



Analysis of Social Activation Measures in Kosovo



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Bulevar Svetog Petra Cetinjskog 59, 81000 Podgorica, Crna Gora

FOR PUBLISHER: Ivana Vujović

AUTOR: Vebi Mujku

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
CMS	Case Management System
CSW	Centre of Social Work
CRA	Civil Registration Agency
EA, KEA, EARK	Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo
EMIS	Employment Management Information System
EO	Employment Office
ILMS	Integrated Labour Market Information System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
InEET	In Employment, Education, Training
KAS or ASK	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KEDS	Kosovo Electricity Distribution Company
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LTU	Long term unemployed
LRIS	Last Resort Income Support
MCSO	Municipal Civil Status Office
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MT	Means Test
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers
MS	Microsoft
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
OSS	Open Source Software
PES	Public Employment Service
PMT	Proxy Mean Test

RK	Republic of Kosovo
RDBMS	Relational Database Management System
SA	Social Assistance
SDG	Sustainable Development Agenda
SOA	Service Oriented Architecture
TAK	Tax Administration of Kosovo
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Development Program
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WA	Work Activation



Understanding the employment situation in Kosovo is crucial for gaining insights into the employment opportunities available to vulnerable categories. Kosovo, a small landlocked country located in the Balkan Peninsula of Southeast Europe, has faced numerous challenges in its economic development since gaining independence in 2008. The country has a complex history marked by political instability, ethnic tensions, and economic struggles. These factors have had a significant impact on the employment landscape, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and minorities.

Kosovo's labor market has undergone significant changes over the years. Before the conflict in the late 1990s, the region had a relatively well-developed industrial base, with a focus on mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. However, the conflict and subsequent political transition disrupted these sectors, declining employment opportunities and economic output.

In recent years, Kosovo has tried to rebuild its economy and create a more favorable business environment. The government has implemented various reforms to attract foreign investment, promote entrepreneurship, and improve labor market conditions. Despite these efforts, however, challenges persist in terms of high unemployment rates and limited job opportunities for vulnerable categories.

One of the key issues affecting employment in Kosovo is the high level of informality in the labor market. Many workers, particularly those in vulnerable categories, are engaged in informal employment arrangements that lack legal protections and social security benefits. This informal sector poses challenges for both workers and the government in terms of ensuring decent work conditions and collecting accurate labor market data.

Furthermore, gender disparities remain a significant concern in Kosovo's labor market. Women face multiple barriers to accessing decent employment opportunities, including cultural norms, limited access to education and training, and discriminatory practices. As a result, women are often concentrated in low-paid sectors with limited prospects for career advancement.

Youth unemployment is another pressing issue in Kosovo. The country has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Europe, with young people facing difficulties in transitioning from education to employment. Limited job opportunities, inadequate skills matching, and a lack of work experience contribute to the challenges faced by young job seekers.

To address these issues, various initiatives and programs have been implemented in Kosovo. These include vocational training programs, entrepreneurship support schemes, and measures to promote gender equality in the labor market. However, sustained efforts are needed to create an inclusive and sustainable employment environment for vulnerable categories.

In conclusion, understanding the employment situation in Kosovo is crucial for identifying the challenges and opportunities faced by vulnerable categories in the labor market. The country's history, political context, and economic struggles have shaped its employment landscape, with high levels of informality, gender disparities, and youth unemployment being key concerns. Efforts to address these issues through reforms and targeted programs are ongoing but require continued commitment and collaboration.

During the last decade, the Republic of Kosovo succeeded in establishing a basic legislative and strategic framework in the area of social policy, labor, and employment. Still, due to the financial constraints of the national budget and insufficient human capacity in the administration, there are serious challenges regarding the implementation of legal provisions and strategic priorities and measures.

Two public institutions have the main responsibilities in overcoming these obstacles: the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT) and the Employment Agency (EA). MFLT has the overall responsibility for monitoring developments in the labor market, processing and implementation of employment and labor market policies, social protection, pensions, and industrial relations. MLSW is also responsible for drafting and adopting legal acts regarding employment and social policies. EA is an independent body under MLSW and has taken over operational tasks related to employment policy.

Supporting the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT) and the Employment Agency (EA) of the Republic of Kosovo (RK), UNDP has introduced programmes, systems, and tools for more tailored and responsive services to job seekers that provide them with opportunities to gain new skills, find employment or launch own small businesses. This includes the flagship active labor market policies measures (ALMPs), with over 14.000 women and men have participated in these programmes since 2005. UNDP also researches to better inform the design of policies of programmes of public institutions, as well as invests into outreach to provide information about the available services and help people move from economic inactivity to being active jobseekers, especially in the context where only 1/5 of women working age have a job or are looking for one, and close to a third of young people are “NEET” (not in education, employment or training).

Kosovo’s Labour Market suffers from low employment (25, 4%) and activity (35, 9%) rates as well as high unemployment rate (29, 2%) and lengthy spells of unemployment. High levels of youth (ages 15-24) unemployment (54, 9%), low labor force participation rates (especially among women and vulnerable groups), and extensive informality and deskilling of the labor force due to long periods without formal employment, are prevailing challenges for Kosovo. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to ensure that no one is left behind and urges to reach the

furthest behind first (UNDP, 2018). All persons who endure multiple barriers and deprivations that limit their choices and opportunities relative to others in society are considered as left behind. The policy response to complex labor market challenges in Kosovo, therefore, focuses on the **active inclusion** of those who are excluded or marginally attached to formal labor markets and served by both CSW and PES.

The concept of inclusive employment tackles employment barriers (educational attainment, job-specific, and behavior skills), participation constraints (caretaking duties, discouragement, physical distance from labor markets), and insufficient information or incentives that individuals face in Kosovo's labor market. It contributes to the Agenda 2030 through SDGs 1, 3,4,5,8, and 10 and therefore entails the following:

- personalized support throughout welfare-to-work transition,
- access to quality services such as housing, training, health and care services, and
- subsistence support (monetary and non-monetary social benefits).

Active inclusion has to be implemented through an integrated approach to employment and social services, embedded in partnership structures. UNDP Kosovo works closely with public institutions of RK to stimulate an enabling environment for an effectively and efficiently operating labor market

UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) is implementing the second phase of a sub-regional project Promoting Inclusive Labour Market Solutions in the Western Balkans (ILMS II) to assist national actors in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia in their effort to enhance the inclusiveness of their labor markets. To achieve this, ILMS II promotes integrated approaches to employment and social policies, as well as collaborative practices in service provision between regional Public Employment Services (PESs) and CSWs, and with civil society organizations. In RK, ILMS II strongly supports institutionalizing collaborative forms of service delivery by EA and CSWs to ensure better coordination of social welfare and work integration services customized for individuals who face multiple and complex barriers to joining the labor market and of course, for the whole family. Currently, in RK there are around 25.000 families that are beneficiaries of Category II social assistance, and around 8.500 of them are the families of active jobseekers.

ILMS II addresses the above issues at central, local, and grassroots levels to impact policies and programmes pursued by the MFLT, working modalities of national and local level branches of EA and CSWs, but also social partners, private sector and civil society, with an ultimate objective of activation and improved social mobility of vulnerable people.

This objective will be achieved through the following interlinked outputs:

1. Employment Agency (EA) and Centers for Social Welfare (CSWs) have institutionalized models of integrated and user-centered provision of services for marginalized groups;
2. Local multi-stakeholder partnerships have the capacities and resources to develop and implement inclusive employment initiatives.

Description of the current status

At the moment, integrated support of employment and social services are hardly offered to able-to-work categories although, the legal and institutional arrangements are largely in place for collaborative practices between CSW and PES. The current design features of the social assistance (SA) programme create disincentives for (formal) work for able-bodied family members reducing their interest in (formal) work as well as demand for joint services by PES and CSW. The most important impediments are the rigid conditions applied during “entry” and “exit” from SAS even if the employment is for a very short term, as well as finding space for claiming that they are unfit for work when SAS beneficiaries are conditioned to take up jobs offered to them.

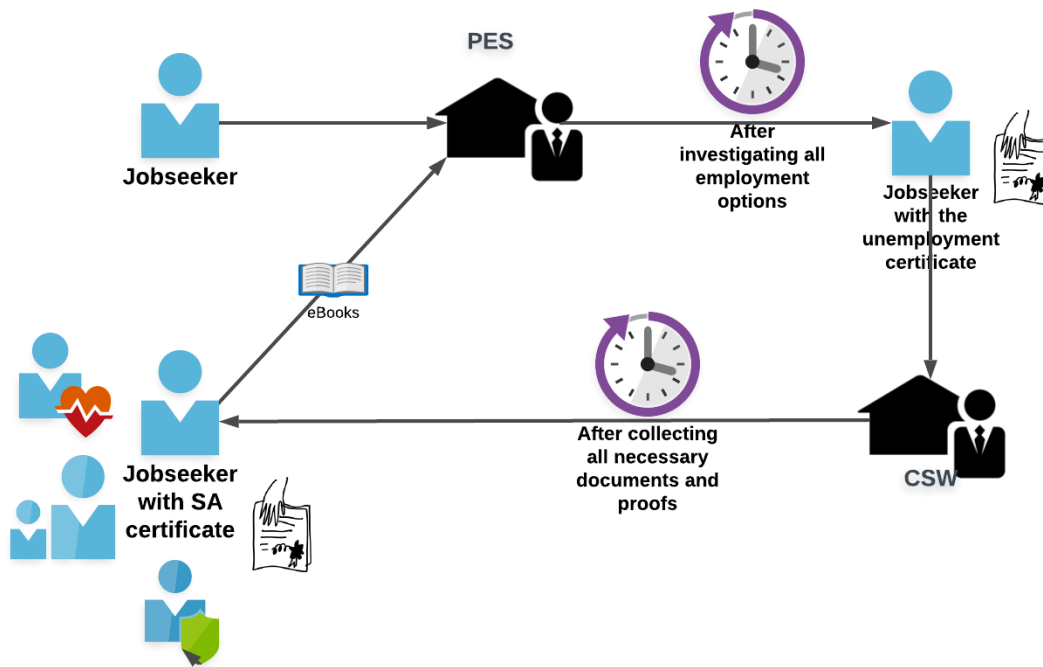
MLSW has a very detailed database on the social and family situation of SAS beneficiaries which CSWs complete during the application and verification process, while EA has a detailed database on motivation and labour market-related barriers that are completed during registration as well as updated during follow-up visits.

Around 6. 500 job seekers¹ who are also the beneficiaries of the social assistance benefits are obliged every 3 months to report to his/her PES and receive a certificate of unemployment status, which they then have to submit, every 6 months, to the CSW as evidence and prerequisite for

¹ <https://askapi.rks.gov.net/Custom/ed51b0c0-27fa-43d1-aa28-78f8441bde3b.pdf>

social assistance benefit. The symbolic procedure of the current steps needed for gaining the SAS for Category II is presented in the figure below:

Figure 1: Steps needed for gaining the SA for the Category II²



Regarding the provision of integrated services by CSWs and PESs, collaborative practices are still very weak, and the centralization of social services from year 2009 made this situation even worse. All these lead to the establishment of one joint integration platform that could be used by both parties at the same time as well as from other public institutions to enable real feedback about the status of the Category II user (if he works in the gray economy, where he lives, and other quality data).

