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EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORTY ISSUES KOSOVO

Study on the Impact of Programs for Social and Economic Reintegration of Minority Communities

Prishtina, 2023



Abstract

This Study analyzes the impact of programs for social and economic reintegration of marginalized communities in Kosovo. The study aims to identify governmental and non-governmental policies and programs that help revive and reintegrate these communities into their society. Through the methodology used, the ECMI Kosovo project for the socio-economic reintegration of these communities offers a successful model of social and economic reintegration and helps to improve the conditions of these communities and increase cooperation between them. The results of this study may be important for the creation of appropriate policies and programs to help in the process of re-integration of communities in Kosovo.

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List of Abbreviations

APMR - Agency for the Protection of Minority Rights

CDP - Community Development Program

CPHRF - Council for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

EC - European Commission

ECARI - European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance

ECMI Kosovo - European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo

GAP - Institute for Advanced Studies

GIZ - German Society for International Cooperation

IOM - International Organization for Migration

IPEP - Institute for Public and Environmental Policies

KAS - Kosovo Agency of Statistics

OECD - Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

SDSA - Strategy for the Development of Special Areas

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WB - World Bank

WHO - World Health Organization

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Introduction

The study of programs for social and economic reintegration is an important area of scientific research and practice of developing policies and programs for marginalized communities affected by conflicts, economic crises, migration, and other difficult situations associated with a country of origin. assigned.

Overall, these programs have a significant impact on the population that has suffered damage from these situations and provide opportunities and services that help people build a new and progressive vision and purpose for individuals and their families, helping them to revive their lives and return to their communities.

The developed study aims to analyze the socio-economic context of the minority communities in Kosovo and to identify the various programs and initiatives for the social and economic reintegration of these communities. This includes public policies, non-governmental organization programs, and donor-sponsored projects. The study will evaluate the effectiveness of these policies and programs in the economic and social reintegration of minority communities and marginalized groups in Kosovo.

ECMI Kosovo project for the socio-economic reintegration of minority communities and other marginalized groups, based on the research methodology used, the basic study of target groups, practices, and results achieved by the project, offers a successful model of the economic and social reintegration of minority communities and marginalized groups. This project can be used as an important source of data and information because it offers a multidisciplinary approach and combines empirical data with the analysis of government policies and programs for reintegration and suggests reintegration policies.

The importance of this study is that it contributes to the development of policies and programs for the social and economic reintegration of minority communities. It helps in improving the socio-economic conditions of these communities and in improving the cooperation between the minority communities and the wider society.

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Methodology of Research

In this study, we will use qualitative research analysis that will be based on:

The method of document analysis is an important way to develop an understanding of the defined topic. For this methodology, various documents such as policies, strategies, reports, and other reports from governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as articles and books related to the topic of the study will be researched. The aim is to analyze the documents to break down important information and details related to policies and programs that have been developed for the reintegration of minority communities and returnees from emigration to Kosovo. The analysis of the documents will help identify the shortcomings and challenges of the current program and suggest recommendations for its future improvement.

The method of ethnography is a qualitative and appropriate tool to study minority communities and marginalized groups, using a deep and general approach to observing their behavior and culture. Through this method, a better understanding of these groups' social and cultural context, as well as the ways they see and function within society, will be achieved. ECMI Kosovo researchers, who live in these communities as paralegals, will stay on the ground for an extended period of time and collaborate with field experts to observe and deeply analyze various data, including interviews, conversations and documents. Through these tools, the challenges and needs of these groups will be identified, and different perspectives will be seen to understand the full context of the social situations being researched. This method will help prepare recommendations for public policies and programs that can help these groups improve their position in society.

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Limitation of work

In this study, there are some limitations that may affect the approach and analysis of the effectiveness of social and economic reintegration programs in Kosovo. The following are some of the main limitations of this study:

- The lack of detailed and accurate data can affect the difficulties to make a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of social and economic reintegration programs in Kosovo.

- The political and social context of Kosovo may affect the difficulties in implementing reintegration programs, making it more difficult to analyze their effectiveness.

- Difficulties in field access, such as difficulties in communicating with minority communities and marginalized groups and difficult environmental conditions can affect the difficulties in doing a detailed analysis and in program implementation that affect the results of reintegration programs.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected the economy and society of Kosovo; therefore, it may have an impact on the effectiveness of reintegration programs in the current conditions.

- The influence of the culture and traditions of minority communities and marginalized groups may affect the acceptance and implementation of the program. In this regard, different cultures and traditions can influence decision-making and program acceptance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the socio-economic context of the minority communities in Kosovo and to identify the various programs and initiatives for the social and economic reintegration of these communities. In general, these programs have a significant impact on populations that have suffered damage from conflicts, economic crises, migration and other difficult situations. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of different policies and programs for the socio-economic reintegration of minority communities and marginalized groups in Kosovo and to offer a successful model of the economic and social reintegration of these communities. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the development of policies and programs for the social and economic reintegration of minority communities and to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of these communities.

Section I

The socio-economic and political context in Kosovo

History, political and administrative structure, and cultural and linguistic aspects.

Kosovo is a country in Southeast Europe with a territory of about 10,900 km2 and a population of about 1.8 million inhabitants. After the declaration of independence in 2008, Kosovo is in a continuous process of economic, social, and political development and growth.

Historically, Kosovo has been a region divided between many states, including the period under Ottoman and Yugoslav rule. It borders Serbia to the north, Macedonia to the east, Albania to the south, and Montenegro to the west.

In 1999, NATO intervened in Kosovo to stop the civil war and help the Albanian community gain independence. After that, Kosovo became a protectorate of the UN. In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence, which has been recognized by more than 100 countries in the world, including the USA and most of the member countries of the European Union.

The political and administrative structure of Kosovo is based on a parliamentary system with the Assembly of Kosovo as a legislative body that has 120 members elected by the populace through a free vote, the President, the head of state who is elected by the Assembly of the Republic by voting secret with a five-year mandate and the Government of Kosovo as the executive body. The judicial system is independent and separate from the executive and legislative powers.

The State of Kosovo is divided into 38 municipalities and 7 regions. The administrative structure is organized at the local, regional and central levels, with a large number of public and private institutions providing services in various fields.

The cultural and linguistic aspects of Kosovo are very diverse and rich. The population of Kosovo is made up of many ethnic groups, mainly Albanians as the absolute majority of the population, then the Serbian community, Bosnians, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and others.

In general, the population structure of Kosovo is very diverse, and this reflects the country's history and culture. The official language of Kosovo is Albanian, but Serbian and other languages are also present. The culture in Kosovo is rich and diverse and consists of ancient and modern traditions but is also influenced by Balkan cultures including art, music, food, and rules of social behavior.

After declaring independence in 2008, Kosovo became an independent and sovereign state. However, it remains under the influence of many internal and external socio-economic and political factors.

One of the main problems Kosovo has faced is its weak economy and dependence on foreign aid. Due to the lack of natural resources and outdated infrastructure, Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Moreover, deep poverty and unemployment have caused a strong emigration wave of young and qualified people from Kosovo to other European countries.

In the political sphere, Kosovo has experienced a turbulent history. After the declaration of Kosovo's independence, Serbia and other countries of the Eastern Balkans refused to recognize its independence. This has brought constant tensions in the region and has caused Kosovo to be under the pressure of a large number of external factors.

In the social sphere, Kosovo is a country with a large number of minorities, where the majority of the population are Albanians. In this context, Kosovo has experienced some conflicts with other minorities, but this situation has improved in recent years, through efforts to integrate minorities and strengthen inter-ethnic harmony.

In general, Kosovo is a country with great socio-economic and political challenges, but it is trying to move forward towards a better future. Together with the help of the international community and the dedication of its institutions, Kosovo can achieve progress and become a strong and developed country.

Section II

Identifying the needs of the minority community

Literature review and document analysis (official reports, policies, strategies and programs)

Analysis of the socio-economic context of minority communities in Kosovo

To understand the socio-economic situation of minority communities in Kosovo, we must take into account its complicated dimensions. For this, a range of resources have been used to provide a comprehensive perspective on this topic and to take steps to address the problems and challenges faced by these communities in Kosovo.

Kosovo is a country with a diverse ethnic population, but the majority of the population is Albanian. Minority communities, such as Serbs, Bosnians, Turks, Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali, live in different geographical areas and constitute a small part of the population.

These minority communities face various socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment, poor infrastructure, lack of opportunities for education and professional training, discrimination in the labor market and public services, as well as poverty. Most of them do not have access to the labor market, and those who have opportunities for employment are offered low wages and conditions compared to others. This situation affects their standard of living and the level of poverty in which they live.

