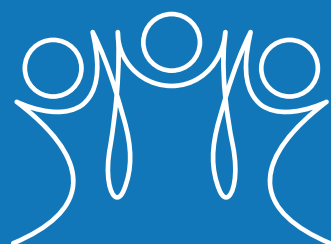




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LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT



United towards empowering youth
women and disadvantaged groups

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR
BUSINESS AND SOFT SKILLS

LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

MUNICIPALITY OF GJAKOVA, DEÇAN, AND JUNIK



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

EU	European Union
JIC	Jakova Innovation Centre
OTJ	On-The-Job
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
NDS	National Development Strategy
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
LFS	Labor Force Survey
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
VET	Vocational Education Training
HEI	Higher Education Institution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

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1. INTRODUCTION

The current report is prepared for Jakova Innovation Center (JIC) as part of the EU financed project “United towards empowering youth, women and disadvantaged groups”. The report focuses on skill mismatch and adaptability of work force in Kosovo in general, and in Gjakova region, aiming to clearly identify hindrances and propose initiatives to reduce the skills gap. Additionally, the report will constitute the basis to develop training curricula tailored to the needs of the private sector, developing On-The-Job training (OTJ) program, and offering small business grants.

For this purpose, main actors in workforce development and employment in these three municipalities were contacted, the complete list of interviewees is attached as Annex 1 of the report. Due to situation with COVID-19, most of the meetings were organised through the online platform, in phone conversation, and answering to the questionnaires, which are attached as Annex 2 to this report.

The results of this report will be used to prepare training curricula and plan for the development of:

- eight (8) training modules for 250 women, youth, and marginalised categories of population,
- On-The-Job (OTJ) training program for at least 100 youth, women and disadvantaged groups in different private companies,

Additionally, the report will identify and recommend specific intervention measures for every relevant stakeholder for the improvement of the qualified labour market in these three municipalities. All this will also lead and contribute to developing concrete strategies and action plans for all these stakeholders in the future.

2. BACKGROUND

In order to specifically focus on the labour needs analyses of the Gjakova region, the overall Kosovo context will be initially illustrated.

2.1 Current situation in Kosovo

Kosovo's per capita GDP is the lowest in the region, with EUR 3,566 in nominal terms in 2017, which is about 26.3% of the EU average (the regional average is EUR 4,853). The economic activity has been growing steadily since 2015, but it is constrained by a narrow production base and significant under-utilisation of labour. Real GDP growth reached 3.9% in 2018. In recent years, the economy has been driven by public investment in infrastructure and private consumption (the latter financed by large remittances from abroad and robust wage and credit growth).

In terms of private sector, Kosovo has significantly improved its business regulations as evidenced by continued to improve the ease of doing business, moving closer to the frontier of global best practices in business regulation. Doing Business Report¹ indicates that Kosovo has improved its score from 73.71 to 74.15 points, where a higher score indicates a more efficient business environment and stronger legal institutions. However, this access to qualified and skilled labor remains and persistent obstacle to growth of private sector.

Various strategic economic development documents point out the need for qualified labor to support economic growth in Kosovo. For example, the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2017 emphasises that matching the skills acquired in education to those required by the labour market facilitate employment generation and foster economic growth. This is confirmed by a recent Economic Reform Programme of Kosovo (2019-2021), which identified the mismatch of education (both graduate and vocational) and labour market to be the key growth constraints, which reduces employment and innovation. Based on EU reports, Kosovo has made little progress on improving the quality of education and addressing skills gaps in the labour market.

Studies at the firm level found that many firms in Kosovo reported problems hiring new employees, largely because of insufficient experience or skills. In turn, the low quality of education/training and skill mismatches prevent the inactive population from obtaining and retaining good jobs acting as key constraining barrier to economic growth. Quality assurance of vocational education and training also needs further development to match the needs of SMEs in building competitiveness and export growth. This is particularly important considering that the private sector consist entirely on SMEs, which particularly find it hard to access education and skills development programmes because the cost (OECD 2016).