² Jasna Vujnovic & Vebi Mujku, Kosovo 2020, UNDP report, Active Inclusion Integration Platform

There should be integration of databases between EA and CSW as a precondition for the implementation of ICMS which can be used for the assessment of clients, as well as during the preparation of a more holistic individual work activation and integration plans for more than 6.500 families with active job seekers family members.

1. ACTIVE INCLUSION INTEGRATION PLATFORM – FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

MFLT keeps a record of persons who are entitled to social benefits at CSWs (in SAS) – Category II beneficiaries. One of these benefits is the social assistance benefit (SAS), for which a person has to be regularly evidenced at the PES (in EMIS). On the other hand, PES (in EMIS) should have information on whether an unemployed person is entitled to SA benefits within its records.

Also, in the process of work activation of persons who are SAS beneficiaries, MFLT and PEA should exchange data on the steps taken in this process: Currently, these data are exchanged by paper and e-mail.

Because of all of this, there is a great need for all this information to be exchanged electronically, "online", at the moment when relevant events are happening, to enable individual monitoring for each beneficiary of the social assistance.

Active Inclusion Integration Platform (AIIP) should be established as a **separate module**, closely connected with both EMIS and SAS.

The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo is a public provider of services in the labor market, which aims to administer the labor market and implement employment and professional training policies. The users of the employment services are long-term unemployed persons, job seekers, employers, employees, and foreign nationals who are aiming for employment in Kosovo. All employment services, maternity leave as well and other services are offered through employment offices, within the territorial competence of the respective municipality, while professional training services in the field of employment, professional training and retraining, tailored for long-term unemployed persons, job seekers, employers, employees and foreign citizens who intend to be employed in Kosovo are offered in regional centers.

The Employment Agency has undertaken a series of reforms for the modernization of the Public Employment Services in Kosovo, towards the creation of a service adapted to the needs of the unemployed and jobseekers. Like the previous model, this model of public employment services has integrated all functions in the same service provider (from here on the advisor), enabling the unemployed, the job seeker in public services of employment to cooperate only with one counselor to receive all services: registration and profiling, counseling services for employment, career guidance, vocational training or mediation in employment, regulation of maternity leave procedures.

Recently, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo has created a new mechanism for the unemployed/jobseekers in the public employment services according to the difficulties they have to enter the labor market, as well as revised the existing model of providing services to jobseekers and employers integrating new services, tools, and schemes, with special emphasis on the connection with the beneficiaries of the Social Assistance Scheme belonging to the second category.

The term "employment services" includes activities related to information, searching, and finding jobs. It also means other services such as providing information on labor market trends, employment and career counseling, job search assistance, employment mediation, and intensive counseling for groups in need. These services are separate from the design and management of Active Labor Market Programs such as professional training, on-the-job training, work practice,

public works, etc., which are described in other manuals for the long-term unemployed. So the main objective of employment services is to increase the skills and prospects of the unemployed and to help them get employed as quickly as possible and thus contribute to the main objective which is the better functioning of the market of work at the local and national level.

The provision of employment services is offered for the following categories, such as:

- i. Registered jobseekers: The first group consists of any person seeking work between the ages of fifteen (15) and eighteen (18), persons working full-time or part-time and persons temporarily suspended from work, who are registered in the EARK online services system.
- ii. The registered unemployed: The second group consists of every person over eighteen (18) to sixty-four (64) years of age, unemployed and registered in EARK.
- iii. Registered employer: the natural or legal person who provides work to the employee and pays him the salary for the work or the services rendered, and who is registered in the Employment Office in person or the EARK online services system;

Services provided to the registered unemployed

The services offered to the unemployed registered in SIMP are as follows:

- Registration;
- Profiling;
- Employment counseling;
- Career counseling and referral to professional training;
- Mediation in regular employment;
- Individual employment plan;
- Mediation in active labor market measures.

Note: This category of unemployed registered in SIMP, to receive employment services, must meet the following conditions: a) no commercial entity or other legal entity is registered, or is not a co-owner in any commercial entity or any other legal entity; b) there is no farm registered in the

farm register at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; c) is not retired, or prematurely retired; d) is not a regular pupil or student; e) actively seeks work and is available for employment; f) is a citizen of the Republic of Kosovo and lives in Kosovo, is a foreign citizen or stateless person, if he has a temporary or permanent residence permit in the Republic of Kosovo; and g) is not registered in the employment office.

During the interview process, the unemployed person is registered in the Employment Management Information System, as well as categorized or profiled in one of the following 4 groups:

Group A - Group with low risk of becoming long-term unemployed;

Group B - Group with medium risk of becoming long-term unemployed;

Group C - Group with a high risk of becoming long-term unemployed;

Group D - High-risk group and beneficiary of the Social Assistance Scheme.

Programme, the Self-Employment Programme, and the On-the-Job Training Programme

ON THE JOB TRAINING A three-month training programme, guided by an individual plan agreed upon between the job-seeker and the private company; monitored by the trainers of Vocational Training Centres and implemented by the employment counselors with the support of the ALMP project team throughout the process. Programme aims to stimulate sustainable employment by identifying companies that have more potential to offer long-term employment for the beneficiaries of the Programme.

WAGE SUBSIDY A one-year employment programme, which subsidizes up to 50% of the employee's wage, over a six, nine or twelve-month period, based on the profile of the jobseekers (the ones with a higher risk of becoming long-term unemployed are subsidized for a longer period). The main aim of the Programme is to support and promote sustainable employment for the job seekers that benefit from the Programme.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT - The Programme provides start-up equipment packages, training, and mentoring for new jobseekers through a competitive process of selecting the best business ideas. The programme is implemented by the Employment Offices (EO) and Vocational Training Centres (VTC) with the support of the ALMP2 team, in line with the development priorities set by the Kosovo Employment Agency (KEA)³

³ Active Labour Market Programmes 2, UNDP

Table 2⁴: profiling of the unemployed

Group “A”	The group at low risk of becoming long-term unemployed
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 35-49 years old; ✓ Qualified; ✓ With work experience; ✓ Unemployed for less than 6 months; ✓ With technical skills accumulated in the sector and with skills in specific professions; ✓ With computer skills to use self-service tools; ✓ Ready for work; ✓ Active in the labor market; ✓ Fully motivated; ✓ Able to search for work independently; ✓ Physically healthy and without any other limitations
Testimonial examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employed job seeker; ✓ Newly unemployed
Group “B”	Medium risk group to become long-term unemployed
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25 - 34 years old; ✓ Qualified; ✓ Unemployed for less than 12 months; ✓ Little or no work experience for the recent graduate; ✓ With few technical skills in the sector and with few skills in specific professions; ✓ With medium computer skills to use self-service tools; ✓ Ready for work; ✓ Semi-active in the labor market; ✓ Not fully motivated; ✓ Semi-capable of looking for work independently; ✓ No other obstacles or slight obstacles to employment.
Testimonial examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A graduate who has just finished school; ✓ Worker dismissed from work and unable to find a job quickly; ✓ The woman who returns to work after maternity leave, etc

⁴ Handbook for employment service providers, Employment Agency

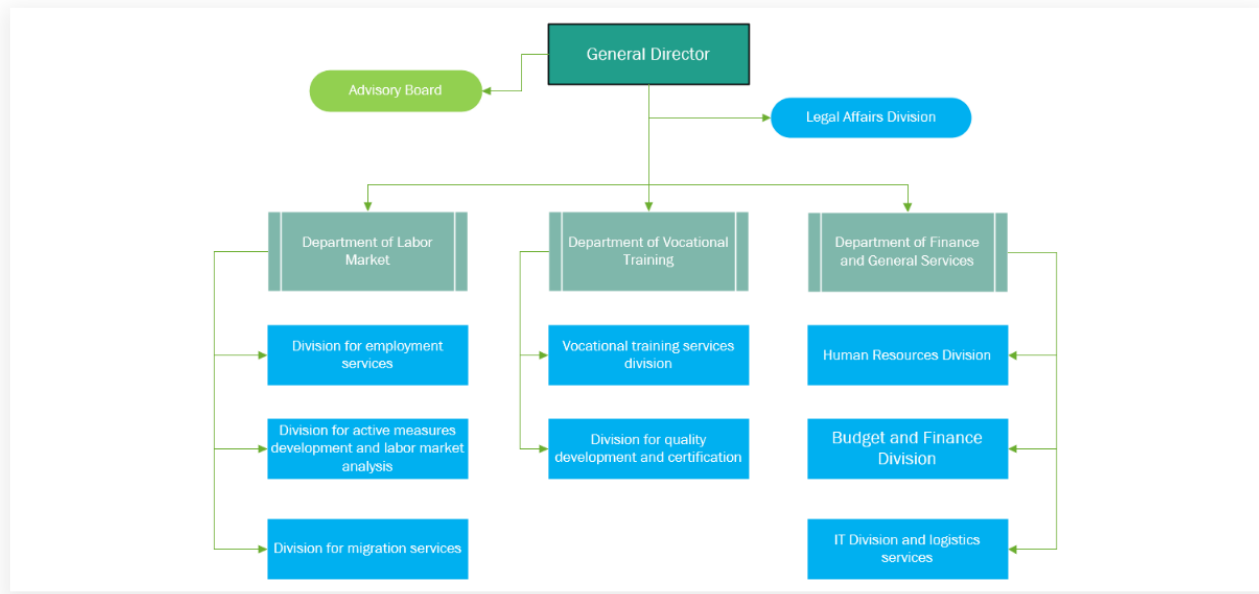
Group “C+D”	The group at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Over the age of 50 or under the age of 25; ✓ Unqualified, with low educational qualifications or with outdated skills; ✓ Unemployed for more than 12 months; ✓ Unrealistic aspirations for work and salary; ✓ No computer skills to use self-service tools; ✓ Not ready for work; ✓ Not active in the labor market; ✓ Unmotivated for work; ✓ Weak skills for independent job search; ✓ health problems or other problems (mobility, language) that affect the individual's employment; ✓ To both unemployed parents ✓ Children under the age of 5.
Testimonial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Long-term unemployed; ✓ Young, without educational preparation, no training, and unemployed; ✓ Person with disabilities; ✓ Ex-convict- ✓ Beneficiary of category II social assistance; ✓ The person who has had an alcohol addiction or suffers from other traumas (for example from domestic violence, etc.).

Note: Group D - High-risk group and beneficiary of the Social Assistance Scheme benefits when the services provided by the employment offices are completed.

Cases that refuse the job offered by the Employment Office, excluding one of the listed reasons: hospitalization, not notified by phone or e-mail, located in the vocational training center, location of the workplace is inappropriate, working hours are ineligible, and payment offered is lower than social assistance, refuses without any reason. After the second refusal for work and without one of the above-mentioned reasons, the unemployment certificate is not generated for the unemployed person and he is deactivated within EMIS

Figure 3⁵

Organizational Structure



STEPS FOR PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR JOB-SEEKERS AND THE UNEMPLOYED

Capacity building programs: Activation measures for social cases often include capacity building programs. These programs aim to increase the skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals and organizations working on social issues. Capacity-building initiatives can provide training workshops, mentoring programs, technical assistance, and resources to strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations to effectively address social challenges. By equipping individuals and organizations with the necessary tools and expertise, capacity-building programs enable them to implement sustainable solutions and contribute to long-term positive change.