Analysis of the socio-economic context of minority communities in Kosovo is a sensitive and complex topic. Minority communities in Kosovo, as well as in many other countries in the world, have suffered discrimination and marginalization in many aspects of their lives (Krasniqi, 2018). According to the Institute (GAP, 2018) and the international organization (OSCE, 2016), the main problems of these communities are related to discrimination and inequality in access to various resources, such as work, education, health, etc.

According to ECMI Kosovo (2013), the Serbian community in Kosovo comprises approximately 146,128 individuals, accounting for around 7.8% of the total population. They face notable economic challenges, such as a 38.35% unemployment rate and limited job opportunities. Serbs rely on social welfare assistance and remittances from overseas family members to mitigate these difficulties.

While they are well-represented in the civil service sector, their presence in managerial positions and public enterprises is comparatively lower. The analysis conducted by ECMI Kosovo also highlights regional economic disparities within the Serbian community, with Serbs residing in the northern part of Kosovo experiencing higher levels of prosperity than their counterparts in the southern region.

On the other hand, the Gorani community in Kosovo, constituting merely 0.58% of the total population with approximately 10,945 individuals, also confronts economic challenges, including significantly higher unemployment rates and limited political representation. The Goran community's unemployment rate stands at 50%, surpassing the overall unemployment rate of 45% in Kosovo. Despite the lack of educational resources in their language, many Gorans residing outside of Dragash exhibit proficient Albanian language skills. In contrast, Gorans in other areas of Kosovo enjoy better socio-economic conditions, often engaging in small-scale enterprises (ECMI Kosovo, 2013). Unemployment and poverty in these communities are important problems and are closely related to discrimination in the labor market and the lack of opportunities for professional training. According to the CPHRF report, minority communities often fail to find work or vocational training due to overt or hidden discrimination by employers. Also, the World Bank's report on Kosovo (WB, 2018) emphasizes that these communities face great challenges in trying to find work and come to an equal level with the Albanian majority in the country.

According to a report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, 2019), in terms of education, minority communities in Kosovo face major challenges in their access to education, including the lack of equal opportunities to study and benefit from the educational system, as well as discrimination in workplaces. Minority communities, including the Roma, Ashkali, and Serb populations, have experienced major socio-economic challenges in recent years, with more than 70% of the Roma and Ashkali population, and approximately 50% of the Serb population living below the poverty line, while unemployment for these communities is several times higher than in the general population (WB, 2019).

Poverty and the lack of opportunities in education and employment have influenced the increase in the number of individuals leaving Kosovo, especially from minority communities. Minority communities in Kosovo constitute about 5% of the country's population and have faced various challenges in the socio-economic and human rights fields, as the report of the Agency for the Protection of Minority Rights (APMR 2018) shows.

The report of the Independent Commissioner for Human Rights for Kosovo for 2020 shows that minority communities in Kosovo have continued to have limited access to basic services such as health, education, and the labor market. Serb communities in Kosovo have had great socio-economic difficulties as a result of violent conflicts

in the past, there are still problems with access to necessary services, such as health and education, and employment. In the report of the Council of Europe on the signing of the Stabilization-Association Agreement in Kosovo in 2020, it is shown that 60% of the Serbian population in Kosovo were unemployed and over 50% were in poverty.

Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo face great poverty and discrimination challenges. Most of them live in difficult economic and social conditions and often do not have access to important services such as health and education. According to the Stability Pact for Southern Europe report in 2020, only 42% of Roma and Ashkali children go to school, compared to 96% of other children in Kosovo. At the same time, most of them are not officially registered with the Kosovo government and do not have access to social services such as health care.

Meanwhile, the Turkish and Bosniak communities have had better socio-economic development compared to other minority communities in Kosovo. The latest census shows that most Turks and Bosniaks live in cities and are employed in the private sector. Prizren is one of the cities where the majority of Turks and Bosniaks live and there has been an increase in the private sector, especially in tourism and construction. This has enabled the employment of the Turkish and Bosnian communities and the increase of their income. However, even though these communities have better development, there are still challenges and problems that need to be addressed. According to the Council of Europe's report on signing the Stabilization Association Agreement in Kosovo in 2020, the Turkish and Bosniak communities have been discriminated against in the public and private employment sectors.

The Bosniak community in Kosovo constitutes approximately 1.54% of the total population, with around 28,933 inhabitants, as per the 2011 census. Bosniaks within this community are primarily Muslim. The unemployment rate among Bosniaks is reported to be 37.68%. Similar to the majority community, the Bosniak community faces challenges in terms of employment, economic opportunities, and language barriers. The Kosovo education system provides most of the public education for Bosniaks (ECMI Kosovo, 2013). With a population of about 18,948 individuals, Turks make up around 1.01% of the total population in Kosovo. The municipality of Mamuşa is the only region where the Turkish community forms a numerical majority. The Turkish community has a relatively lower unemployment rate of 37.98% compared to the overall rate in Kosovo, which is 45%. Despite using the Kosovo education system, the Turkish community encounters issues related to the availability of textbooks, transportation, and educational infrastructure. Nonetheless, the Turkish community has made significant contributions to the cultural and religious diversity of Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo, 2013).

In its analysis, the Institute for Public and Environmental Policies in Kosovo (IPEP, 2020) notes that the increase in unemployment in the country has a negative impact on minority communities, including Roma, Ashkali, Turkish, and Bosniak communities. This is because, in these communities, unemployment levels are higher compared to the majority population, making these communities more affected by poverty and social isolation.

To address inequalities and discrimination against minority communities in Kosovo, it is necessary to take sustainable and continuous steps to ensure equal access to the labor market and other socio-economic resources. This requires a strong commitment from government and non-governmental organizations to take sustained and coordinated action.

Government and non-governmental organizations can provide training and skill programs for employees of minority communities to enhance their skills and make them more competitive in the labor market. In addition, the development of small businesses in minority communities can be a good solution to increase employment opportunities and increase the economic development of small communities.

According to (KAS, 2012), the last census conducted in Kosovo in 2011, the population of Kosovo was 1,739,825 inhabitants. Several minority communities in Kosovo were registered in this census, including Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Ashkali, Egyptians, Gorani, Roma and others.
According to this census, the percentage of the population of these minority communities in Kosovo was as in the following table:

Table 1: Census of population (2011) Minority communities

	Albanian	Serb	Bosnian	Turks	Roma	Ashkali	Egyptian	Gorani	Other
Figures	1,616,869	25,532	27,533	18,738	8,824	15,436	11,524	10,265	2,352
%	92.9%	1.5%	1.6%	1.1%	0.5%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.1%
%	92.9%	7%							
Total population:	**1,739,825**								

Source: KAS, 2012

The ECMI Kosovo report, Analysis and Recommendations, of 2012 shows that the population and housing census in Kosovo in 2011 had some significant problems. In particular, the Serb and Roma communities did not fully participate in the census, thus jeopardizing the accuracy of the data. The results of the census have raised questions and concerns from representatives of minority communities, causing ECMI Kosovo to make a preliminary assessment of the data. In its report, ECMI Kosovo makes several recommendations to improve the population census process in Kosovo. These recommendations include noting in all references to the 2011 Kosovo census that northern Kosovo was not included and that there was a partial boycott by the Serb and Roma communities. ECMI Kosovo also recommends that in the future Croats and Montenegrins should be included as separate ethnic groups in the population census. Furthermore, the report indicates that other minority communities should be further analyzed to assess the accuracy of census data and information on electoral participation.

According to Community Profiles - ECMI Kosovo, the population of Kosovo is about 1.8 million inhabitants, with the majority being ethnic Albanians (about 87%) and Serbs making up about 8%, equally divided between the south and the north of Kosovo. The remaining 5% of the population includes other communities such as Turks, Bosniaks, Gorans, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Croats and Montenegrins.

Analysis of the socio-economic context of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo

The Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities are an important part of the population in Kosovo. According to various studies, these communities encounter a history of discrimination and exclusion due to their cultural and socio-economic characteristics. These communities have a low level of education, a high rate of unemployment and poverty, and face difficulties in accessing basic services, such as health and water supply. The Roma, originate from the Indian peninsula; Ashkali, originate from Kosovo and Albania and have lived in the region for thousands of years; and the Egyptians, who came to Kosovo in the Middle Ages and originated from Egypt (ECARI, 2019; UNDP, 2017).

