



One advice away from professional career Prishtina Career Guidance Center

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Training Centre PRAKTIK Profile of Arlind Gashi



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Each year approximately 1400 students graduate from VET schools based in Prishtina. While most of them continue to get higher level education, approximately 40% of them enter immediately into labour market.

Fast transition from education to job placement for graduates of VET schools from now on will be facilitated by the newly established Prishtina Career Guidance Center managed by Municipality of Prishtina with the support of EYE.

Merita Mustafa, Coordinator of PCGC, says that "we have just become fully operational now, while we are now engaging with private sector to promote our center and thus become a trustful partner in identifying young Kosovar professionals who are seeking jobs".

This kind of dialogue is something new for Municipality and private sector and she is adamant that by the end of next year the center will serve more than 50 businesses that will be ready to identify and hire new professionals through PCGC and their professional career advising services.

Training Centre PRAKTIK Profile of Arlind Gashi

We encountered the 25-year-old man, Arlind Gashi, in one of the many cafes in Peja in the pedestrians' area.

After graduating in computer science three years ago, he soon came to understand that there was no job waiting for him after graduation.

"It is often said that the IT sector is the future of Kosovo," explains Arlind and adds that "unfortunately, I found that my studies are not enough to get immediately involved in this field".

Arlind says that during the time when he was studying, around 180 students had 12 computers available to them, thus showing unfavourable conditions for learning.

One of the educational programs supported by EYE, called PRAKTIK, tries to fill this gap in the educational system.



Merita Mustafa-Coordinator of PCGC

Rind Vrapci was the first student to benefit from the services of this centre. Thanks to the mediation of the counselors, he has now a full time job with Meridian Express as Chef Assistant. In addition, few other students managed to get internships with private companies in Prishtina.

"Thanks to EYE support, we are now analyzing the structure of the private companies in the municipality of Prishtina. We want to find out which sector employs most of our youth, and what the future potential for youth

employment in Prishtina is. We are also building a database of businesses that we want to establish long term partnership with for accommodating their skill needs" Said Merita Mustafa as she was overseeing the data entry in the new database.

These are small initial steps towards accomplishing PCGC's goal to accommodate each year hundreds of students from VET school into job market. Merita has one mission: more jobs for young Prishtinalis!

After several months unemployed, Arlind finished a course in PRAKTIK last autumn and learned how to configure computers, install programs, eliminate errors, and create networks and program small applications.

An integral part of quarterly education is the practical work - very important for each student who aspire professional career.

Thus, Arlind was employed soon under contract at the Kujtesa Company. "Education at the PRAKTIK opened doors for me," he says. And again, he dares to dream even more:

"I may continue my education in journalism after some years, and maybe transfer to the media part of Kujtesa" and comment the goals of Xherdan Shaqiri, in his favourite team Inter Milan.



Arlind Gashi (center-down)

Meridian Express Increasing revenues by investing in people

Meridian Express recently has opened its largest retail store in Prishtina. The Meridian Express chain, now available in almost every neighborhood in Prishtina, comes with a new concept and wider services for its customers: the take away food corner managed by an ex-Chef of one of the most popular restaurants in the capital of Prishtina.

In the same facilities of the new location Meridian has opened the first modern training facility for its employees. "Our employees now get trained in our in-house training facility on various programs that are tailored for our employer's needs" says Abdylkerim Ratkoceri, HR Director at Meridian Express.

One of the new tools applied by Abdylkerim's department is the Performance Measurement software and the Certified Management Program for all the management levels within the company.

These new tools have contributed to the enhancement of performance and are providing the HR department valuable feedback from its employees. All of these changes within the company were designed and implemented thanks to the important advice from a very experienced consultancy company with global experience in retail industry.



Abdylkerim Ratkoceri (left)-HR Director at Meridian Express

The HR Director also explains the shift in Meridian Express policy on the importance of staff trainings, "Investing on staff is expensive but only short term, we have seen amazing results on the performance of our staff after trainings.

Investing on people is our new policy that brings a great return on investment in the long term". Meanwhile already 50 employees already went through regular trainings in their new training center.

This shift in Meridian's corporate culture was not an easy process to undertake as generally in Kosovo most businesses tend to focus investments in more tangible features such as assets or marketing.

Meridian Express instead followed different suit after attending Human Capital Development Initiative supported by EYE. This program gathered HR managers and owners of the leading companies in Kosovo.

According to Abdylkerim, HCDI has offered a fantastic venue to incite the interest of the owners of the large companies to focus their investment in staff while strengthening Human Resource Departments.

Abdylkerim says that "nothing will stop our quest to invest in people as it is crucial to develop modern business practices, with fewer costs, higher revenues, and increased staff productivity".

Establishing industrial boards within high education institutions is continuing

Dialogue between high education institutions and private sector is strengthening and spreading throughout Kosovo as a model to address the issue of skills supply according to real market needs.

In yearly June, 2015, after University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" University recommended all its faculties to establish industrial boards, next institution that applied this model with EYE support was University of "Haxhi Zeka" (UHZ) in Peja.