In conclusion, social activism measures include a variety of strategies and actions aimed at addressing social issues and promoting positive change. Awareness campaigns, community mobilization efforts, policy advocacy, and capacity-building programs are among the key

⁵ Handbook for employment service providers, Employment Agency

activation measures used to engage individuals, communities, organizations, and governments in activities that contribute to the betterment of society.

The link between SAS beneficiaries and active labor measures

To connect beneficiaries of social assistance schemes with jobs through activation measures, several strategies can be implemented. These strategies aim to provide individuals with the support and resources needed to increase their employability and ease their transition into the labor market.

Here are some key steps that can be taken:

1. **Skills assessment and training:** The first step in connecting beneficiaries with jobs is to assess their existing skills and identify any gaps that need to be addressed. This can be done through skills assessments, interviews, or self-assessment tools. Once skills gaps are identified, appropriate training programs can be designed and implemented to equip beneficiaries with the skills needed for employment. These training programs may include vocational training, job-specific skills development, soft skills training, and entrepreneurship training.

2. **Job placement services:** To effectively connect beneficiaries with employment opportunities, it is essential to establish strong partnerships with employers and establish a network of employment services. These services may include job matching platforms, employment agencies, career counseling centers, and job fairs. By actively engaging with employers and understanding their employment needs, job placement services can help match beneficiaries' skills and qualifications with available job openings.

3. **Support Measures:** In addition to skills assessment and employment services, support measures are essential to ensure the successful integration of beneficiaries into the workforce. These measures may include mentoring programs, job training opportunities, wage subsidies for employers who hire beneficiaries, and workplace accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Providing ongoing support and guidance throughout the employment process can increase the chances of long-term job retention for beneficiaries.

4. **Entrepreneurship support:** For those beneficiaries who have an entrepreneurial mindset or wish to start their businesses, the provision of entrepreneurship support can be a valuable path to

economic empowerment. This support can include business development training, access to microfinance or small business loans, mentoring from successful entrepreneurs, and help navigating regulatory requirements.

5. Continuous monitoring and evaluation: To ensure the effectiveness of activation measures, it is essential to establish a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation. This includes tracking the progress of beneficiaries in terms of their employment outcomes, job retention rates, and overall satisfaction with the program. Regular feedback from beneficiaries, employers, and other stakeholders can help identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to activation measures.

Therefore, social activation measures are often offered alongside active labor market policies. They primarily include basic income support beneficiaries and often include a range or mix of types of programs offered to beneficiaries. Five types of programs can be defined:

- Counseling, monitoring, and placement agreements;
- Qualification or training programs;
- Work promotion schemes in the public and private sectors;
- Wage subsidies;
- and social programs

Some of these example projects contain interventions and activities such as counseling, psychological support, volunteering, or community activities. Only some of these examples (projects, programs, or other policy interventions) are formally evaluated with clear mention of their results and/or their actual effectiveness. More often they are evaluated less formally or evaluation is completely absent.

By implementing these strategies, beneficiaries of social assistance schemes can be effectively linked to employment opportunities through activation measures. It is important to note that specific implementation may vary depending on the context and resources available in each country or region.

When it comes to dealing with the issue of drug use and employment, several work activation measures can be implemented to support drug users in finding and maintaining employment. These measures aim to provide individuals with the support, resources, and opportunities needed to reintegrate into the workforce and lead productive lives. It is important to note that these measures should be part of a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs.

1. Vocational training programs: Vocational training programs play a crucial role in equipping drug users with the skills and knowledge needed to secure employment. These programs offer various training courses in various fields such as construction, hospitality, healthcare, and information technology. By providing practical skills training, vocational programs enable drug users to gain marketable skills that increase their chances of finding employment.

2. Job placement services: Employment services connect drug users with potential employers by acting as intermediaries between job seekers and businesses. These services help drug users identify suitable job opportunities based on their skills, interests, and qualifications. They also help with resume writing, interview preparation, and job search strategies. Job placement services can partner with local businesses to create job opportunities specifically tailored for drug users in recovery or treatment.

3. Workforce development programs: Workforce development programs focus on increasing the employability of drug users through various interventions. These programs may include life skills training, career counseling, financial literacy education, and mentoring opportunities. By addressing the personal and professional development needs of drug users, workforce development programs help them overcome barriers to employment and improve their chances for long-term success in the workforce.

4. Transitional Employment Programs: Transitional Employment Programs provide temporary work opportunities for drug users who face significant barriers to traditional employment due to their substance use history or lack of work experience. These programs typically offer supervised work placements in supportive environments where individuals can gain hands-on experience, build their resumes, and develop essential workplace skills. Transitional employment programs

often partner with local businesses or community organizations to create these temporary employment opportunities.

5. Job retention support: Job retention support is essential for drug users who have successfully secured employment but may face challenges in maintaining their jobs. This support can include ongoing counseling, mentoring, and access to resources that address issues such as workplace stress, relapse prevention, and conflict resolution. By providing ongoing support, job retention programs help drug users overcome barriers and maintain stable employment.

6. Legal protections and anti-discrimination policies: The implementation of legal protections and anti-discrimination policies is essential to ensure that drug users are not unfairly discriminated against in the employment process or during employment. These policies may prohibit employers from discriminating against individuals based on their past drug use or current participation in a treatment program. By promoting equal opportunities for drug users, these measures help reduce stigma and increase their chances of finding work.

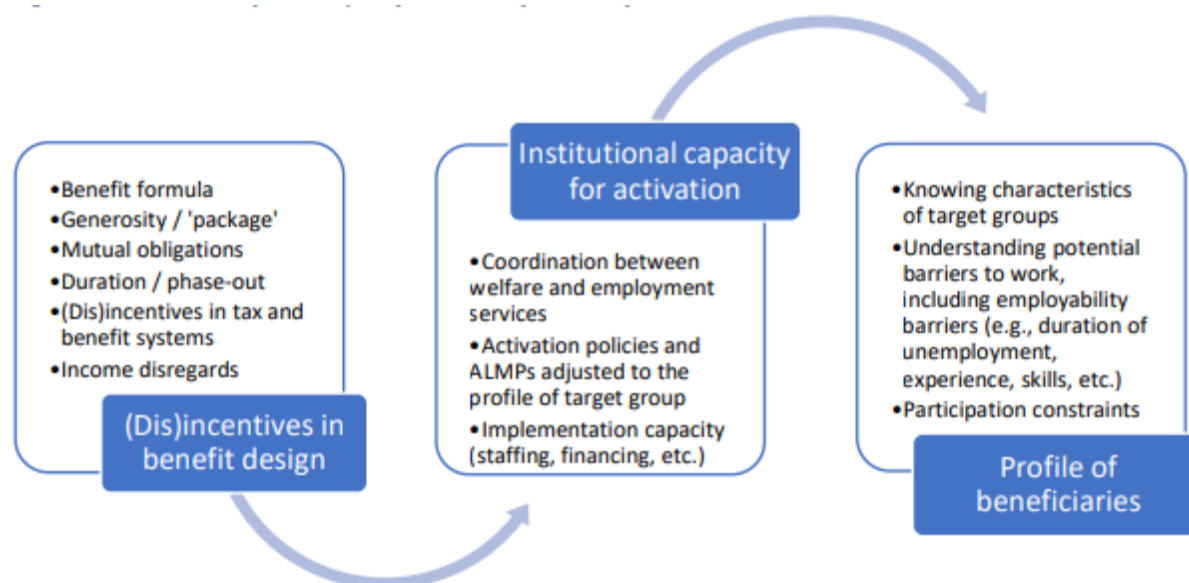
It is important to note that the effectiveness of these work activation measures may vary depending on individual circumstances, local resources, and the availability of support services. It is therefore essential that these measures are tailored to the specific needs of drug users in each community.

ACTIVATION

Social assistance reform, including in Southeastern Europe, has gradually shifted from a focus on targeting and coverage to a focus on activation measures. The so-called first-generation reforms of LRIS schemes typically involve improving the targeting and coverage of benefits, reducing leakage to the non-poor, reducing benefit fragmentation, and establishing unified registries of recipients of benefits and social services. The so-called second-generation reforms entail the creation of “smart” safety net programs that also focus on decreasing dependency on welfare among the LRIS recipients who can work and promoting their employability with a combination of incentive-based cash transfers and services. In other words, this process could be described as moving beyond “how to get the right people into the social assistance programs” toward “how to activate and help social assistance beneficiaries graduate from dependency on transfers.” Successful activation of social assistance beneficiaries requires several demand- and supply-side factors. These can be organized into three ‘building blocks’ (Figure):

- (i) (Dis)incentives to work in the design of social assistance benefits
- (ii) (ii) Institutional capacity for activation of SAS beneficiaries, and
- (iii) (iii) Profile of beneficiaries, including barriers to work.

Figure⁶: Framework of the analysis of activation of LRIS beneficiaries



(Dis) incentives to work in the design of social assistance benefits Work disincentives in SAS are on the reform agenda, and legislative changes have addressed them to some extent. Disincentives in SAS design and implementation were identified with the support of World Bank technical assistance⁷. SAS design changes were made with Law No. 04/L-096 to remove or reduce some of the generic disincentives, specifically:

- SAS is no longer a guaranteed minimum income benefit. The SAS benefit formula was changed from paying the difference between actual income and a certain threshold to paying a flat rate. This removed the work disincentive effect emerging from taxing away any additional income in full and immediately from the due amount.
- The previous eligibility formula, which encompassed an income and asset test combined with exclusion filters, was replaced with an income test and a PMT. The purpose of this reform was to create fewer disincentives for saving and asset accumulation compared to the previous asset test.

⁶ Source: This analytical framework has been used for the analysis of activation of LRIS beneficiaries in the Western Balkan countries in World Bank (2014).

⁷ 9 Gotcheva and Sundaram (2011); World Bank (2013) and World Bank (2014).

Notwithstanding reform and legislative changes, there remain elements of the SAS design that create disincentives to work. The main SAS-specific legal impediments include:

- SAS is accessible only to families with no or one family member who is capable of working. If, for example, a second family member becomes able to work (e.g., when a child turns 18 and is not in compulsory secondary education), or if the second adult no longer has caregiving obligations (e.g., because the youngest child in the family reaches 5 years of age, or an orphan cared for by the family reaches 15 years of age), then the family no longer qualifies for SAS.
- Working and receiving SAS exclude one another. Any formal job—even if sporadic or low-paid— makes the family of the working individual ineligible for SAS.

Other SAS design characteristics, which are common for several LRIS programs, also impact disincentives to work. These stem from the design of the eligibility criteria (e.g., treatment of earned income), the benefit formula, benefit generosity, sanctions in the case of non-compliance, and incentives to graduate.