According to a report by ECMI Kosovo in 2013, the population census in Kosovo in 2011 was partially boycotted by the Roma community. This community comprises about 15,696 people, accounting for 0.84% of the total population. They have cultural similarities with the Egyptians and Ashkali. The Roma community faces barriers in accessing education and employment opportunities, with low income and high unemployment levels. Additionally, they are underrepresented in the civil sector, and Roma children attend Serbian-funded educational institutions, lacking promotion of cultural diversity (ECMI Kosovo, 2013).

Similarly, the Ashkali community in Kosovo, numbering approximately 15,546 individuals (0.83% of the total population), faces challenges in education and employment. The largest Ashkali communities are found in Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje, Lipjan/Lipljan, Prizren, and other municipalities. They identify themselves as an ethnic group with Persian descent.

With a high unemployment rate of 60.46%, low average income, and underrepresentation in civil service and public enterprises, the Ashkali community also suffers from low levels of education and professional qualifications (ECMI Kosovo, 2013).

Moreover, in Kosovo, there is an Egyptian population of about 11,524 inhabitants (0.61% of the population) mainly residing in western Kosovo, particularly in Gjakova/Đakovica, Peja/Peć, Istog/Istok, and Klina. While sharing cultural similarities with the Roma and Ashkali communities, Egyptians consider themselves a separate ethnic group. The statistics reveal that Egyptians face significant challenges, including the highest unemployment rate in Kosovo, peaking at 80%. They also experience poor educational levels and insufficient professional skills. The working environment often perpetuates policies of exclusion and entrenched inequalities tied to their ethnicity (ECMI Kosovo, 2013).

In the World Bank's "Kosovo Poverty Assessment" report of 2019, it is found that the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities are among the poorest groups in Kosovo, with a high level of unemployment and very few opportunities to be part of the labor market. About 90% of the members of these communities live in extreme poverty and in poor living conditions, while only a small part of them have access to the resources necessary to survive (WB, 2019).

According to the 2018 Human Rights Watch report, discrimination and exclusion from the labor market are the main challenges these communities face, becoming one of the main reasons for their poverty. The report states that in some cases, members of these communities cannot apply for work as a result of the discrimination they face in the workplace, making them many times less employed than the general population in Kosovo, and when they do work, they are paid below average. This situation causes these communities to have a high level of poverty and difficulty in meeting their basic needs, such as food, housing, and health services.

The study by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare in collaboration with UNICEF revealed that the majority of young people from the Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo suffer from poverty and have challenges in their access to education and health (Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, 2019). This community also faced the risk of discrimination and marginalization by society, with most of its members being in difficult socio-economic conditions.

In a study published by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2020, it was found that only 6.3% of Roma had received higher education and 76% of them had a low level of education, indicating their challenges in the field of education (OSCE, 2020).

According to Human Rights Watch (2018), Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are most affected by discrimination and marginalization in Kosovo. This organization points out that these communities have encountered problems in accessing education and health services, and have suffered from a high level of unemployment. At the same time, according to Krasniqi's studies (2018, 2019), these communities have a very poor economy and need support from the state and various organizations to improve their socio-economic situation.

In addition to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, there are other groups in Kosovo that are marginalized and affected by discrimination and social exclusion. People with disabilities are one of these groups, who constitute a significant part of the population and have difficulties in accessing basic services such as education, health and the labor market. Studies have shown that this group has a low level of education and a high rate of unemployment. An extensive analysis of this issue was made in the study "Persons with disabilities in Kosovo", published by the organization Kosovo Disability Forum in 2017. This study identifies the difficulties that this group encounters in accessing basic services, such as education and health, as well as in the labor market. At the same time, it proves that the group often feels discriminated against and excluded from society in general.

In Kosovo, women and children at risk have difficulties in accessing basic services and creating opportunities for employment and personal development, leading to a lack of equal rights and opportunities for them. Women in Kosovo face discrimination and violence, while children at risk are affected by poverty, lack of education and lack of basic services such as health and education, which have a direct impact on their health and development.

The report of the Organization for the Protection of Human Rights in Kosovo for women in 2020 shows that many women encounter difficulties in accessing basic services such as education and health, which hinders their personal and professional development. Furthermore, the report states that only 11.7% of women in Kosovo have a job, making employment a major challenge for this category.
Also, the report notes that women in Kosovo face discrimination in their lives, not only in the workplace, but also in families and society in general, affecting their self-confidence and sense of security.
These challenges require government and civil society action to address discrimination and help increase opportunities and improve socio-economic conditions for these marginalized groups.

Analysis of the socio-economic context of returnees from emigration in Kosovo

The analysis of the socio-economic context of returnees from emigration in Kosovo is important to understand the phenomenon of returnees from emigration, which is very wide and frequent in this country. There are many Kosovars who have emigrated to the countries of Western Europe and beyond in search of new economic opportunities and a better life. However, some of them have been stopped by the authorities of the host countries and forced to return to Kosovo, while others have decided to return voluntarily for various reasons.

The phenomenon of returnees from emigration in Kosovo has been influenced by various socio-economic factors, such as the increase in unemployment and the lack of new opportunities for employment in the emigration countries, the global economic crisis, changes in the migration policies of the host countries and other factors. that affect the lives of immigrants. Their return to Kosovo often faced various challenges.

According to the latest reports of the Organization for Migration in Kosovo (IOM, 2021), the number of returnees from emigration has been increasing in recent years. Most of them have decided to return to Kosovo due to the difficult situation in the countries where they lived. Returning to Kosovo can be challenging for them, as they have lived away from the country for many years and have built new routines and lives in their host countries.

In Kosovo, the economic situation is still difficult and many people struggle to secure work and enough income to survive. In this context, emigration returnees need to create employment opportunities and personal and professional development (KAS, 2021).

In various studies of local and international organizations, it has been observed that returnees from emigration are a group that can be vulnerable in Kosovo due to the lack of employment opportunities and skills necessary for the labor market. A World Bank report from 2020 mentions that returnees from emigration are among the poorest and most vulnerable groups in Kosovo.

Returnees from emigration to Kosovo face various challenges, including a lack of employment and skills needed for the labor market in the country, as well as challenges in returning to their society of origin, culture, and language. Living conditions in Kosovo are different from those in their countries of emigration, making the situation even more challenging. Returnees from emigration are a sensitive and vulnerable group in Kosovar society, facing challenges in various areas of their lives, such as work, health, education, and social integration. A 2017 study by

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) paid particular attention to the challenges faced by returnees from emigration to Kosovo, including problems in employment, education, health, and social integration.

The lack of jobs in Kosovo is an important problem that affects all parts of society, including returnees from emigration. Many of them lack the necessary skills and experience to find well-paid and stable work, thus making the employment challenge even more difficult for them. According to (WB, 2019), in addition to employment and economic challenges, returnees from immigration face social integration challenges. They must adapt to the society and culture of Kosovo, as well as integrate into their community and become part of it. This process can be difficult, especially for those who have been away for a long time and have followed different patterns of lives and cultures. However, social integration is important for returnees from emigration to build stable and happy lives in their new country.

Also, most of those who return from emigration face challenges in the field of education, such as adapting to the Kosovo education system and learning the mother tongue. This is a difficult challenge for those who have received education abroad or have lived for a long-time outside Kosovo. Studies and reports of international organizations, such as "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education" from UNESCO, as well as local studies of non-governmental and governmental organizations of Kosovo, show that this problem is frequent in the country. For returnees from emigration, learning in the mother tongue is essential in Kosovo schools, so this is an important challenge for them.

A study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019 revealed that returnees from emigration to Kosovo need appropriate health care. This is due to the stress and tensions of the period of leaving the country, as well as due to the possible stress and anxiety associated with the process of reformation and integration into Kosovar society. In this report, WHO recommends that the government and health organizations provide appropriate health services for returnees from emigration to Kosovo and support initiatives and projects that promote their health and well-being.

Analysis of needs and priorities of minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities including returnees from emigration in Kosovo

Minority communities and other vulnerable marginalized groups, including those who have returned from emigration, have special needs that must be addressed with care and appropriate responses from institutions and society in general. In Kosovo, international organizations, including UNICEF Kosovo (2016), the European Union Office in Kosovo (2020), the Statistics Agency of Kosovo (2019), the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (2021), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2020), as well as local institutions, have identified some of the main needs and priorities of these communities.

Access to education and training: Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may need better access to education and training to increase their chances of employment and improve their living conditions. Priorities may include improving access to education in their native language and providing training for specific skills.

Rights and equality in employment: Rights and equality in employment are important to ensure a fair and equal society. Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may need increased protection from discrimination in the workplace, as well as better access to employment opportunities.

Support for businesses and their initiatives: Help and support for businesses and initiatives of minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities can help them grow and create opportunities for increased employment. Priorities may include improving access to finance and information needed to start and manage a business.