Beside the high demand and struggles of private companies for qualified labor, Kosovo still faces high unemployment rates. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS)² data based on the results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2018 the unemployment rate is 29.6%. Moreover, the KAS shows that within the working age population, the rate of participation in the workforce is 40.9%, while the rate of employment in the Labor Force Survey in 2018 is 28.8%. Further the KAS (2019) evidences that two-thirds of the population in Kosovo is a working age population (15-64 years).

¹ World Bank Doing Business (2019)

² The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019) *The Labour Force Survey results*

The highest employment rate is to males (45.3%), while female employment is 12.3%. Female are employed mainly in the sectors of education, trade and health care, by 52.9%, while males are mainly employed in the sectors of trade, construction and manufacturing, by 43.0%. In addition, KAS (2019) finds that promising economic sectors that continue to employ more people are: trade by 17.0%; construction by 11.9%; education by 11.3%; and manufacturing by 10.3%. Meanwhile, other sectors participate with the lowest percentage in employment. On the sectorial contribution to the economy, the EU progress reports also point to the need for future interventions.

According to the EU Progress report (2019) there was no progress in addressing the structural weaknesses of Kosovo's private sector, which continues to be fragmented and unable to improve its efficiency. There have been no significant structural changes in Kosovo's economy since 2008.

Economic development in all sectors has not resulted in significant employment generation. Despite positive growth rates in Kosovo, the employment rate has remained low. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the labour force participation in Kosovo is one of the lowest in the region, with an average of 39 percent participation rate over the last five years. It is particularly low for women which averages below 20 percent over the same period. The unemployment rate is high with almost one-third of those in the labour market reported to be unemployed. The level of unemployment among the young population (15-24) is almost 50 percent. The share of employment remains low, with an average of 28 percent of population reported being employed over the last five years.

2.2 Current situation in Gjakova region

The employment in Kosovo is concentrated in the capital. According to Employment and Labour Market Analyses (2019), Prishtina employs more than half of the officially employed labour force (51%), of which almost one-third work in the public sector. It is followed by Prizren (with 13.5% of the employed), Mitrovica and Gjilan (with around 8% each), Ferizaj (7.5%), Peja (7%) and Gjakova (5%).

Occupations with the highest level of unemployment, based on Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)³ data in Kosovo, are Business, Manufacturing and Construction, and Life Science. Although a prevailing high unemployment rate, combined with some level of lack of demand for these occupations in all regions, should serve as a deterrent, Kosovo youth still are clustered in education and professional schools linked directly or closely to Business Administration, Economics, and Law. On the other hand, Services, Engineering, Crafts and Trades, are the occupations with the lowest level of unemployment, all, around half the level of that faced by business professionals, and yet remain sectors in which neither a lot of education is offered, nor is there a demand for such education from the youth.

According to MCC data⁴, high unemployment rate among those who have completed post-secondary vocational education, with an unemployment rate of 22%, and for those who have completed a university education, with an unemployment rate of 20%.

According to data from Kosovo Statistic Agency (2019), among total unemployed, youth between ages 18 and 24 makes 44%, of whom 44% are male and 56% are female.

³ MCC Kosovo – Labor Force and Time Use Survey Report, 2018

⁴ MCC Kosovo – Labor Force and Time Use Survey Report, 2018

Sector	% Employed
Trade	20.0
Education	14.6
Construction	9.84
Manufacturing	9.81
Public sector	9.58
Health	7.23
Hotels	5.5

Table 1: Employment by sectors

Similar to the general Kosovo context, there is a considerable gap between demand from the labour market for qualified workforce and the level of unemployment among youth in Gjakova region. On the survey conducted with businesses in Gjakova by the Kosovo Statistic Agency (KSA)⁵ in 2019, 69.6% of businesses surveyed identified lack of qualified workforce as second biggest problem important to their development. Following are most sought professions:

1. Professionals with 24%
2. Sales with 21%
3. Managers with 13%
4. Clerks with 11%, and
5. Equipment operators with 8%

According to the Head of the Employment Office in Gjakova⁶, in 2021 there were 90 new businesses, in addition to 144 other businesses from previous years, requesting qualified employees. Most businesses requesting qualified employees are from following sectors:

1. Construction
2. Gastronomy
3. Textile
4. Trade
5. Wood processing
6. Metal processing.

In regard to number of unemployed youths registered with the Office, from January 2021 until now there were 359 new unemployed youth registered adding to the total of around 11000 registered as unemployed.