There remains significant potential to enforce new incentives to work in the design of SAS. Most effective or powerful in terms of incentivizing work and activation is the treatment of earned incomes when determining eligibility for SAS, the possibility for disregard of particular fully or partially earned incomes, and gradual benefit phase out. Such features are already present in the design of certain LRIS schemes in Europe. Future reforms of the design of SAS should build on international experience to make it incentive-compatible and conducive to activating beneficiaries and overcoming benefit dependency.

There is also room to curtail the existing disincentives and strengthen the incentives that are already present in the design of the SAS. The following work incentives, although limited in scope, are embedded in the SAS design:

- Eligibility for SAS is linked to requirements for mandatory registration as unemployed / jobseeker with EARK, for taking up a job, training or participation in PWP when offered by EARK, and sanctions (termination of the unemployment registration and SAS) are applied in the case of non-compliance without a legitimate reason. Stricter requirements and sanctions are expected to have a stronger positive effect on the labor market participation of the able-to-work SAS recipients. They are the vehicle for linking the able-to-work SAS beneficiaries to the system of services for the unemployed and to active labor market programs and measures.

- SAS benefit amounts are not generous when compared to potential labor market earnings, thus incentivizing beneficiaries to pursue employment. The highest transfer value of SAS is 45.3 percent of the minimum wage, in the case of a single adult claimant / one-member family. The SAS transfer value per capita decreases significantly with increases in family size.
- The benefits and rights that are linked to SAS are not numerous and not generous compared to ‘packages’ associated with other LRIS programs. The combined generosity of SAS and the benefits and rights associated with SAS is not high compared to several LRIS programs in Western Balkan and EU countries

Institutional capacity for activation of SAS beneficiaries

Public financing for activation measures in Kosovo has been consistently low, thus constraining the government’s ability to serve and activate a large number of unemployed. Kosovo’s spending on ALMPs stood at 0.08 percent of GDP in 2016, a small fraction of the spending on pensions and social assistance. Despite high levels of inactivity and unemployment, public spending on employment services and active measures has remained almost the same or seen only minimal increases since 2009. Spending is also very low compared to other countries in the region. In particular, government spending is extremely low, making the availability of activation programs highly dependent on donor funding. Active measures reach only a small share of the registered unemployed (9.4 percent in 2017) and inactive. The total number of people placed in jobs through job matching and ALMPs is reported to be around 6,000, or approximately 6 percent of the registered unemployed

However, low funding of ALMPs has translated into several challenges limiting the functionality of the Employment Agency, in particular:

- Limited staff for ALMPs. The Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), which is responsible for ALMPs, operates as an independent body within the MFLT. The EARK operates labor market and vocational training departments at a central level, 38 employment offices in each of the Kosovo municipalities, and 8 regional vocational training centers. Given the limited number of employment counselors (92 counselors in 2017) relative to the number of registered

unemployed, the counselor-to-client ratio is above 1:1000. Moreover, many positions are unfilled (e.g., due to retirement), further exacerbating staffing problems.

- Lack of equipment. Regional and local employment offices often lack the necessary equipment and operating funds (e.g., for transportation, communication, and IT) to conduct their work effectively. This also negatively affects the quantity and quality of interactions with job seekers and employers.

Moreover, employment services and active measures are not yet sufficiently adapted to the needs of specific groups of jobseekers and their effectiveness is limited. Several groups of the unemployed, such as women or minorities, are currently underrepresented among beneficiaries of employment services and activation programs, reflecting failure to take their specific needs into account (e.g., targeted outreach, and specialized services). Moreover, several measures face design and implementation challenges, such as the lack of practical orientation and labor market relevance of vocational training. As a result, the available evidence suggests that the effectiveness of existing measures is limited.

While several reforms have been introduced in recent years, the progress in operationalizing them has been inconsistent. Many new processes have been introduced, such as profiling of registered unemployed into three risk categories; a new service delivery model that distinguishes between jobseekers (using online services) and registered unemployed served by employment offices; creation of an individual employment plan for those categorized at high risk of longer-term unemployment; an internal training system; and a performance measurement system for branch offices. However, not all of these changes have been fully institutionalized.

Moving forward, increasing the participation of vulnerable groups, including SAS beneficiaries, is reflected in EARK's strategy. The Policy for Employment Services 2019-2021 sets out the strategic objectives for the Employment Agency over the next years. These include:

1. increasing the effectiveness of employment services and active measures;
2. increasing the coverage of employment services and active measures; and
3. increasing the participation of vulnerable groups in EARK services⁸.

⁸ Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme Study Assessment and Reform Options, March 2019 World Bank

Table 4⁹ Number of SAS beneficiaries engaged in jobs during 2020-2023

Nr	Municipality	2020		2021		2022		2023 (01 Jan 2020 07 July 2023)		Total gender		Total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Deçan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Gjakovë	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	6
3	Gllgovc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Gjilan	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	9
5	Dragash	14	0	0	0	3	0	4	0	21	0	21
6	Istog	38	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	2	40
7	Kaçanik	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
8	Klinë	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	6	3	9
9	Fushë Kosovë	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
10	Kamenicë	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
11	Mitrovicë	13	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	2	16
12	Leposaviq	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Lipjan	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	15
14	Novobërdë	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	1	15
15	Obiliq	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	6
16	Rahovec	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
17	Pejë	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	4
18	Podujevë	17	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	6	23
19	Prishtinë	26	19	0	0	0	1	2	1	28	21	49
20	Prizren	57	5	1	0	2	0	7	4	67	9	76
21	Skenderaj	54	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	10	64
22	Shtime	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
23	Shtërpçë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Suharekë	24	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	25	4	29
25	Ferizaj	16	8	0	0	1	0	1	0	18	8	26

⁹ Information System for Employment Management, Employment Agency

26	Viti	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
27	Vushtrri	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
28	Zubin Potok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	Zveçan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	Malishevë	97	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	97	18	115
31	Junik	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	Mamushë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
33	Hani i Elezit	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
34	Graçanicë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35	Ranillug	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
36	Partesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37	Kllokot	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
38	North Mitrovica	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	456	82	4	4	7	2	15	5	482	93	575

Conclusion

Based on the large number of beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme in Kosovo, which during the years 2020-2023 was from 26,000 to 20,000 families, since last year the number of families benefiting from the social assistance scheme is decreasing, the number of 575 engaged personnel is not large. This also represents the fact that many families consider the benefit from the social assistance scheme to be a safe and guaranteed income, and avoid accepting offers from employment offices.

This approach requires an awareness of the beneficiary families, but also an increase of the professional capacities of the employment counselors and officials of the social assistance schemes in the Center for Social Work, for the work with the families benefiting from the social scheme, with special emphasis on the beneficiaries from the second category as an active job seeker

Table 5¹⁰ Vacancies within the Active Labor Market Measures – ALMP

Nr	Municipality	Number
1	Zubin Potok	15
2	Novobërdë	4
3	Obiliq	26
4	North Mitrovica	10
5	Ranillug	8
6	Mitrovicë	85
7	Shtërpcë	57
8	Zveçan	0
9	Klllokot	5
10	Fushë Kosovë	19
11	Vushtrri	241
12	Lipjan	26
13	Kaçanik	88
14	Klinë	140
15	Glllogovc	67
16	Skenderaj	95
17	Kamenicë	100
18	Malishevë	1378
19	Partesh	0
20	Hani i Elezit	124
21	Shtime	83
22	Leposaviq	0
23	Gjakovë	161
24	Podujevë	118
25	Rahovec	12
26	Pejë	38
27	Istog	104
28	Viti	107
29	Ferizaj	198
30	Dragash	142
31	Suharekë	52
32	Graçanicë	16
33	Deçan	23

¹⁰ Information System for Employment Management, Employment Agency 08.11.2023

34	Gjilan	125
35	Junik	5
36	Prishtinë	271
37	Prizren	143
38	Mamushë	1
	Total	4087

Comment: In this table, the data of job vacancies available for the unemployed as part of active labor market measures have been reported. This number is quite high, I take into account the number of beneficiaries of various social schemes and other repatriated personnel, who can be activated as part of active labor market measures.

Table 6 Regular job vacancies within Employment Agency of Kosovo

Nr	Municipality	Number
1	Zubin Potok	0
2	Novobërdë	0
3	Obiliq	69
4	North Mitrovica	124
5	Ranillug	4
6	Mitrovicë	621
7	Shtërpcë	51
8	Zveçan	4
9	Klllokot	5
10	Fushë Kosovë	240
11	Vushtrri	287
12	Lipjan	358
13	Kaçanik	134
14	Klinë	47
15	Glllogovc	116
16	Skenderaj	61
17	Kamenicë	152
18	Malishevë	135
19	Partesh	1
20	Hani i Elezit	34
21	Shtime	134
22	Leposaviq	0
23	Gjakovë	513
24	Podujevë	213
25	Rahovec	91
26	Pejë	236
27	Istog	66
28	Viti	158
29	Ferizaj	736
30	Dragash	13
31	Suharekë	37
32	Graçanicë	11
33	Deçan	156
34	Gjilan	168
35	Junik	80
36	Prishtinë	565
37	Prizren	176
38	Mamushë	1
	Total	5797

Comment: The number of 5,797 job vacancies, at this level of unemployment, makes us understand that a large number of people refuse work, which is available to everyone. Worrying is the fact when we make a comparison between the municipalities with the large number of beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme and the vacancies within that municipality. If we look at the municipalities of Mitrovica, Lipjan, Ferizaj, Pristina, Fushë Kosova, etc., which lead in terms of the number of families benefiting from the social scheme, and regular work engagement, we can conclude that we have some factors that need to be improved. The factors that are related mainly to the lack of sufficient staff of the Labor Inspectorate to combat informal employment, the work of social scheme officials regarding counseling, notification, control, and the incentive to engage in work and removal from the list of beneficiaries, the lack engagement of employment counselors about notification and engagement, lack of information on the type of work and working conditions through public information, punitive measures for those engaged in work without a contract in informal employment, punishment of businesses for engaging in work without a contract, improvement of payment amount, as many businesses continue to pay the minimum wage rate.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME (SAS)

The Center for Social Work based on the Law on the Social Assistance Scheme is responsible for providing services from the social assistance scheme and its types, determining the beneficiaries of social assistance for families in need, due to poverty, shocks from crises economic, natural disasters, global warming, epidemics, as well as other factors that affect a large number of people, cannot ensure the fulfillment of basic life needs, preservation of the integrity and social inclusion due to limited economic and financial opportunities, then the state offers support through social assistance programs to all families who consider themselves to be in a situation of need for material support.

The Center for Social Work within its organizational structure, in addition to the unit of professional social services, also has the unit of the social assistance scheme, which is managed by the leader of the social scheme and the staff engaged within the unit. Coordination between the staff of the social assistance scheme and social services is necessary, as well as the referral of cases, to raise the quality of life and provide the necessary services for each household.

Information sheet for the social assistance scheme

Your family must not have more than 0.5 Ha of land, must have this income, and must meet the criteria for one of the two categories

The first category includes families that have:

- People over 18 years of age with permanent disabilities and unable to work
- People over 65 years old
- Permanent guardians of persons with disabilities and over 65 years of age
- Persons up to the age of 14
- Persons between 15 and 18 years old who are in regular education
- Self-supporting parents with at least one (1) child under the age of 5

The second category includes:

- Families with one member able to work and
- With at least one child under the age of 5
- Who has in permanent care an orphan under the age of 15

If you think that your family meets the above criteria, you can submit a request to the Center for Social Work in the Municipality where you live.