Access to health services: Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may need better access to health services and better information about health care. Priorities may include providing health information and advice and improving access to health care.

Social benefits and financial support: Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may need financial support and social benefits to survive and improve their living conditions.

Priorities may include providing financial support to the poor, the sick, and the elderly, as well as to families with children. Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may also need better access to social programs and services, such as rent assistance, food, energy assistance, and child assistance.

Supporting awareness raising and community organizing: Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities can improve their situation through awareness raising and community organizing. Priorities may include providing training and seminars to promote cooperation and coordination among community members and improving awareness of their rights and duties.

Protection from violence and discrimination: Minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities may be exposed to discrimination and violence. Priorities may include protection from discrimination and violence in the workplace, public institutions, and other public settings and providing training and education to promote awareness and tolerance among different communities.

Cooperation between the government, civil society organizations, and interested communities is important to address the needs and priorities of minority and other vulnerable marginalized communities, creating joint strategies to promote the process of inclusion of all individuals and society in public life. The needs and priorities of these communities are diverse and complex, but it is important that institutions and society as a whole engage honestly and effectively to address these issues and create a just and equal society for all.

Section III

Identification of existing policies and programs that aim to assist in the economic and social reintegration of minority communities, other marginalized groups and returnees from emigration

To foster interethnic and intercultural cooperation in Kosovo, the policy of promoting interethnic cooperation aims to enhance communication between communities and encourage cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence. This initiative is endorsed by the European Commission and forms an integral part of the Kosovo Development Strategy for the period 2016-2021.

The Strategy for Minority Communities in Kosovo 2021-2025 aims to support minority communities, including Kosovo Albanians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, and Roma. This strategy includes goals such as improving education and language skills, supporting the development of businesses in these communities, and promoting the values of multiculturalism and human rights. The main goal of this strategy is to help grow the economy in the areas where these communities live.

The Strategy for the Development of Special Areas (SDSA) is another plan of Kosovo for reintegration, which aims to improve development conditions in rural and urban areas. This strategy aims to include all communities in these areas, including those who have been marginalized, and help increase productivity and create jobs, especially in the agribusiness and tourism sectors.

Program for Returnees to Kosovo, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020), is a program undertaken by the Government of Kosovo which aims at the return and reintegration of persons who have emigrated or become refugees for various reasons. This program provides financial support and return assistance, as well as helps in finding work, housing, and health services after returning to Kosovo. The main goal of this program is to help people who have returned to Kosovo to reintegrate into the Kosovar society and economy. The program for returnees to Kosovo is ongoing and open to all those who are interested in returning to Kosovo and benefit from the support provided by this program.

The Support Program for Returnees and Displaced Persons in Kosovo is a program funded by the European Union, which aims to help persons who have returned to Kosovo after a short or long period of displacement. This program is important to help returnees and displaced persons integrate into Kosovo society and have a successful life in their new country.

This program offers support in several different areas such as:

- *Returning to home and workplace*
- *Training and education*
- *Psychosocial support*
- *Assistance in finding housing.*

The European Commission (2019) and the World Bank (2019) offer support programs in Kosovo for small and medium-sized businesses through local organizations, providing financial and technical support. These programs are available to minority and marginalized communities in Kosovo and are aimed at increasing the impact of small and medium-sized businesses on the local and national economy, as well as increasing opportunities for employment and economic stability in Kosovo. Organizations that offer Support programs for small and medium businesses in Kosovo through financing and technical assistance provided by the European Commission and the World Bank are Innovation Center Kosovo (ICK) - Center for Innovation in Kosovo; USAID EMPOWER Private Sector - USAID program for empowering the private sector; Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) - Women's Network in Kosovo.

The German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ, 2021) is another organization that has helped in the socio-economic development of Kosovo. GIZ has developed various training and skills programs for minority and marginalized groups.

The youth training program is an important initiative in Kosovo for preparing young people for the labor market and increasing their skills in areas required in the labor market, such as computer programming, information technology, and business management.

The Kosovo Development Agency has developed this program, which provides intensive training for young people from minority communities, marginalized groups and returnees to Kosovo. This helps increase their skills and improve opportunities for employment and career development. (Zogaj & Mustafa, 2020).

Regional development programs are an important initiative in Kosovo, which aims to help develop poor and isolated areas, including minority and marginalized communities living in them. These programs aim to increase employment opportunities and economic development in these areas, providing training and assistance for the establishment of local businesses. Through these programs, it is aimed to improve the quality of life and reduce the level of poverty in these areas (UNDP, 2016).

The support program for women in business is an important initiative for Kosovo, as it helps in the fight against discrimination and in the promotion of gender equality in the field of business. This promotes the development of an equal and fair environment for

women in business and helps increase the number of women-run businesses in Kosovo. Thus, this program helps in the growth of the country's economy and in its development in order to create new opportunities for the labor market and influence the increase in the standard of living of the citizens. In addition, this program is intertwined with the development strategy of Kosovo's economy and aims to influence its growth in a sustainable and long-term way. There are several organizations and programs in Kosovo that provide support and training for women in business. Some of them are Kosovo Women's Business Community (KWBC): Project for Advancing Women in the Private Sector (AWPS); Kosovo Women's Business Community (CBKW).

The Community Development Program (CDP) is an initiative of the government of Kosovo to assist underdeveloped and isolated communities in Kosovo in improving economic and social development. For this purpose, the program provides financial and technical support for development projects, infrastructure and public services. The aim of the program is to address the challenges these communities have and help build their infrastructure, create opportunities for economic development, and improve the quality of public services.

CDP offers a wide range of support, including consultancy, training and financial support for development projects in various fields such as infrastructure, public services, tourism, agriculture, construction and transport. These projects help promote the economic and social development of underdeveloped and isolated communities in Kosovo.

Identification of challenges and evaluation of the effectiveness of the socio-economic reintegration program in Kosovo for minority communities, marginalized groups and returnees from emigration.

In Kosovo, the implementation and monitoring of the policy of increasing inter-ethnic cooperation has been carried out by several organizations and institutions, as well as by the government itself. In the European Commission's report on Kosovo in 2020, it is emphasized that there is continuous progress in this area, but more needs to be done to achieve sustainable results in the development of a perfect inter-ethnic society in Kosovo (European Commission, 2020).

The German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), the organization that monitors the implementation of the strategies of Minority Communities in Kosovo, evaluates their effectiveness in accordance with their goals and objectives but has presented challenges related to the lack of financial resources and inter-ethnic conflicts in the implementation of the strategy.

The Ministry of Economic Development (2016) presents some important challenges during the implementation of the Special Areas Development Strategy (SDSA). These challenges are as follows:

Financing is one of the main challenges of implementing the development strategy of special areas, as the limited budget of the Kosovo government may be insufficient to implement it. However, the changing business climate in Kosovo, which can be difficult for investors and small enterprises, especially in rural areas, is another challenge to consider. Also, the lack of infrastructure in some special areas and ownership problems and the lack of necessary documentation are other challenges that can hinder investors and enterprises that want to develop in these areas. The last challenge is the impact of negative phenomena such as corruption, criminality and lack of transparency in the implementation of this strategy, which can hinder the growth of investments and the development of special areas in Kosovo.

According to (Belegu & Pireva, 2018), in the Program for Returnees to Kosovo, funding from the European Union is not always sufficient to cover all the needs of the returnees, thus making it challenging to achieve the objectives of the program. To integrate successfully in Kosovo society, returnees may need special skills, such as language skills. If resources for training and development are not provided, they may encounter difficulties in their integration into society. Stigmatization of returnees is another challenge of the Program for returnees in Kosovo. They may face discrimination from the rest of society due to their status as returnees, making it challenging to cope. Local government in some cases does not provide enough support for returnees, making it so difficult to achieve the objectives of the Program for returnees in Kosovo.

The Support Program for Returnees and Displaced Persons in Kosovo has faced challenges, such as the lack of sufficient resources to cover all the needs of the returnees, the lack of skills needed to successfully integrate into Kosovo society, stigmatization of returnees and the lack of sufficient support from the local government (Government of Kosovo, 2022).

According to (Krasniqi & Shabani, 2019), some of the main challenges that affect the effectiveness of small and medium business support programs in Kosovo are:

1. *Lack of information and difficulty to apply*: most small and medium-sized businesses in Kosovo are not informed about support programs and do not have the capacity to apply for them.
2. *Most programs are not specialized*: most programs are not specialized and do not respond adequately to the specific needs of small and medium-sized businesses in Kosovo.
3. *Lack of infrastructure development*: lack of infrastructure, such as the transport and telecommunications network, can affect trade and communication difficulties between businesses.