The Industrial Board established by this UHZ includes the largest businesses operating in Peja such as Elkos Group,

Devolli Corporation, and so on. On the same day board has approved its statute and elected its first Chairman, Mr. Fatos Islami from Elkos Group.

Meanwhile Industrial Board of UHZ will cooperate closely with another university from Finland to design best practices that will allow private sector and UHZ implement joint activities enabling students and future job seekers for faster transition into labor market.

Some of the initial activities overseen by the newly appointed Board include enabling students of UHZ to use advance research labs based in the factories owned by members of the board.

Zanfina's dream

Young Kosovars face an uncertain future even with a university degree under their belt. With high unemployment rate amongst youth in Kosovo,

EYE is supporting entities that offer training courses and internships to help young people, especially women, to get a foothold in the IT industry.

"My dream is to become a self-employed software engineer and start my own company," says 22-year-old Zanfina Gashi, who graduated with a Computer Science degree at the beginning of this year.

Kosovo's IT industry has huge potential, yet even a university degree offers no guarantee of a steady career in a very competitive labour market with scarce and unsustainable job openings in offer.

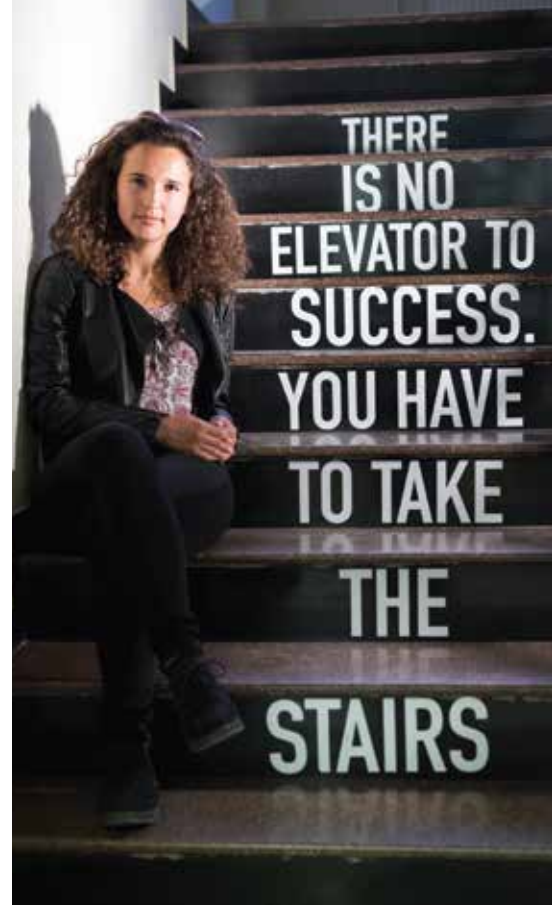
The curricula of such training programs are not tailored to the market, and the courses do little to prepare students for the realities of the industry. Zanfina was lucky. Recently she started working for a software company and there is a good chance that they will take her on fulltime.

"I work in a wonderful young team at Softdom, and I'm learning lots of new things. Our company is due to expand into Germany and Switzerland," she says happily. She found the job through a further education scheme called "Females in IT" (FIT). There, Zanfina is able to put into practice what she learned on the courses she attended at the American University in Pristina.

She is one of fifty young women whose FIT training is being supported by EYE. "I'd like to get some work experience abroad soon too," says Zanfina. She has a clear vision for her future, but she doesn't just think about herself. "Staying abroad isn't an option for me. I love my country and I'd like to use my skills to boost economic development here."

If her dream comes true and she does set up her own software company, then she wants to make sure that others benefit from it too.

"It would make me very happy to be able to give people here a job and the prospect of a better life."



Zanfina Gashi-attended Females in IT training program



Centre for Career Development

The University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" with new services for students

University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" has concluded cooperation agreement with EYE in November 2013 in support of the Centre for Career Development (CCD) and for its professional capacity building in order to provide its students the opportunity for personal and professional development through information, counselling and career guidance. The goals of this collaboration are to increase the number of users of services of the CCD and students' easier and faster connection to the labour market.

During 2014, the project EYE invested in the realization of study visits to the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor in Slovenia, and the University of Graz in Austria, to create new opportunities for the exchange of experiences. In 2014 has also conducted training for the Competence Development of the Career Counsellors aimed at professional capacity

building of the career counsellors conforming to international standards of competence.

Finally, with the help of EYE, the Development Strategy and Action Plan for UPHP CDC for the period 2015-2016 have been compiled.

In a statement issued by CCD specifically for the new edition of EYE Newsletter, amongst other things it is stated that "information sharing and job matching are some of the services that have improved recently, including the online services such as the Virtual Career Platform".

Through the planned interventions in this strategy, the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", for students of sixteen academic units will create the opportunity of a new access to the labour market, and this mediation will be realized through extracurricular preparations such as: training for development of soft skills and students' competencies, counselling, and information on labour market.

The main goal of the UPHP remains the professional preparation of students, their inclusion in the labour market and economic and social development through education platform that this institution offers.

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Implementers:



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