

Promoting Social Inclusion & Supporting Disadvantaged Communities

Our Aim:



Create a sustainable and a socially inclusive labour market in Kosovo

Our Approach:

1. Set clear aims, goals and determine target groups.
2. Define how and why exclusion happens and develop a guiding Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy to be mainstreamed in all of the project's interventions.
3. Support the creation of non-formal trainings, job creation, and job matching for disadvantaged communities.
4. Analyze why complex systems are failing to serve the most at-risk communities and perform skills-gap analyses to understand the local market.
5. Develop a vision for how you will aid the development of inclusive and sustainable labor market initiatives that benefit the disadvantaged.
6. Identify partners and design project interventions to help them create a) inclusive and sustainable models of non-formal training programs which serve disadvantaged groups or are run by them, b) inclusive career guidance information, and c) inclusive job matching services.
7. Continually monitor quantitative and qualitative data to see if inclusivity indicators are being met, and learn from both successes and mistakes.

Context

Social exclusion is the process in which individuals or people are systematically blocked from (or denied full access to) various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group, and which are fundamental to social integration and observance of human rights within that particular group (such as employment).

Promoting and investing in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion is not just the right thing to do, it is also smart thing to do. Not only does inclusion have a positive impact for those who are traditionally marginalized, it also positively impacts the wider economy and benefits the whole society.

When we first started out at EYE, the youth unemployment in Kosovo was showing deeply concerning figures. In 2016, for example, young people in Kosovo were twice more likely to be unemployed than adults, and among persons aged 15-24 in the labour force, 52.4 % were unemployed. Women also were—and still are—an at risk group, as their unemployment was much higher (65.4 %) than that of young men (47.2%). This is why we worked toward skilling and employing women in particular. But, we quickly came to realize that even among this group there are sub-groups that have different needs, interests and priorities, and who are excluded from various reasons. We identified three main sub-groups which required specific attention:

- Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, who are excluded based on their identity and whose exclusion is transmitted from generation to generation, multiply discriminated and most at risk of poverty;
- The Kosovo Serb community, who live in a segregated society in Kosovo as a post-conflict situation, and Serbian youth mostly were not benefiting from Kosovo existing ecosystem (training providers, private job matching platform, private sector, etc.);
- Women, who are substantially underrepresented in the labour market.

Our Approach

EYE's overall goal has been to contribute to a dynamic and socially inclusive labor market that provides more decent jobs to young people in Kosovo. We designed the EYE to be a gender-aware and social equity-aware project. After conducting analyses to get a clear picture of why selected systems are failing to serve the disadvantaged, we created our Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy to lay out a roadmap of how to achieve our social inclusion goals and ensure sustainability of specific activities in order to serve the disadvantaged beyond our project support. This helped us design interventions which support sustainable, socially inclusive social change.

From the get-go, we placed a special focus on initiatives that foster the inclusion of disadvantaged groups. Aiming to improve career outlooks for non-majority communities and their standing in society, we designed interventions that would improve existing and new non-formal training opportunities for disadvantaged groups, supported the market to offer more inclusive career guidance choices for non-majority communities, helped the media produce inclusive media coverage of labour market topics, gave rise to inclusive job-matching services, and supported businesses and social enterprises services who are benefiting or led by non-majority groups.



Two disadvantaged groups were particularly hard to reach: The Serbian community, and the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Whereas the Serbian community in Kosovo showed great aptitude in the field of ICT—particularly youth—they were

1. Either not at all or very weakly connected to the Kosovo ICT ecosystem (which operates mostly in Albanian language and in the capital, Prishtina), and
2. There were limited non-formal ICT training initiatives in Serb-majority areas in Kosovo. This is why we started building capacities of local players to empower Serbian youth with ICT skills. In a similar fashion, we supported the beekeeping sector in Serb-majority areas, specifically in the production of beeswax plates, which are one of the essential product for the entire sector. Local beekeepers had to travel hundreds of kilometres to acquire these plates in the past, so we supported Nukleus Beekeepers Association to produce its own beeswax, and impact beekeeper sector both in Serbian majority municipality of Gracanica, and wider region in Kosovo.

Given the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities' orientation towards seasonal work and a preference for daily pays, we our approach was to seek out and fund job-matching initiative for seasonal/agricultural daily work payment. Based on findings that significant number of RAE members had a traditional aptitude for welding, that there is high market demand for certified welders, we also designed interventions to instill welding skills and support certification of members of this community, which would significantly improve their chances for employment.



Key Results

- Supported initiatives which encourage equal participation of women and men, and particularly initiatives designed for non-majority communities and women.
- Partnered with local partners to link the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities with the welding profession and jobs, and we also worked with Serbian youth in Gracanica to improve their IT competencies.
- Created tailor-made career guidance activities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth, and also made more inclusive (and available in the Serbian language) the most popular career guidance platform and the most widely visited job-matching platform, Busulla.com and PortalPune, respectively.
- Created practical job-matching schemes which matched Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities with seasonal work.
- Fostered the inclusion of more female consultants to become part of the most widely visited consultancy platform-Konsulence.org,
- Supported numerous businesses and social enterprises led by disadvantaged groups to consolidate and become sustainable actors in the Kosovo labor market system.
- Supported non-formal training programs for women to encourage them choose careers in traditionally men-dominated fields such as ICT, graphic design, and media.

Successes

- Matched hundreds of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian men and women with jobs as we built trust between majority Albanian agriculture employers and jobseekers of said communities. We helped these communities become trained, skilled, and certified in welding, as well as receive jobs after training. After one training cohort with 16 Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian members, all participants got certified as welders, 7 of whom immediately received employment afterwards.
- Fostered the creation of non-formal ICT trainings for Serbian youth in their native language, and supported the Kosovo Serb beekeeping ecosystem, helping them create sustainable business models helping local actors produce their own beeswax.
- Built capacity of local stakeholders that are coming from disadvantaged groups, helped them create sustainable models, and improved their role and capacities in the system. We managed to reach not only youth as our target group, but also among them women and different non-majority communities, who often used to be under the radar of empowerment initiatives.
- Helped partners become more inclusive (i.e. to set practical criteria for recruitment or work with the non-majority groups), and built connections among non-majority communities and employers.

Contributors:

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