(Peci, 2017) states that the challenges of the training program for young people can be different, but some of them can be:

1. Lack of necessary qualifications of trainers and organizational staff to provide the necessary training and help young people in their professional development.
2. Difficulty in securing sufficient funds to cover the costs of training and necessary materials.
3. Lack of information and connections needed to help young people connect with employers and find jobs.

According to the study by Nexhipi and Kastrati (2019), the Regional Development program in Kosovo faces several important challenges, in general, and not only with monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the program and coordination with other policies and programs. In particular, the following challenges have been identified:

1. *Funding the program*: Lack of financial resources can be a significant challenge for this program, as it requires large investments in infrastructure and various pieces of training.
2. *Cooperation of entrepreneurs*: To achieve success in the program, the cooperation of local entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs with the government and with international organizations is important. In some cases, the lack of such cooperation can hinder the development of the program.
3. *Identifying needs*: Identifying the needs of isolated and poor communities can be a challenge for the program. This may happen due to the lack of information or due to the lack of resources needed to do the proper analysis.

4. Involvement of all stakeholders: Involvement of all stakeholders is important to the success of the program. If any party is outside the program, then there may be difficulties in achieving the goals of the program.

The challenges for the Community Development Program (CDP) in Kosovo are:

Lack of financial resources: MDP aims to help underdeveloped and isolated communities in Kosovo with financial support, but this can be a challenge in realizing the program's goals.

Poor infrastructure: Underdeveloped and isolated communities in Kosovo may have poor or unimproved infrastructure, which can create challenges for the implementation of development projects.

Lack of technical knowledge: Underdeveloped and isolated communities in Kosovo may need advice and training to develop and implement development projects.

Political and security challenges: Some communities in Kosovo may be in areas with political or security challenges, creating challenges for the implementation of development projects.

Conclusion

Regarding the policies and programs for socio-economic reintegration of minority communities, the marginalized group, and returnees from emigration in Kosovo, international, governmental, and civil society organizations and researchers have brought some conclusions:

- In order to achieve a perfect inter-ethnic society in Kosovo, it is necessary to continue with efforts to implement the policy of increasing inter-ethnic cooperation. Although steps have been taken by organizations, institutions, and the government, the progress achieved so far is not enough. (European Commission, 2020).
- GIZ, the organization that monitors the implementation of the strategies of Minority Communities in Kosovo, has presented challenges related to the lack of financial resources and inter-ethnic conflicts in the implementation of the strategy.
- The implementation of the Special Zones Development Strategy (SDSA) has faced the lack of financial resources, the change in the business climate, the lack of infrastructure, ownership problems, and the lack of necessary documentation, as well as the impact of negative phenomena such as corruption, criminality and lack of transparency in the implementation of this strategy (Ministry of Economic Development, 2016)
- The program for returnees in Kosovo does not have sufficient funding and this may make it difficult to meet the objectives of the program. Returnees need special skills to successfully integrate into Kosovar society, but these skills are not always provided. The stigmatization of the returnees and the lack of support from the local government are the other challenges they are facing (Belegu & Pireva, 2018)
- The Support Program for Returnees and Displaced Persons in Kosovo has faced challenges, including the lack of sufficient resources to achieve the objectives and the challenges of sufficient support from the local government (Government of Kosovo, 2022)
- The lack of information and the difficulty to apply, as well as non-specialized programs and the lack of infrastructure development are the main factors that prevent the achievement of benefits from small and medium business support programs in Kosovo (Krasniqi & Shabani, 2019)
- Challenges for youth training programs are: lack of qualifications of trainers and organizational staff, difficulty in securing sufficient funding, lack of information and connections needed to help young people connect with employers, and competition with similar programs of other organizations (Peci, 2017).
- The Regional Development Program in Kosovo faces several important challenges in monitoring, evaluating, and coordinating other policies and programs. These challenges include the lack of financial resources, the cooperation of local entrepreneurs with the government and international organizations, the identification of the needs of isolated and poor communities, as well as the inclusion of all interested parties in the program (Nexhipi & Kastrati (2019)

- The Community Development Program in Kosovo faces various challenges in the implementation of development projects. The main challenges are lack of financial resources, poor infrastructure, lack of technical know-how, and political and security challenges.
- Great commitment and good coordination between government institutions and NGOs to address the needs and challenges of these groups and to improve the process of reintegration (European Commission, 2020).
- ·The need for clear and coordinated policies and strategies to address the challenges that have affected the socio-economic integration of marginalized communities with a greater focus on improving job opportunities, supporting business sectors and increasing investment in key sectors of the economy. (World Bank, 2019).
- The need to undertake specific policies and measures for minority and marginalized communities, including in the areas of education, health, law enforcement and employment (European Commission, 2019).
- The need to support the development of small and medium-sized businesses in rural and urban areas as a way to increase employment opportunities and improve living conditions for minority and marginalized communities (United Nations, 2020).
- Addressing the causes of internal and external migration, including economic, political and social factors, and to ensure support for returnees and their integration into society (Government of Kosovo, 2019).

Section IV

Identifying resources and opportunities to assist in the reintegration of minority communities and other marginalized groups

The European Center for Minority Issues in Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo) is an important organization with exceptional capacities to help reintegrate minority communities and other marginalized groups.

The organization has sufficient resources, specialized skills, and clear objectives in the protection and promotion of human rights, with a focus on minority rights, education, language issues, governance, accountability, and economic empowerment.

On this basis, it offers a variety of different services to the community, using its valuable expertise and resources. In addition to expertise in the field of study and scientific research, the organization has specialized skills in several other areas that allow it to provide valuable assistance to the community.

ECMI Kosovo has high potential for achieving results in improving the lives of people in the community, and this potential comes from a wide range of specialized skills and expertise in programs and projects successfully implemented and evaluated by the donor community. In the effort to provide quality services, the organization uses its knowledge and experience in the methodology and techniques of scientific research to undertake deep research and studies in various fields such as economy, health, education, reintegration, etc. In this way, the organization can help the community in solving current challenges and problems and is prepared to improve their situation.

ECMI Kosovo Project on Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and Other Vulnerable Marginalized Groups

In accordance with the guiding principles of the German Return and Reintegration Strategy, the "Return with New Opportunities" Program, whose main objective is that returnees and other marginalized groups of society are socially and economically reintegrated in their country of origin, ECMI Kosovo, through the Project "Socio-economic reintegration for minority communities and other vulnerable marginalized groups" aims to realize the main objective of the program.

Project Planning "Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and Other Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups"

Kosovo currently faces significant migration pressure due to financial difficulties, a lack of employment opportunities, and the COVID-19 pandemic's impact. The returnees, whether voluntary or forced, are considered to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Kosovo, as most of them face severe financial difficulties. Therefore, the objective of the project is to increase the employability of returnees and minorities by harmonizing their training with labor market needs, enabling them to engage in self-employment and self-development processes.

Project objective

Increasing the employability of returnees and minorities through the harmonization of training with the needs of the labor market.

Basic study and planning of activities for the implementation of the project objective

The implementation of the social and economic reintegration project is critical to ensure that their reintegration project is successful and helps improve their quality of life. It is therefore required that the activities undertaken for these groups be personalized and appropriate to their special needs, and have a sensitive and careful approach to ensure equal and fair treatment for all.

The planning of activities for the implementation of the project objective has been followed based on several basic steps, in:

Analysis of study conclusions and the identification of the needs of the target group was done through the methodology used, namely:

1. Document analysis in identifying the needs of the target group through the study of government documentation, various international organizations, scientific articles, reports and other analyzes related to the target group.
2. The qualitative method of ethnography that has helped in identifying the needs of the target group and has understood the full context of their social and economic situation.

Baseline study for target groups

Basic research as scientific research aims to collect and analyze important information on the target group. This is a valuable way to better understand these groups and to take effective measures to help them in the process of reintegration into Kosovar society.

In the initial phase of the project, approximately over two months of research was carried out by the staff - the group of specialized researchers of the organization who have knowledge in the field of study. Local interlocutors and collaborators (paralegals - well-known and trusted individuals within the communities) who have deep knowledge of the communities and have helped to better understand the local context and situation have also been included in the research. In order to minimize the personal impact, a general and honest approach was used in observing the culture and behavior of the target groups. The tools used in the research included the research plan, note-taking, questionnaires, interviews, description of the observation and ethical standards for research were used continuously. Surveys were conducted to collect quantitative data on socioeconomic conditions, employment status, level of education and other important factors affecting the target groups. They were used as an effective tool to gather information from a large number of participants about their needs, concerns, and the effectiveness of the project in meeting these needs.