These documents must be attached to your request for Social Assistance

- Declaration of the family union - not older than one month
- Letter of notification – for all family members over the age of 16
- Death certificates - for both parents of the orphaned family member or the partner of the dependent parent
- Declaration of unemployment – (a) for the applicant and family members aged 18 to 65 able to work, and/or (b) for family members aged 15 to 18 not regularly attending school medium
- Divorce certificate or official statement from the social services at the PSC
- Doctor's certificate for disability - of the applicant and/or family members - if the applicant and/or family member applies based on permanent disability
- Land cadaster certificate – of the applicant and family members who are 18 years old or older; details of deceased parents and/or guardians should also be included here
- Certificate from the relevant municipal body for the amount of property tax - of the applicant and family members who are 18 years old or older; details of deceased parents and/or guardians should also be included here
- The bill for the consumption of electricity in the residence where he lives
- Certification from the Center for Social Work of the initial permanent residence - for internally displaced persons in which it is stated that they do not receive social assistance in the Municipality from which they were displaced

- Coronation certificate for married persons in the family, especially for the husband (wife) of the applicant, if that person is included in the submitted application
- School certificate – for the applicant and family members aged 15 to 18 and attending regular schooling
- Motor vehicle circulation and insurance permit - used by the family only for domestic needs

If there is a reason, other documents will be required

Submission of a request for social assistance will be valid only if all members of your family are permanent residents of the Republic of Kosovo and have documentation issued by the Republic of Kosovo. Refugees, asylum seekers, and repatriates can also be beneficiaries of the Social Assistance Scheme.

The information in this section draws heavily on the recent capacity assessment of the SAS Units of Kosovo's CSW, which was implemented to provide recommendations regarding the capacity of CSWs to take on the responsibility of identifying beneficiaries of exemptions from Social Health Insurance (SHI) contributions. In the report (World Bank, 2018b), the SAS Units' capacity in terms of geographical distribution and coverage, human resources, physical equipment and infrastructure, current caseload, and other characteristics is evaluated and analyzed in light of this new mandate. Findings are informed by results from a quantitative staff survey, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and direct field observations.

The assessment identifies gaps and shortcomings in the implementation capacity of the CSWs' SAS Units, which affect the accuracy of beneficiary identification. Capacity constraints in the SAS Units are related to:

- Understaffed SAS Units. According to legislation, there should be at least three staff members in a SAS Unit to administer the PMT survey and fill and sign Form A3. However, the number of staff members in a unit ranges between one and eleven. Three CSWs operate the SAS scheme with only one staff member who is responsible for accepting applications and re-applications, carrying out verification, inputting data in the SAS system, handling complaints, and reporting to MLSW and the municipal authorities. In eight other CSWs, just two SAS staff are employed.

- Only a limited number of SAS staff can use the SAS IT database and there is an overall shortage of staff with data management skills. As many as 68 percent of SAS staff work with paper files only, and 32 percent report having no personal computers in the workplace. These gaps lower the productivity of the respective SAS unit. Most of the IT work is handled by one or two database operators in each unit. Furthermore, a significant number of staff is satisfied with the current division of labor where only dedicated database operators work with the SAS IT system.

- Unfulfilled training needs. Although SAS officials have substantial work experience with 75 percent of staff having worked for the CSWs for more than ten years, they report significant training needs on (i) the targeting system, (ii) using the SAS database, and (iii) the new law and by-laws. Training needs were particularly pronounced when the new SAS registry and the PMT formula were introduced in 2014. Although the training was delivered in the form of instructions for two staff per CSW, it was not sufficient to ensure efficient and uniform implementation of the PMT across CSW administration and full use of the SAS IT system's capacity.

- Insufficient technology, equipment, and other forms of physical infrastructure. There is a shortage of a sufficient number of rooms, office furniture, modern IT equipment, reliable internet connectivity, and vehicles necessary for the management of SAS cases and the administration of the PMT questionnaires. Another challenge related to physical infrastructure is that office space is not organized in ways that allow confidentiality when discussing applicants' cases

Low salaries of SAS staff. The salary coefficient that is assigned to staff working in CSWs by the Ministry of Public Administration, which determines entry wage and the salary curve, is low (professional 3) compared to other government entities. This can impede the recruitment of educated and experienced professionals, and lower the motivation of existing staff, especially in the context of limited opportunities for professional development.

- The SAS staff faces challenges in filling out the PMT questionnaire (Form A3). This relates in part to the relevance of indicators, which was discussed in the context of the SAS design (content of Form A3), and to inaccurate assessment practices. Other challenges relate to the format and the user-friendliness of the PMT form.¹¹

¹¹ March 2019, World Bank Kosovo, Social Assistance Scheme Study Assessment and Reform Options,

The issues with assessing poverty status in the field and filling out Form A3 could lead to significant exclusion and inclusion errors. One way of their reduction is to strengthen grievance and redress procedures in the CSWs and MLSW. Currently, the CSWs mostly facilitate referring complaints to the second instance (MLSW) which increases administrative burden and delays case resolution. Another reason for exclusion error is the absence of proactivity in the identification of potential SAS beneficiaries. Social workers have no incentives and resources for active identification and are not empowered to reach out to municipal authorities and local communities in search of potentially eligible SAS cases.

In addition, there is a widespread perception among SAS staff of a voluminous caseload, whereas the actual caseload in most cases is below the recommended caseload and low in international comparison. Contrary to these perceptions, administrative data shows that only three municipalities exceed the recommended caseload (number of SAS direct beneficiaries per SAS staff which includes both managers and SAS officials) of 250 cases per staff

Administrative Instruction regulates the procedures for registration and provision of employment services for the unemployed who apply to the Social Assistance Scheme in the second category.

REGISTRATION OF UNEMPLOYED WITH EMPLOYMENT OFFICES

Registration procedures for unemployed persons are conducted following the requirements of the Law on Registration and Provision of Services for the Unemployed, Jobseekers, and Employers.

Every unemployed person has the right to register with the Employment Offices, to receive employment services, if they meet the following conditions:

- are not registered as a commercial entity or other legal entity, or are not co-owners in any commercial entity or any other legal entity;
- have no farm registered in the farm register with the relevant Ministry;
- are not in retirement or early retirement;
- are not regular students;
- are actively looking for a job and are available for employment;

- are a citizen of the Republic of Kosovo and live in Kosovo, are a foreign citizen or a stateless person, if they have a temporary or permanent residence permit in the Republic of Kosovo;
- are not registered with the Employment Office.

The registration of the unemployed is performed in the Employment Offices which operate within the EARK. For registration, the unemployed must register in person at the Employment Offices according to their place of residence and must submit the following documents, or apply through the electronic platform and attach the following scanned documents

- ✓ 4.1. valid ID card;
- ✓ 4.2. evidence of schooling;
- ✓ 4.3. evidence of eventually completed training.

The Employment Offices perform the registration of unemployed persons based on the applicants' statements, after verifying the data submitted in hard copy or electronic form.

The register of the unemployed includes:

- ✓ 6.1. personal data;
- ✓ 6.2. education and training data;
- ✓ 6.3. work experience data;
- ✓ 6.4. professional interest;
- ✓ 6.5. any other information that is directly related to the mediation for the unemployed.

The collection, storage, processing, and communication of personal data of the unemployed registered by the Employment Offices, is performed by the legislation in force for the protection of personal data. Employment Offices ensure and document the consent of any unemployed person before the publication, dissemination, communication, and submission of personal information to employers. The registered unemployed person has the right to see his/her data which are kept in the database of the Employment Offices, and to request the completion and correction of the data, if eventually there is any error or irregularity, or if any update is needed.

Provision of Employment Services for Registered Unemployed

1. Employment Offices provide services to the registered unemployed, based on an assessment of their needs, such as:

- Provide labor market information;
- Provide information on services and measures offered by the Employment Offices;
- professional counseling;
- employment mediation;
- professional assistance for job search;
- career guidance and providing lifelong learning opportunities based on their needs;
- preparation of the Individual Employment Plan;
- taking a statement under oath that the person is unemployed;
- mediation for employment abroad;
- work clubs;
- job fairs;
- other measures related to employment services.

Employment Offices offer the following active labor market measures for registered unemployed, based on their needs assessment, as well as for registered employers:

- employment subsidies;
- on-the-job training;
- vocational training and recognition of prior learning;
- internships;
- self-employment and promotion of entrepreneurship;
- public works; and
- other measures related to the labor market.

The Employment Office issues an Unemployment Certificate that the unemployed need to apply for the second category social assistance scheme. The Unemployment Certificate is generated through the Employment Management Information System. The certificate will have a serial

number and the possibility of third-party verification through direct access to the EMIS system. The CSW is offered access to the Unemployment Certificate and the option of direct download from the Employment Management Information System of the Employment Office. The Unemployment Certification includes the personal data of the unemployed jobseeker, the procedures conducted for mediation for regular employment, and the ALMMs. The Employment Office is responsible for providing employment and vocational training services to all persons registered as unemployed, prioritizing those in the second category of the SAS. The Employment Office implements the Regulation on ALMMs for every unemployed person.

Obligations of Registered Unemployed

The obligations of the registered unemployed are:

- to appear at the Employment Office to be informed about employment opportunities and to receive employment services at least once every three (3) months;
- to appear at the Employment Office for any call from the Employment Office, to be informed about new employment opportunities and active labor market measures;
- not to refuse employment and active labor market measures offered by Employment Offices;
- to undertake all activities arising from the individual employment plan;
- to actively seek employment; and
- to notify any change that affects the realization or loss of the right to the status of registered unemployed, no later than fifteen (15) days from the day when the change has occurred.

Removal from Active Jobseeker Records and Placement in Passive Records

Employment Offices shall cease to keep active records of the registered unemployed if they:

- do not present themselves at the Employment Offices twice in a row within six (3+3) months;

- establish employment relations;
- register a business or engage in self-employment activities;
- become regular students;
- twice refuse the mediation offered for suitable employment;
- twice refuse to join an active measure or terminate it without reason;
- refuse to look for work in the labor market actively.
- refuse to implement the activities of the individual employment plan, or do not adhere to the individual plan;
- the temporary or permanent residence permit of a foreign citizen is terminated.

The registered unemployed active record in the database of active jobseekers can also be removed at his/her request.

In the case of transition to the passive records, the person cannot be issued an Unemployment Certificate.

With the change of employment status, the unemployed can return to the active records of jobseekers.

Registered Unemployed

For this administrative instruction, the registered unemployed include:

Any person aged eighteen (18) to sixty-four (64) years old, unemployed, looking for a job and registered with the EARK; In the sense of this administrative instruction, a registered jobseeker is also considered: Any jobseeker looking for work from the age of fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) years old under Article 3, Para. 1.2 Of Law No.05/L-077. Students seeking part-time work under Article 9, Para. 3 of Law No.05/L-077.

