to design relevant, gender-responsive policies at the central level and to deliver integrated services at the local level, focusing on the most vulnerable groups among the unemployed. The project also provides employment and training opportunities for unemployed persons registered in EO all over Kosovo through various active programs such as: Wage Subsidy (WS), On the Job Training (OJT), Internship at Work (IW) and Self-Employment (SE).





**ROMA INTEGRATION 2020**  
Regional Cooperation Council