Focus group discussions and interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on the challenges and opportunities facing the target groups. Interviews conducted one-on-one or in small groups, helped gather information on specific aspects of the target group's needs.

The study, after analyzing the data, has helped to identify the social, economic, and cultural needs of the target group. The perspective of how the target group sees themselves and society is understood. Challenges and obstacles in their reintegration process have been identified. The developed study has helped to understand the current and future situation of the target group and to identify solutions to these problems through training programs to address these needs. Tailored training programs were designed based on these identified needs, with the aim of improving the skills and competencies of the target groups, namely migration and the labor market.

Activities defined in addressing needs

Program activities include participants from all regions of Kosovo with a special focus on individuals from rural areas. Minority communities, repatriated individuals, potentially irregular migrants, marginalized groups, women and youth constitute the target group.

The training will be divided into two programs:

1. **Training Program for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship and,**
2. **Soft Skills Training Program**

Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training Program

The Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training Program provides training to participants on self-employment and entrepreneurship, including vocational training based on their assessed needs and entrepreneurial skills such as: metal welding, carpentry, chef, hair stylist, construction technician, IT, and bartender. The program provides targeted support for reintegration activities, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, mothers and children. Part of the participants will be provided with reintegration support and training, with a focus on women and children. Additional educational courses, such as language courses, social activities and education for minority children, will be offered by professional staff. The program also supports the registration of minority children in kindergartens and schools and provides school bags and materials for their children, as well as training parents on children's rights. After the training, the beneficiaries receive 1.5 days of individual counseling and mentoring for self-employment, and will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with job offers in the labor market.

Soft Skills Training Program

The Soft Skills Training Program trains participants on soft skills to enhance their employability, including communication skills, problem-solving skills, work ethic, and interpersonal skills . In addition to the training, individual consultations are offered to each of the beneficiaries for up to two days (12 hours) and will support their connection with potential employers.

The project also provides tools and equipment packages to beneficiaries to enhance their entrepreneurial and employability skills, which will include equipment to meet their individual needs for self-employment. In addition, the equipment package includes support for children in the reintegration process, such as school materials, sportswear and clothing. The project will put beneficiaries in contact with potential employers to improve social programs that deal with marginalized groups, especially minorities.

In addition to self-employment and support for entrepreneurial initiatives, the project aims to find internships in participating private enterprises. Through individual consultations, training participants are enabled to become familiar with job offers in the labor market. Project beneficiaries will be put in contact with potential employers. The attended training aims to increase their capacity to make them ready for the labor market and ensures a high possibility of employment in participating private enterprises. Establishing direct contacts with their potential future employers increases the employment prospects of the participants in the training programs.

Program implementation and evaluation

Program implementation and evaluation is a critical process to achieve the program's goals of social and economic reintegration of the target group. This process involves taking concrete and effective measures to achieve the defined goals.

In this implementation process, used a targeted approach to identify and engage potential participants for the training programs. In an effort to expand the reach of the project, in addition to online channels, a combination of door-to-door communication was used to reach individuals in rural communities as well. During field efforts, a significant number of motivated and enthusiastic individuals were identified. Training programs were primarily advertised through online channels, such as social media and the Open Call Training Program App. The project teams also held information sessions in areas with a high concentration of target groups to promote the importance and benefits of the training.

To further promote the programs, we developed and distributed project materials such as leaflets and brochures to beneficiaries and the general public. As a result of the efforts, a significant number of people up to 3856 were reached through social media posts.

The use of targeted and innovative communication strategies, including door-to-door engagement and social media campaigns, has been a key factor in the project's success and its ability to engage and benefit individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities.

In total, the selection committee in consultation with the experts engaged to assess the needs of the target group has successfully selected 412 beneficiaries for the Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training Program, and 202 beneficiaries to benefit from the Soft Skills Training Program with a priority of assigned to minority communities, returnees, marginalized vulnerable groups and rural population as in the following tables:

Table 2: Beneficiaries for the Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training program

Number of beneficiaries	Minority communities, marginalized groups, repatriated	Percentage
218	Women	52.91%
111	Youth	26.94%
248	repatriated individuals	60.19%
	144 repatriated from Germany	34.95%
117	Bosniak	28.39%
186	Albanian	45.14%
7	Egyptian	1.69%
39	Roma	9.46%
29	Ashkali	7.03%
1	Gorani	0.25%
21	Serbian	5.09%
1	Cerkez	0.25%

Source: ECMI Kosovo, 2023

Table 3: Beneficiaries of the Soft Skills Training Program

Number of beneficiaries	Minority communities, marginalized groups, repatriated	Percentage
129	Women	63.86%
80	Youth	39.60%
129	repatriated individuals	63.8%
	75 repatriated from Germany	37.12%
45	Bosniak	22.27%
63	Albanian	31.18%
21	Egyptian	10.39%
10	Roma	4.95%
33	Ashkali	16.34%
30	Serbian	14.85%

Source: ECMI Kosovo, 2023

In the second phase of the project, attention was paid to the organization of training programs for the target communities in the respective municipalities. A holistic approach was used to understand the special needs of these communities and tailored training programs to their circumstances.

Efforts were made to provide flexible scheduling for training programs to help participants benefit from these training. In particular, the organization of the training program in municipalities near rural areas allowed us to offer new opportunities to those who previously did not have access to training programs. The flexible approach and training programs accessible to a wider range of individuals allowed us to create a more comprehensive and effective project. This new approach helped overcome socio-economic barriers, including limited access to transport.

Program evaluation is a critical step in assessing how effective the program is in achieving its stated goals and identifying ways to improve program effectiveness. In this stage, a series of indicators and parameters were followed to evaluate the success of the program. The evaluation was developed through the method of defined indicators. Indicators provide information to measure progress and evaluate program achievements. For the social and economic reintegration program of the target group, a table of defined indicators has been generated.

Table 4: Table of defined indicators

Indicator	Target Value	Means of Verification	Current status vis à vis the achievement of the objective in percent (since project start).
Supporting the employment of the target through soft skills training for employment, individual consulting for employment and liaison with employers	**200 Beneficiaries**	List of participants, pictures, training report, and time sheets for consulting days.	**101%** of the target value/**202 beneficiaries** received training regarding soft-skills across six (6) regions of Kosovo: *Prishtina/Priština, Prizren, Peje/Peć, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Partesh/Parteš.* The training program covered a wide range of topics, including effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, time management and conflict resolution. Participants were provided with comprehensive materials and resources to help them understand the various aspects of soft skills development.
Support of self-employment and reintegration of women and children through training in entrepreneurship and self-employment and individual consulting	**400 Beneficiaries**	List of participants, pictures, training report etc.	**103%** of the target value/**412 beneficiaries** received training regarding self-employment and entrepreneurship across six (6) regions of Kosovo: *Prishtina/Priština, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Prizren, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje* The training program covered a wide range of topics, including business planning, marketing, financial management, and legal considerations. Participants were provided with comprehensive materials and resources to help them understand the various aspects of starting and running a business.

Self-employment support to beneficiaries trained with in-kind support (tools and equipment package)	**140 Beneficiaries**	Contracts established, handing over document, List of handing over start up equipment, Pictures from handing over and Success story from the field	The indicator has been fulfilled. A total of **140 beneficiaries** have received the support. Contracts have been established, a List of handing over start-up equipment, pictures from the handing over process, and a success story from the field have been obtained and are being monitored.

Source: ECMI Kosovo, 2023

Data analysis and program improvement

In the program implementation and evaluation phase, after the program indicators have been examined and compared with its goals, aspects that have worked successfully and those that need improvement have been identified. In the process of recruiting participants to the training programs, significant challenges and difficulties have been encountered, which have required specialized training expertise to identify aspects of the program that need to be changed and improved in order to adapt to all participants. The identified challenges are:

1. **Lack of awareness -** There is often a lack of awareness in these communities about the training programs that are offered, as well as their importance for personal and professional development.
2. **Cultural barriers -** They include a lack of knowledge of the language of the training program and the requirement that women stay at home to care for children and the elderly.
3. **Stereotypes and prejudices -** They include misconceptions that women are not capable of being involved in training programs and minority communities are not interested in participating in training programs.

In this context, several strategies have been undertaken to promote training programs among minority communities and women. In the beginning, project teams have intensified their efforts by advertising the training programs, and have also organized community events by distributing project brochures and leaflets. In order to ensure high effectiveness in achieving the goals of the program and full access to these communities, seven paralegals based in these communities who are individuals known and trusted by their members have been engaged.