Contacting SAS Unemployed Beneficiaries

SAS beneficiaries will be contacted for work in any case where there are offers from employers. For each job, the unemployed beneficiaries of the SAS that match the professional offers and present themselves to the Employment Offices are contacted. The contact with the unemployed

will be made based on the contact info he/she has submitted upon registration with the Employment Offices, telephone number, or email address.

The unemployed will be invited for jobs for which they have professional training and which they have submitted when applying to the EO, according to the attached evidence. According to job offers, the EO will also invite the unemployed without professional training.

In employment calls, Employment Offices will prioritize beneficiaries of the second category from the social assistance scheme.

Refusal of the Offer by Unemployed Jobseekers

The unemployed person who has been offered a job has the right to refuse a job offer, once. The unemployed person who refuses the job for the first time will be placed at the bottom of the list and will be contacted again after all other unemployed people have been contacted based on the prescribed criteria.

For unemployed persons who refuse a job for the second time, the reasons for the refusal of the offered job are evidenced in the Unemployment Certificate. The certificate will have a distinctive sign identifying that the person has twice refused the job offered. A person who has twice refused a job offer, for 3 months is not eligible to apply to be a SAS beneficiary in the second category.

Exemptions to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article are allowed for an unemployed person who at the time of contact had any of the following reasons, and who will not be considered to have refused the job offer until the moment of termination of these reasons:

Hospitalization; Detention or serving a prison sentence; maternal leave; any ongoing vocational training in accredited programs by the National Qualifications Authority.

Upon verification, the EO may accept the following reasons and causes that will not be considered as refusal of the job offer:

Unsuitable workplace location; Inadequate working hours; Offered payment is lower than social assistance

The following will be considered as refusal of the job offer:

The unemployed person does not reply to phone calls or e-mails from the EO; Refuses the offer without any of the acceptable reasons according to this article; Refuses, the EO does not accept the evidence submitted as a reason by the unemployed.

The reasons set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this article are evidenced as follows:

Evidence from the doctor that the jobseeker is temporarily in medical treatment or hospitalized at the time of the call for work; Evidence from the Kosovo Correctional Service;

Birth certificate of the child; Evidence from the institution where vocational training is provided; It is a long distance and travel expenses cannot be covered; Lack of regular transport lines, which prevents the jobseeker from arriving on time at work; The offered payment is evidenced with the offer of the employer; Evidence regarding the time of the phone call or e-mail;

Are entered in the refusal list and are placed at the bottom of the list after the first refusal, and are categorized in the second group for pre-removal. While at the second refusal, they are removed from the list of beneficiaries of social assistance schemes.

The EO verifies the documents and other evidence submitted by the unemployed according to Paragraph 6 of this Article, which are stored in their file. In case they justify the reasons presented by the unemployed, the EO will consider them valid and will act according to the requirements of this article. If the submitted documents do not justify the presented reasons, are not issued by the competent body, or do not meet the other conditions required by law, the EO will reject the reasons provided in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this article.

The documents and other evidence provided by this article must be submitted within the required deadlines.

Active Job Search for SAS Unemployed Beneficiaries

The unemployed, under the Law on the SAS, is a family member who is actively seeking employment, is registered as unemployed with the Employment Office, and has signed the unemployment statement at the Employment Office.

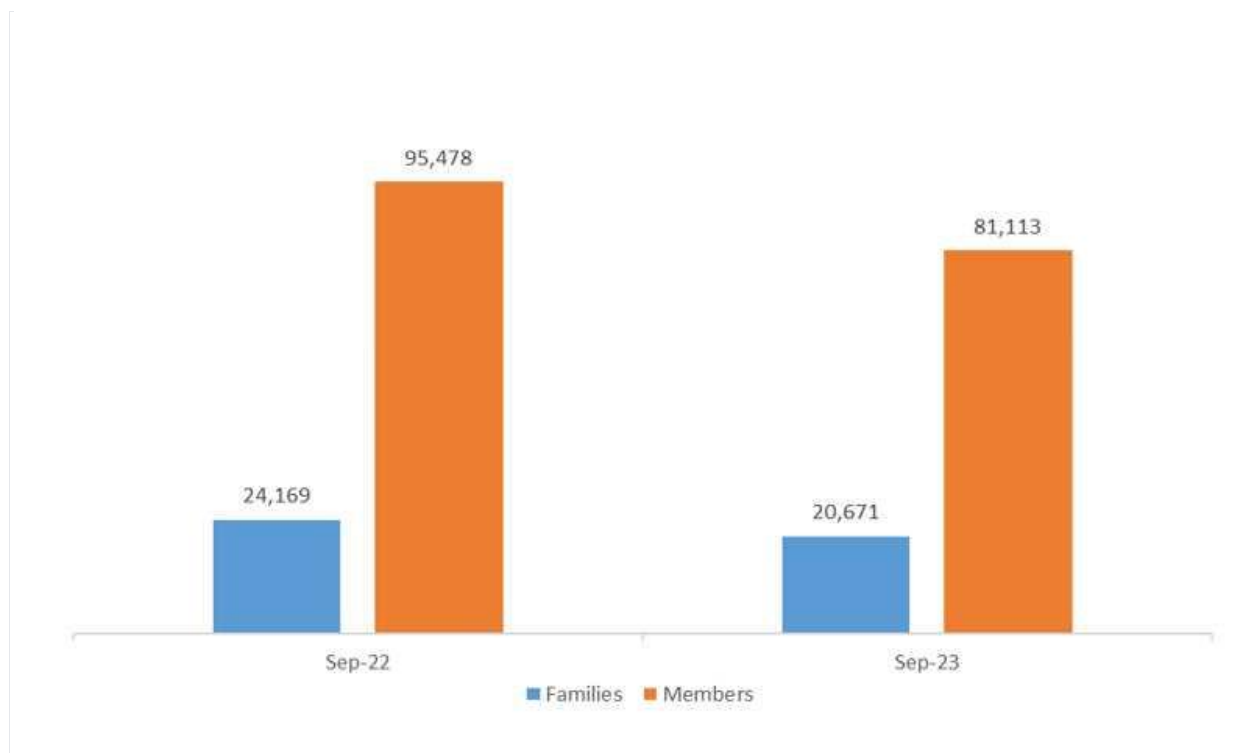
All family members within the second category must be dependent, as defined in Article 2, Para 2.7 of Law No. 2003/15, as amended by Law No. 04/L-096, or the only family member who can work, and is registered as unemployed with the Employment Office. The unemployment certificate issued by the EO is valid for six months.

The Employment Office, in cooperation with the CSW, uses the integrated information module for all users of the second social assistance category, according to real-time profiling within the information system.

The Employment Office has direct access to the register of the unemployed who are beneficiaries of social assistance.¹² The number of beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme has decreased in September 2023, compared to September 2022

In September 2023, 20 671 families with a total of 81 113 members benefited from the social assistance scheme, where compared to the same period of the previous year, which was 24 169 families with a total of 95 478 members, a decrease in the number of beneficiary families is observed from this scheme for 3 498 or 14.5%.

Number of beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme¹³



¹² Administrative instruction (MFLT) on registration procedures and provision of employment services for the unemployed applicants to the social assistance scheme

¹³ Kosovo Agency of Statistics Nov 2023

DECREASE IN BENEFICIARIES FROM PENSION SCHEMES, COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR

In September 2023, compared to September 2022, there was a decrease in the number of beneficiaries from the disability pension scheme (-18.0%); Trepça pension scheme (-18.1%); scheme for family pensions (-10.1%); old-contribution-payer pension scheme (-0.8%); scheme for families of martyrs and war invalids (-1.6%).

Increase in beneficiaries from pension schemes, compared to the previous year

In September 2023, compared to September 2022, there was an increase in the number of beneficiaries from the Basic age pension scheme (5.8%); the scheme for material support to families with children with special needs/disabilities (14.9%); the pension scheme for the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) (10.9%); pension scheme for paraplegic and tetraplegic persons (12.2%); pension scheme for persons with special needs (6.2%); compensation scheme for education workers who worked during the school year 1990/91 to the school year 1998/99 (5.4%); compensation scheme for blind people (0.6%); the pension scheme of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) (3.0%); a scheme for war veterans (-0.2%)¹⁴.

¹⁴ <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Releases/Details/7608>

Number of beneficiaries of pension schemes and other social welfare schemes¹⁵

Beneficiaries of pensions and other social schemes	Month/Year	
	09/2022	09/2023
Basic age pensions	140 800	149 009
Old-contribution-payer pensions	48 456	48 078
Pensions for persons with special needs/disabilities	18 998	20 183
Pensions of Trepca miners	1 803	1 476
Pensions of the Kosovo Security Forces	677	751
Pensions of the Kosovo Protection Corps	1 267	1 305
Scheme of the blind	1 823	1 834
Family pensions	3 311	2 975
Disability pensions	61	50
Paraplegic and Tetraplegic pensions	2 537	2 846
Compensation scheme for education workers for the years 90/91 to 98/99	12 749	13 441
Pensions of families of war martyrs and invalids	13 148	12 934
Veterans	36 780	36 866
Scheme for financial support to families with children with special needs	2 776	3 190

¹⁵ Ibid

Among the many tasks and responsibilities of the Labor Market Department are the development of new practices for the provision of services to employers, and the assessment of training needs for the provision of services, mediation, and career guidance.

Also, within the Employment Services Division, the Labor Market Department offers professional support to Employment Offices in building technical capacities, developing analyses and researches on developments and careers in the labor market, and publishing them. On the other hand, Employment Offices are responsible for registering, keeping records, and updating information about job seekers, providing information and counseling services to the unemployed and jobseekers, as well as supporting them in career guidance and learning throughout life based on the assessment of their needs. Employment offices are also responsible for the preparation of individual employment plans for members of vulnerable groups, as well as assisting with mediation, with proposals for training and measures and active programs for persons in employment.

Due to traditional gender roles and a lack of social infrastructure, women are more likely to remain unemployed in the long term. According to the Kosovo Women's Network, investing in social care and infrastructure can create more jobs and improve the well-being of more citizens, including both women and men. Such investments are integral to robust and gender-equal economic growth.

Stereotypes about 'women's jobs' versus 'men's jobs' impair jobseekers' understanding of their interests and skills when looking for/applying for a job, influencing them to create interest constraints and their abilities. Employment counselors need to keep in mind that despite the norm, women and men are willing to do jobs that are not stereotypically appropriate for their gender. Once we provide them with those opportunities and, even better, once we promote such choices, it will be easier to break harmful gender stereotypes.

Stereotypes intersect and this has direct consequences. Example: In the region of Gjakova, among 668 persons recognized as persons with disabilities (PWD) of working age, only 14 (two women)

were employed in municipal public institutions, while four (one woman and three men) were employed in civil society organizations (CSOs), mainly working with others with PWD

Referring to data from the Employment Agency, during 2023 the category of Persons with Disabilities received counseling and employment services. The data show that 12 people were registered, of which 8 were men and 4 were women.

If we refer to mediation in employment, 5 people with disabilities have benefited from the mediation program during 2023, 3 men and 2 women¹⁶.

Discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation appears in the Kosovo market and the region. Representatives of the LGBTI+ community claim that they are discriminated against in employment, they find it difficult to find work as waiters because "persons with a more feminine appearance do not fit the stereotypical 'masculine' image of a waiter"¹⁷

Vocational Training Centers - Prishtina

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare through the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo manages eight Vocational Training Centers (VTC) which are concentrated in seven Regions of the Republic of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica) with 69 workshops and 30 different professions. In these centers is done the training and retraining of persons who are registered as jobseekers, unemployed, and those who receive career guidance services, at all Employment offices in municipalities.

Vocational training includes two sub-measures, such as (i) Institutional training in Vocational Training Centers and (ii) Combined training (VTC and company).

- Institutional training means the training provided by the 8 Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) that operate under the umbrella of EARK. Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) provide training for the unemployed and jobseekers for a given profession for free focusing

¹⁶ November 2023, Employment Management Information System, Employment Agency of Kosovo

¹⁷ Rrjeti i Grave të Kosovës, Diskriminimi në baza gjinore dhe punësimi në Ballkanin Perëndimor, 2022. Burimi: https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Gender-based-Discrimination-and-Labour-in-WB_2022-1.pdf

on the application of practical skills and knowledge using teaching in different cabinets. The purpose of institutional training is to enable or enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective performance within a profession. Enabling participants to gain additional knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform work efficiently. Training in VTCs in this way aims to increase the perspective of the participants in employment or maintaining their employment.

- Combined training means cooperation with companies for the inclusion of the unemployed and jobseekers in vocational training, where the purpose of organizing this component is to provide better vocational training services, through training in partnership with businesses, which enables the continuation of candidates in VTC modules that have more theoretical content, while modules in which practical work predominates, are developed in enterprises where for this part, the candidate is provided by VTC with theoretical teaching materials and instructions which are used during the demonstration of concrete work tasks which are performed under the supervision of a professional worker in the enterprise. This component of training is quite advanced because the candidate during the implementation of the training program faces concrete tasks of the job and achieves competencies in work tasks at a much higher level than he would achieve with engagement only in VTC, which is also why practical demonstration of job duties is enabled, real working conditions cannot be offered as they are offered in the enterprise.

The training system in the Vocational Training Centers is quite flexible, modular, and based on the individual skills of the candidate. The duration of the training is 3-6 months. The candidate undergoes the test after each module that takes place as well as the final test and after the training receives a certificate on the competencies taken. The trainings are 30% theory and 70% practice.¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://apr.krs-gov.net/Content/Agency/Index>

Table 19 Poverty of Families per Municipalities

Nr	Municipality	Number of families	Number of beneficiaries	Number of population	Average of beneficiaries per family	Poverty per Municipality
1	Deçan	314	1239	42755	3,95	35
2	Gjakovë	1094	4392	94924	4,01	22
3	Gllgovc	963	4271	61939	4,44	15
4	Gjilan	577	2126	77630	3,68	37
5	Dragash	355	1123	34034	3,16	30
6	Istog	371	1590	41397	4,29	26
7	Kaçanik	687	2879	34988	4,19	12
8	Klinë	800	3288	40913	4,11	12
9	Fushë Kosovë	877	3790	40432	4,32	11
10	Kamenicë	435	1622	28017	3,73	17
11	Mitrovicë	2131	8672	69866	4,07	8
12	Leposaviq	260	620	13174	2,38	21
13	Lipjan	1163	4979	58601	4,28	12
14	Novobërdë	359	1236	7157	3,44	6
15	Obiliq	619	2609	18419	4,21	7
16	Rahovec	587	2459	57575	4,19	23
17	Pejë	1034	3904	99073	3,78	25
18	Podujevë	798	3638	83018	4,56	23
19	Prishtinë	1152	4370	220323	3,79	50
20	Prizren	694	2470	195881	3,56	79
21	Skenderaj	767	3378	53277	4,40	16
22	Shtime	296	1346	27779	4,55	21
23	Shtërpcë	213	718	6580	3,37	9
24	Suharekë	442	1931	58878	4,37	30
25	Ferizaj	885	3576	107378	4,04	30
26	Viti	384	1656	48290	4,31	29

27	Vushtrri	1291	5609	63473	4,34	11
28	Zubin Potok	641	1473	6650	2,30	5
29	Zveçan	340	780	7235	2,29	9
30	Malishevë	687	3201	58154	4,66	18
31	Junik	49	169	6404	3,45	38
32	Mamushë	18	70	5949	3,89	85
33	Hani i Elezit	121	507	10171	4,19	20
34	Graçanicë	91	359	12149	3,95	34
35	Ranillug	177	480	3706	2,71	8
36	Partesh	32	92	1683	2,88	18
37	Kllokot	84	262	2718	3,12	10
38	North Mitrovica	588	1569	11987	2,67	8
	Total	22376	88453	1812577	3,77	

Comment table Poverty of families per Municipalities:

This table presents data by Municipality, the number of families from the social assistance scheme, the number of persons within families benefiting from social assistance, the number of the population within each Municipality, including data on the averages of beneficiary families according to the Municipality and the number of members within the families.

Table²⁰ Size of the family member SNS beneficiaries

Nr	Municipality	Number of beneficiaries	Number of population	Average of beneficiary members per family
1	Zveçan	780	7235	2,29
2	Zubin Potok	1473	6650	2,30
3	Leposaviq	620	13174	2,38
4	North Mitrovica	1569	11987	2,67
5	Ranillug	480	3706	2,71
6	Partesh	92	1683	2,88
7	Klllokot	262	2718	3,12
8	Dragash	1123	34034	3,16
9	Shtërpcë	718	6580	3,37
10	Novobërdë	1236	7157	3,44
11	Junik	169	6404	3,45
12	Prizren	2470	195881	3,56
13	Gjilan	2126	77630	3,68
14	Kamenicë	1622	28017	3,73
15	Total	14740	402856	3,77
16	Pejë	3904	99073	3,78
17	Prishtinë	4370	220323	3,79
18	Mamushë	70	5949	3,89
19	Graçanicë	359	12149	3,95
20	Deçan	1239	42755	3,95
21	Gjakovë	4392	94924	4,01
22	Ferizaj	3576	107378	4,04
23	Mitrovicë	8672	69866	4,07
24	Klinë	3288	40913	4,11
25	Rahovec	2459	57575	4,19
26	Hani i Elezit	507	10171	4,19
27	Kaçanik	2879	34988	4,19
28	Obiliq	2609	18419	4,21
29	Lipjan	4979	58601	4,28

²⁰ Kosovo Agency of Statistics Nov 2023

30	Istog	1590	41397	4,29
31	Viti	1656	48290	4,31
32	Fushë Kosovë	3790	40432	4,32
33	Vushtrri	5609	63473	4,34
34	Suharekë	1931	58878	4,37
35	Skenderaj	3378	53277	4,40
36	Glllogovc	4271	61939	4,44
37	Shtime	1346	27779	4,55
38	Podujevë	3638	83018	4,56
39	Malishevë	3201	58154	4,66
	Average			3,88

Comment Table 3 **Size of the family member SNS beneficiaries**

In this table, data are presented according to the size of the family, according to the number of members. The municipalities of Malisheva, Podujeva, Shtime, Glllogovc, and Skenderaj lead with the largest number of members per family. The municipalities with the smallest number of beneficiaries within the family benefiting from the social assistance scheme are Zvecan, Zubin Potok, North Mitrovica, Leposaviç, Ranilugu, etc., that is, mainly the municipalities inhabited by Serbian people.

Table 4. According to the degree of poverty

Nr	Municipality	Poverty member per Municipality
1	Zubin Potok	5
2	Novobërdë	6
3	Obiliq	7
4	North Mitrovica	8
5	Ranillug	8
6	Mitrovicë	8
7	Shtërpcë	9
8	Zveçan	9
9	Kllokot	10
10	Fushë Kosovë	11
11	Vushtrri	11
12	Lipjan	12
13	Kaçanik	12
14	Klinë	12
15	Glogovc	15
16	Skenderaj	16
17	Kamenicë	17
18	Malishevë	18
19	Partesh	18
20	Hani i Elezit	20
21	Shtime	21
22	Leposaviq	21
23	Gjakovë	22
24	Podujevë	23
25	Rahovec	23
26	Pejë	25
27	Istog	26
28	Viti	29
29	Ferizaj	30
30	Dragash	30
31	Suharekë	30
32	Graçanicë	34

33	Deçan	35
34	Gjilan	37
35	Junik	38
36	Prishtinë	50
37	Prizren	79
38	Mamushë	85
	Average	23

Comment Table: According to the degree of poverty

This table presents the data according to the number of residents who benefit from the social scheme according to the municipalities. According to the presented table, the worst situation is in the Municipality of Zubin Potok, Novo Berde, Obiliq, Mitrovica, and several other small municipalities.

The situation is much better in large municipalities such as Prizren, Pristina, Mamusha, Juniku, and Gjilan. This also shows the overview of the municipalities, how developed they are, and how many jobs they create, whether in administration, agriculture, tourism, etc.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Personalized approach:** Activation policies that take a personalized approach, tailoring support to individual needs and goals, be more effective than one-size-fits-all approaches (Kamper, 2017). This includes considering factors such as the individual's preferences, abilities, and aspirations when developing their support plan.
2. **Flexible support:** Providing flexible support that can be adjusted as needed has been found to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Hart, 2018). This includes providing ongoing support and accommodations to maintain employment, as well as providing resources for job training and education.
3. **Collaborative approach:** Collaboration between service providers, employers, and policy makers has been identified as critical to successful activation policies (OECD, 2017). This includes working together to identify employment opportunities, providing training and support, and addressing any barriers to employment.
4. **Technology-based interventions:** Technology-based interventions, such as online job boards and virtual mentoring programs, have been found to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Garrett et al., 2017). These interventions can help to overcome the barriers of geographic and social isolation, as well as provide access to work opportunities and support.
5. **Holistic approach:** Activation policies that take a holistic approach, taking into account the overall well-being and quality of life of the individual, be more effective than those that focus only on employment outcomes (Muñoz et al., 2017). This includes considering factors such as housing, transport, and social connections when developing support plans.

Activation policies in the field of social care and employment refer to a series of measures and strategies aimed at promoting the integration of individuals into the labor market by ensuring their access to social care services. These policies are designed to address the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, and those at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Applying interdisciplinary research on activation policies in the field of social care and employment involves a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to address the challenges faced by individuals seeking social care support while also promoting their integration into the labor market. Activation policies aim to provide individuals with the tools, resources, and support needed to increase their employability, improve their skills, and ultimately secure sustainable employment.

Activation policies refer to a range of measures and interventions implemented by governments and social welfare agencies to promote active participation in the labor market and reduce dependency on social welfare benefits. These policies recognize that work is not only an economic necessity, but also a means to promote social inclusion, personal development, and well-being.

Implementing interdisciplinary research on activation policies involves collaboration between different actors, including policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and service providers. This collaborative effort aims to gather evidence-based knowledge, share best practices, and develop effective strategies to increase the effectiveness of activation policies in the context of social care and employment.

A key aspect of implementing interdisciplinary research on activation policies is data collection and analysis. This includes the collection of quantitative and qualitative data on various aspects related to social care and employment, such as employment rates, educational attainment, skills gaps, barriers to employment, and the impact of various policy interventions. By analyzing this data, researchers can identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement in existing activation policies.