Paralegals are a very important part of the community as they have helped to support individuals in the community to promote positive changes in the society where they live and engage in the fight against discrimination and the protection of human rights in the communities. By following a direct access method, they have enabled close contact with communities and conveyed information accurately and directly and transparent about the actions taken.

Working with paralegals and project team experts with integrity and respect, the needs and interests of the community have been identified, as well as common points with the programs that the organization (ECMI Kosovo) offers. This has ensured the creation of a close and effective approach to achieving the goals of the organization, but also to help the target groups in achieving the goals of their own, increased employment opportunities, communication skills, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills and socio-economic reintegration in their country of origin.

The partnership with the community is built through the organization's transparency with the community for the activities developed, creating the community's trust in ECMI Kosovo. Experts have had an open approach to the community during the decision-making process by making them part of the process and listening to their position. ECMI Kosovo respects culture and community and has cooperated with them at all levels of activity. This has led to the building of real empathy with the community by engaging alongside them to meet their needs and make real changes in their lives. The project experts have taken real responsibility for the activities and the changes we make in the community where it is operated.

In this sense, training experts have improved several aspects of the training program in order to address the identified challenges and ensure the achievement of the program's goals. These aspects are:

1. **The use of training methods:** Through trainers in certain fields, the method of lectures, group discussions, and practical activities, it has helped to increase the awareness of the participants about the changes and challenges that society can overcome.
2. **Use of community languages:** It has been achieved that the training is accessible and understandable for the participants.
3. **Treatment of cultures and traditions of communities:** It has been achieved through training on the cultures and traditions of these communities that have influenced the reduction of cultural barriers and the building of good relations with participants from minority communities.
4. **Awareness of stereotypes and prejudices:** Trainings are provided that address various stereotypes and prejudices. The training has helped raise awareness and sensitize the participants on these issues, increasing respect and understanding among the participants.
5. **Communication skills training:** It has helped the participants learn different communication techniques, cooperate and interact with each other in a way that is respectful and effective.
6. **Training of community leaders:** By involving community leaders in the training, the training has helped to promote positive changes in the community. This has helped raise awareness and improve conditions for minority communities and women.

Results and implications for the future

In the context of the project "Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and Other Vulnerable Marginalized Groups," the European Centre for Minority Issues in Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo) utilized a selection process to contract two implementing companies for the high-quality implementation of two project programs. ECMI Kosovo decided to collaborate with D&D Business Support Center to provide Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship training and mentoring and coaching services to 400 project beneficiaries. Additionally, ECMI Kosovo partnered with Smart Innovation Centre (SMART IC) to offer training, mentoring, and coaching services in the development of soft skills to enhance employability.

Soft Skills Training Program

In accordance with the specific requirements outlined by the European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo, it was ensured that at least 50% of the participants are women and at least 50% are returnees, while at least 70% are members of minority communities and marginalized individuals out of a total of 200 participants in the soft skills training program.

During the implementation of the training program, the organization's experts developed training materials and modules in various municipalities, including Prishtina (2 groups), Prizren (2 groups), Peja, Fushe Kosovë (3 groups), Partesh, and Ferizaj, with a total of 202 participants. In addition to the training sessions, they also provided 12 hours of individual counseling sessions for each of the 200 project participants.

Various methods were used during the training to engage the participants. Interactive discussions and practical exercises were conducted to improve their soft skills.
Participants who successfully completed the five-day training were honored with a certificate acknowledging their dedication and efforts during the training. This certificate can serve as a reference for their trained soft skills.

Upon the successful completion of the first phase of the project, the second phase was developed, which involved the development and provision of mentoring and coaching services. In this phase, a physical questionnaire was developed to gather information about the individual needs of each participant for improvement.

After the preparation of the Individual Needs Assessment and Mentoring Plan for each participant, two days of counseling sessions were provided, covering the following topics in the table below:

Table 5: Consultancy Sessions and Topics

No.	Category of Consultancy Sessions
1	Job Search Resources
2	Finding the Right Job
3	Researching and Understanding the Position Applied
4	Preparation of Motivational Letter
5	CV/Resume Preparation
6	Self-Confidence, Integrity, Creativity, and Others

Source: SMART IC, 2023

Soft coaching is an important part of personal and professional development. Through these trainings, individuals have the opportunity to acquire new skills, develop self-confidence, improve communication skills and achieve excellent results. The following table presents the activities and results achieved by the soft trainings. To evaluate the efforts and effects of these trainings, you can see the following details for each training activity and the results achieved as a result of them.

Table 6: Activities and Achieved Results of Soft Skills Training

No.	Description of activity	Results achieved
Task 1: Develop and deliver the 5-day Soft Skills Training		
1.	Selection of candidates	The project team, in collaboration with the contracting authority, established selection criteria and conducted a selection process adhering to the project's overarching criteria
	Provision of venues, refreshments and training materials	According to the project needs, the venues, refreshments and training materials also has been provided for the project beneficiaries.
	Delivery of the soft skills training	Staff and experts delivered 5 days of training for 10 groups all across Kosovo.
Task 2: Develop and Deliver Mentoring and Coaching Services		
2	Needs Assessment	Smart IC experts developed the needs assessment questionnaire in order to understand participants needs for mentoring and coaching services.
	Delivery of mentoring and coaching services	After finalization of needs assessment questionnaire Smart IC experts has delivered 2400 hours of individual consultancy for 200 beneficiaries with total of 12 hours for each of them.
3.	Progress reports	Project team has prepared progress reports according to reporting plan given earlier from the contracting authority.
	Physical dossier	For each training group, a physical dossier with attendance list and food and refreshments list has been prepared. Also, for mentoring and coaching services timesheet, needs assessment questionnaire and individual report has been prepared.
	Final Report	A final report which includes progress, lessons learned and overall performance of the assignment has been prepared.

Source: SMART IC, 2023

In order to provide readers with more detailed information, the report prepared by Smart Innovation Centre (2023), titled "Final Report: Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and Other Vulnerable Marginalized Groups," conducted in collaboration with the European Centre for Minority Issues in Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo), is included as a separate document in this study.

Training Program for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

The provision of training for self-employment and entrepreneurship, as well as mentoring and coaching services, has been carried out for 400 participants. The main objective of the training is to significantly increase the participation of minority communities, returnees, and marginalized groups in Kosovo in the job market, as well as to provide support in capacity building and business idea development through training.

The organization's experts have identified the following activities:

Activity 1: Provision of Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training for 400 beneficiaries.
Activity 2: Provision of Mentoring and Coaching Sessions for 400 beneficiaries

Table 7: Activities and Achieved Results of Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training

Activities	Targets	Results
1. Training courses	a. Identification of up to **400 training participants** b. Organizing up to **20 training groups**	Finalized the list of **412 beneficiaries**; Organized and completed **20 training groups** in the field of entrepreneurship and self-employment.
2. Mentoring and coaching services	a. Conducting Individual Needs Assessment and Prepare Consultancy Plan for **400 training participants** b. Delivering individual Mentoring and Coaching services for **400 training participants**	Conducted individual needs assessment and prepared consultancy plan **400 beneficiaries**; Out of the **400 beneficiaries** who received mentoring and coachingsessions, the D&D experts successfully delivered a total of **4,800 hours** of consultancy.

Source: D&D Business Support Center, 2023

During the mentoring and coaching sessions provided by the organization's experts, consultations were conducted in various areas, covering a wide range of business and personal development topics. The experts began by creating an assessment questionnaire to identify the specific needs of the participants, enabling them to identify the areas where assistance and improvement were needed.

Table 8: Category of Sessions and Consultancy Content

No.	Category of Sessions	Session Contents
1	Business Plan	Development of business plans, identification of goals, and strategies for achieving them.
2	Marketing and Marketing Planning	Guidelines for developing marketing strategies.
3	Financial Planning	Creation of sustainable financial plans, including budgeting and cash flow management.
4	Market Research	Advice on market analysis and studying consumer needs to better understand the market and competition.
5	Operational Planning and Production Management	Development of operational plans and strategies for production management and quality control.
6	Business Negotiation Skills	Training and guidance for developing negotiation skills to achieve favorable agreements.
7	Investment Planning	Development of investment plans and strategies for capital .
8	General Business Management	Guidelines for developing general managerial skills, including organizational work and team management.
9	Strategic Planning	Development of long-term and short-term strategic plans for business development.
10	Risk Management	Advice and guidance for identifying and managing potential risks in business.
11	Entrepreneurship Awareness	Instructions for the process of starting a business and the challenges that come with it.
12	Accounting and Taxes	Guidance for understanding legal procedures and obligations of accounting and taxes in business
13	Human Resource Management	Focuses on developing skills for managing human resources, including employee recruitment and training.