Another important component is policy evaluation. Evaluating the impact of activation policies helps policymakers understand what works and what doesn't in terms of promoting the integration of social care beneficiaries into the labor market. This evaluation process involves evaluating the results of various policy interventions, identifying factors or barriers to success, and making evidence-based recommendations for policy improvements.

Moreover, implementing interdisciplinary research on activation policies requires knowledge sharing between different countries or regions. By sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices across borders, policymakers can gain valuable insights into successful activation

policies implemented elsewhere. This exchange of knowledge can help design and implement effective policies tailored to specific social care and employment contexts.

In addition to data collection, policy evaluation, and knowledge sharing, implementing interdisciplinary research on activation policies also involves stakeholder engagement. Engagement with different stakeholders, including social care beneficiaries, employers, trade unions, and civil society organizations, ensures that the perspectives and needs of different stakeholders are taken into account when designing and implementing activation policies. This participatory approach helps create a sense of ownership and legitimacy for policies, increasing their chances of success.

In general, the implementation of cross-cutting research on activation policies in the field of social care and employment is a complex and multifaceted process. It requires a combination of data collection, policy evaluation, and knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement to develop evidence-based strategies that effectively promote the integration of social care recipients into the labor market.

Activation policies usually include a combination of economic, social, and labor market interventions aimed at increasing the employability of individuals, providing them with appropriate support and training, and creating opportunities for sustainable employment. The underlying principle is to empower individuals to participate actively in society and improve their well-being through work.

A key aspect of activation policies is active labor market policies (ALMP). The ALMP includes several measures aimed at increasing the employability of individuals and facilitating their transition into employment. These measures may include job search assistance, vocational training programs, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship support, and public works schemes. By providing targeted support and resources, ALMPs help individuals gain the skills and qualifications needed to secure sustainable employment.

In addition to ALMP, activation policies also focus on social care services that complement labor market interventions. Social care services include a wide range of supports aimed at meeting the basic needs of individuals, enhancing their well-being, and promoting their social inclusion. These services may include health care, housing assistance, childcare support, disability benefits, and

other forms of social assistance. By providing access to these services, activation policies aim to remove barriers that may prevent individuals from participating in the labor market.

Implementation of activation policies requires a comprehensive approach involving many actors such as government agencies, employers, trade unions, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. Cooperation between these actors is essential for effective policy design and implementation.

Research on activation policies in the field of social care and employment has provided valuable insights into their impact and effectiveness. Numerous studies have examined the outcomes of various activation measures and their implications for individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

One area of research focuses on the effectiveness of ALMP in improving employment outcomes. Studies have shown that well-designed and properly implemented ALMPs can lead to positive employment effects, especially for disadvantaged groups. For example, vocational training programs have been found to improve individuals' skills and increase their chances of finding stable employment. Similarly, wage subsidies have been effective in encouraging employers to hire individuals from vulnerable groups.

The poverty rate in Kosovo The poverty rate in Kosovo has been falling continuously since the post-war years. In the first poverty assessment, made in 2000, the WB findings showed that over half of the population (50.3%) lived in poverty, while 11.9% of the population lived in extreme poverty. Seven years later, the levels of poverty had marked a small decrease, or 45% of the population lived in poverty, while extreme poverty had increased to 15%. The most recent data published by the Kosovo Statistics Agency (KSA), those for 2017, show that the poverty rate in Kosovo was 18% (those living on 1.85 euros per day), while extreme poverty was 5.1% (those living on 1.31 euros per day). The Covid-19 pandemic, which appeared also in Kosovo, in 2020, caused the poverty rate to increase during 2020 but marked a decrease in 2021. According to the World Bank, poverty in Kosovo at the end of 2021 is 20.9%. The increase in consumer prices and the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine is expected to increase poverty in Kosovo even more. But even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the price crisis, the monthly allowance for families receiving social assistance was small and insufficient to lift them out of poverty. If we are based on the monthly allowance based on the size of the family and the 2017 poverty rate of 1.85 euros

per day, it turns out that all families with two or more members continue to remain poor even after receiving social assistance.

Another area of research explores the interaction between activation policies and social care services. It is widely recognized that access to social care services can play a crucial role in enabling individuals to participate in the labor market. For example, affordable, quality childcare services can help parents, especially single parents, balance work and family responsibilities. Accessible healthcare services can also contribute to maintaining individuals' physical and mental well-being, which is essential for sustainable employment.

Furthermore, research has highlighted the importance of tailoring activation policies to the specific needs and circumstances of different target groups. For example, individuals with disabilities may require personalized support and reasonable accommodations to overcome barriers to employment. Similarly, older workers can benefit from targeted retraining programs that address their specific skills gaps and ease their transition to new job opportunities.

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on evidence-based policymaking in the field of activation policies. Policymakers are increasingly relying on rigorous research findings to inform the design and implementation of effective interventions.

This approach involves evaluating the impact of different policy measures through randomized control trials, longitudinal studies, and comparative analyses. By identifying what works and what doesn't, policymakers can make informed decisions about resource allocation and program improvement.

In conclusion, activation policies in the field of social care and employment aim to promote the integration of individuals in the labor market by guaranteeing their access to social care services. These policies include a combination of economic, social, and labor market interventions, including active labor market policies and social care support. Research on activation policies has provided valuable insights into their effectiveness, highlighting the importance of tailored interventions, the interaction between labor market measures and social care services, and evidence-based policy-making.

Activist measures for social issues refer to strategies and actions taken to address social issues and promote positive change within a society. These measures aim to engage individuals, communities, organizations, and governments in activities that contribute to the betterment of society. Activation

measures can include a wide range of initiatives, including awareness campaigns, community mobilization efforts, policy advocacy, and capacity building programs.

Awareness campaigns: A common activation measure for social cases is the implementation of awareness campaigns. These campaigns are designed to educate the public about specific social issues, raise awareness, and encourage individuals to take action. They often use various communication channels such as television, radio, print media, social media platforms, and public events to disseminate information and engage with target audiences. Awareness campaigns can focus on a wide range of topics such as human rights, gender equality, environmental conservation, mental health, poverty alleviation, and many more.

Community mobilization: Another important measure of activation for social cases is community mobilization. This approach involves empowering communities to identify their needs and work collectively towards addressing them. Community mobilization aims to foster active participation and cooperation among community members, enabling them to take ownership of the issues that affect their lives. It often involves organizing community meetings, workshops, and forums where individuals can voice their concerns, share ideas, and develop collective solutions. Community mobilization can lead to the formation of local committees or organizations that continue to work on social issues even after external support ends.

Policy Advocacy: Activist measures for social cases also include policy advocacy efforts. Policy advocacy aims to influence decision-makers at different levels (local, regional, national) to adopt policies that effectively address social issues. Advocacy activities may include conducting research and analysis to gather evidence supporting specific policy changes, engaging in lobbying efforts with policymakers, organizing public demonstrations or protests to raise awareness of an issue, or advocating for legislative reform through legal channels. Policy advocacy plays a crucial role in shaping the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern social issues, ensuring that they are aligned with the needs and aspirations of affected communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Developing personalized support plans: Service providers and policymakers need to work together to develop personalized support plans that take into account the individual's unique needs, goals, and circumstances.
- Provide flexible support: Support should be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, including ongoing support and accommodations to maintain employment.
- Collaborate with stakeholders: Collaboration between service providers, employers, and policy makers is essential for successful activation policies, including identifying job opportunities, providing training and support, and addressing any barriers to employment.
- Use of technology: Technology-based interventions, such as online job boards and virtual mentoring programs, can improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and should be considered as part of activation policies.
- Take a holistic approach: Activation policies should consider the overall well-being and quality of life of the individual, including factors such as housing, transport, and social connections.
- To recommend social assistance beneficiaries apply for activation measures at the employment office, it is important to understand the purpose and benefits of these measures. Enabling measures are designed to help individuals receiving welfare to improve their employability and transition into stable employment. These measures aim to provide beneficiaries with the skills, training, and support needed to overcome barriers to employment.
- Understanding the needs of beneficiaries: Before recommending activation measures, it is essential to assess the specific needs and circumstances of welfare recipients. This can be done through individual interviews or assessments carried out by social workers or employment counselors. By understanding their skills, level of education, work experience, and personal circumstances, it becomes easier to identify appropriate activation measures that match their goals and aspirations.

- Providing information about activation measures: Once the needs assessment has been completed, it is essential to inform the beneficiaries about the various activation measures available through the job office. This can be done through information sessions, brochures, websites, or one-on-one counseling sessions. The information should include details about the different types of measures available, the eligibility criteria, the application process, the duration of the program, and the possible benefits.
- Adaptation of recommendations to individual circumstances: Each beneficiary may have unique circumstances that must be considered when recommending activation measures. For example, some individuals may need additional support in terms of childcare or transportation services. Others may benefit from specific training programs or vocational courses that match their interests and skills. By considering these individual factors, recommendations can be tailored to maximize the chances of success.
- Highlighting benefits and incentives: It is important to highlight the benefits and incentives associated with participating in activation measures. These may include financial incentives such as additional bonuses or rewards for completing certain programs. In addition, beneficiaries can gain valuable skills, certifications, or work experience that can enhance their employability and increase their chances of finding stable employment.
- Help with the application process: To facilitate the application process, it is essential to assist beneficiaries. This may include helping them to complete the necessary documents, collecting the required documents, and submitting the application to the employment office. Providing guidance and support throughout the process can alleviate any potential obstacles or challenges that beneficiaries may face.
- Tracking and monitoring: Once beneficiaries have applied for activation measures, it is important to maintain regular contact and provide ongoing support. This may include monitoring their progress, addressing any concerns or issues that arise, and providing additional guidance or resources as needed. Regular follow-up ensures that beneficiaries stay engaged and motivated throughout the program.
- In conclusion, recommending activation measures for social assistance beneficiaries requires a comprehensive understanding of their needs, providing information on available measures, tailoring recommendations to individual circumstances, highlighting benefits

and incentives, assisting in the application process, and providing ongoing support. By following these steps, welfare recipients can be effectively guided towards enabling measures that can improve their employability and lead to sustainable employment.

- In line with the challenges addressed above, these are a set of recommendations to move forward beyond the position of women in the labor market and gender equality:
- Reforms aimed at employment should be gender responsive and based on the principle of fair development and growth of the labor market.
- Decent employment should be a goal, with effective mechanisms in case of violations of labor rights.
- Development of financial products that suit the needs of women.
- Strengthening the role of the education system in creating a workforce whose skills match the requirements of the private sector.
- Improved way of career counseling and better career guidance in schools.
- Development of the necessary legal and physical infrastructure to help women reconcile work and family obligations.
- Strengthening the role of the media in eliminating gender stereotypes in non-traditional professions.
- Greater contribution from civil society organizations in shaping a positive attitude and support of the family and society towards the employment of women.

Disclaimer:

The report was developed by Vebi Mujku, an expert for labor market policies and social assistance. All information, data, and positions in this report do not represent the orientations, positions, and policies of Labyrinth, Juventas, MNE-KOS, and the European Union.