Source: D&D Business Support Center, 2023

Note: *In order to provide readers with more detailed information, the report prepared by D&D Business Support Center (2023), titled "Final Report: Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and Other Vulnerable Marginalized Groups," conducted in collaboration with the European Centre for Minority Issues in Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo), is included as a separate document in this study.*

Equipment assistance to encourage entrepreneurship and reintegration

The total number of beneficiaries with documentation for the equipment delivery list is 140, as part of the assistance program. Self-employment support for trained individuals, in this case, a package of tools and equipment, is a component of the project that has provided assistance and resources to those who have received training to become self-employed. This assistance has been provided in the form of a package of tools and equipment, which includes all the necessary elements to start or develop their business.

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The purpose of this support is to assist the trainees in establishing a self-employment business and provide them with the necessary tools and equipment to carry out their work. Through this assistance, they have gained access to a wide range of tools and equipment, such as work tools, electrical, mechanical, informational, and others.

The offered package of tools and equipment has been tailored to align with the type of business the trainees wish to develop. This has helped them to have sufficient resources to start and successfully operate a business. Support for self-employment, such as this, is crucial in encouraging the development of self-employed businesses and creating new job opportunities. Assistance with the necessary tools and equipment ensures a good start for those who wish to become independent and build their own business.

With this project, the trainees have the ability to leverage the knowledge and skills gained in training and apply them to the development of their business. By providing the necessary tools and equipment, they have a greater chance to be competitive and create a sustainable business in their chosen market. In this way, support for self-employment with the necessary tools and equipment enables the growth of entrepreneurship and the creation of new employment opportunities.

In general, ECMI Kosovo is satisfied with the achieved results and the fulfillment of the objective. The implemented project also has significant positive implications for the future of the communities. These implications can contribute to the enhancement of social and economic responsibility of these communities, assisting in improving their quality of life, including women, children, and returnees from emigration.

Table 9: Positive Impacts of the Implemented Project

No.	Impact
1	Increased level of education and skills of minority community members, expanding their future prospects
2	Creation of a safer and sustainable environment for women and their families, increasing trust and security
3	Enhanced employment opportunities and skill development for individuals and their communities, improving living conditions
4	Improved living conditions of women and their families, including aspects of health, enhancing their quality of life
5	Encouragement of cooperation and good relations between minority communities and the general community in Kosovo
6	Increased opportunities for women to engage in the labor market and participate in the economic and social life of Kosovo
7	Generation of employment opportunities and support for small businesses in these communities, contributing to economic growth
8	Improved living conditions and increased hope for women and their families for a better future
9	Improved living conditions and increased hope for returnees from emigration, aiming to reduce emigration from the country

Source: ECMI Kosovo, 2023

Section V

CONCLUSIONS

The ECMI Kosovo Project on Socio-Economic Reintegration for Minority Communities and other vulnerable marginalized groups has demonstrated that it is a successful model for promoting the social and economic reintegration of these communities. Through training programs and support, ECMI Kosovo has helped improve living conditions and fostered cooperation among members of minority communities.

The study confirmed that training programs have a significant impact on the socio-economic improvement of minority communities. Through specialized training, participants gain new knowledge and skills that enable them to improve their economic and social situations.

Key conclusions drawn from this study are as follows:

- Skill development is one of the primary benefits of training programs. The acquired skills create new opportunities for participants in the job market and contribute to the establishment of a sustainable and successful career.
- Boosting self-confidence and self-awareness is a crucial aspect of training programs. Participants develop a more positive self-perception and increased self-confidence, which influences their social and economic well-being.
- Training programs provide support and foster entrepreneurial and employment skills. Participants gain knowledge and strategies for establishing small businesses and improving their economic situation.
- Training facilitates the building of participants' networking contacts. This expanded network creates more opportunities for employment and access to crucial information.
- Training programs offer assistance in the reintegration of marginalized groups, particularly women, mothers, and children. This helps improve their socioeconomic status in society.
- Training develops soft skills such as communication, time management, problem-solving, work ethics, and interpersonal skills. These skills enhance participants' employment and self-employment prospects.
- Training programs contribute to increased collaboration and collective awareness among marginalized groups. This fosters a culture of solidarity and mutual assistance within the community.
- Improved quality of life is a proven outcome of training programs. Participants gain more employment opportunities and contribute to strengthening society as a whole.
- In general, the study's conclusions indicate that training programs have a significant impact on the socio-economic reintegration of minority communities and marginalized groups. These programs help improve individual and societal situations, bringing noticeable changes to people's lives.

Section VI

ECMI KOSOVO RECOMMENDATIONS

In Kosovo, the socio-economic reintegration of minority communities, marginalized groups, women, and returnees from emigration represents a significant challenge. These communities face many challenges in their socio-economic integration into society. Socio-economic reintegration programs play an important role in assisting them to integrate into society and improve their socio-economic status.

In this context, the recommendation of ECMI Kosovo is for socio-economic reintegration programs to focus on developing specialized training programs for each of these communities, taking into account their specific needs in the job market and the society they live in. It is important for training programs to be tailored to their needs, have experienced trainers, change the training culture, provides appropriate content, and be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure their success.

Specific recommendations for training programs are as follows:

- Conduct detailed analyses for target groups: Use various methods such as ethnography, surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observation to fully and accurately identify the social, economic, cultural, and other needs and challenges of these communities.
- Engage community-based paralegals: Paralegals, as familiar and trusted individuals in the community, are trained and capable of collaborating with training experts, assisting in identifying the community's training needs, preparing training materials, raising awareness about the importance of training programs, and addressing socio-economic issues.
- Build partnerships with communities: Create mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and interest groups to achieve common goals, increasing participation in training, community awareness, and support. The partnership should ensure active community participation in the development and implementation of the training program, including involvement in the planning process, needs identification, and evaluation of results.
- Develop specialized training programs: Training programs should align with the specific needs of each community and provide knowledge and practical skills that help them integrate into the job market and improve their socio-economic status.

Training may include technical, managerial, communication, career counseling, and other skills that are important for the personal and professional growth and development of participants.

- Ensure equal access to training: It is important to ensure that all potential participants have equal access to training programs. This includes combating discrimination and barriers that may hinder their participation, such as cost, physical distance, lack of information, and socio-cultural factors. Communication tools and digital technology can be used to offer distance training and improve access for communities living in remote or hard-to-reach areas.
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- Monitoring and evaluation of the training program: Regular monitoring and evaluation of the training program are necessary to assess its effectiveness and identify changes and improvements in the socio-economic integration of participants. This may involve monitoring intermediate and short-term results, participant interviews, and other research to gather valuable data for evaluation.
- With the help of the aforementioned socio-economic reintegration programs, organizations and institutions can assist individuals and communities in developing new skills, acquiring important knowledge, and improving their opportunities for personal and professional success.

ANNEXES

In this section, the annexes accompanying the study are presented, providing additional evidence for the results and findings obtained.

ANNEX 1: Photos from the Soft Skills Training



ANNEX 2: Photos from Mentoring & Coaching Sessions










ANNEX 3: Photos During Training Sessions




Socio-Economic Reintegration
for Minority Communities
and other Vulnerable
Marginalised Groups

ANNEX 4: Photos During Consultancy Sessions

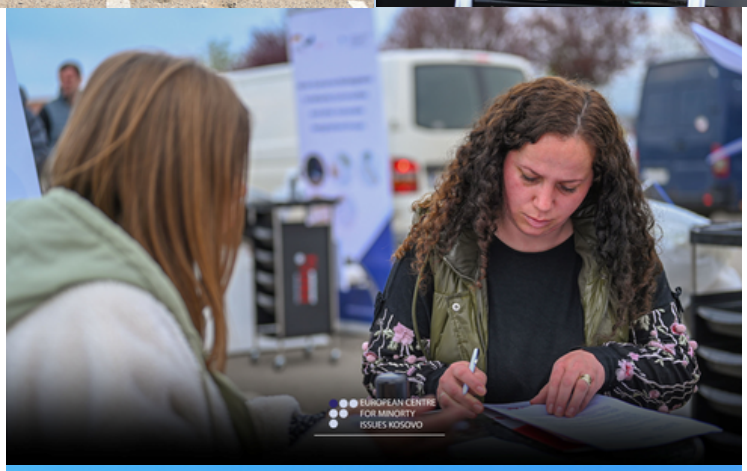


ANNEX 5: Photos During Distribution of tool and equipment packages to beneficiaries of the Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Training Program




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