On the other hand, main training providers in Gjakova are VET providers, professional schools, and public and private universities in Gjakova. According to the interview with the Head of VET in Gjakova⁷, centre organises the training for following qualifications:

1. Administrative assistant,
2. Accounting,
3. Entrepreneurship,
4. Self-employment,
5. Electric installers,
6. Welders,
7. Hairdressers,

⁵ The Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019) *The Labour Force Survey results*

⁶ Interview with Mr. Kujtim Dula, Head of the Employment Office in Gjakova

⁷ Interview with the Head of VET.

-
8. Makeup, and
 9. Tailoring (though not active for the moment).

The training is organised on modular format where 70% of the time is spent in practical work, 20% is theory, and 10% is testing. According to the Head of VET, the total number of students that completed the training were 220, of which 135 were below age of 29. The number of trainees in 2020 was lower considering the situation with pandemics during which the centre was closed. Until month of May in 2021 the number of trainees completing the training was 82, of which 40 were under the age of 29.

Of nine training modules offered, the highest demand of trainees is for the following modules:

1. Construction,
2. Hairdressing,
3. Electric installation,
4. Welders, and
5. Tailoring.

However, out of the total trainees completing the training, 70% of the, find employment. Nevertheless, in addition to present training modules, there are increasing requests and interest for additional training on kitchen chef/cook and bakery.

3. OBJECTIVE, TARGET GROUPS, CONSTRAINTS.

3.1 Objectives

Specifically, this analysis will include assessing the current labour market problems, issues and context in Gjakova municipality, with additional inputs and results supplemented and covering municipalities of Decan and Junik.

Analysis will be focused on assessing the current labour market situation in Gjakova, a) applicable regulatory framework, b) capacity of local authorities, c) ongoing activities, and d) actions by other stakeholders such as the business community, civil society, NGOs, business associations and other relevant actors.

Finally, the report will provide detailed recommendations on: i) employee profiles requested by the private sector, ii) propose training modules for unemployed tailored on needs of the private sector, iii) provide recommendations for On-The-Job training program, and iv) identify and propose main training providers.

3.2 Target groups

The report is prepared for the project "United towards empowering youth, women and disadvantaged groups", thus, targeting youth between ages 18 and 24 from three municipalities in Gjakova region, women and disadvantaged groups from these three municipalities.

Categories mentioned above are main beneficiaries of the project, nevertheless, targeted beneficiaries of the project are also businesses, training and other skills education institutions, public institutions concerned with employment, respective municipalities, etc.

3.3 Constraints

Meeting and interviews with relevant stakeholders were planned to take place during April. Nevertheless, the situation with COVID had prevented physical meetings having them taking place on virtual platforms, through phone conversations, or by answering questionnaires.

4. The Methodology

Implementation approach is based upon three components, including (I) Desk research and analysis of secondary sources, (II) qualitative field research based on stakeholder interviews and situational/stakeholder analysis, and (III) organising roundtable meetings with all relevant stakeholders.

Some of these tools and areas of enquiry include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) secondary literature review,
- (b) stakeholder internal literature review,
- (c) key informant interviews,
- (d) surveys, and questionnaire,
- (e) focus group discussions.

To achieve the identified objectives and results, following tools and techniques to collect the data for proper assessment were utilized:

- Development of separate semi-structured questionnaires for the selected businesses,
- Interviewing 30 representatives from businesses, civil society, education institutions, training providers, etc,
- Collecting inputs and recommendations from roundtable meetings,
- Analysis of the Survey responses.

Initially, meetings with the Project Team were organised in order to discuss details of activities, outputs, and further coordination. To this end, the initial meeting was held on 26 March 2021 where, among others, details of survey questionnaires and the list of businesses and other stakeholders to be interviewed, and the deadlines were discussed and agreed. The second coordination meeting took place on 1 April 2021 where questionnaires for both target categories were confirmed and also the dates until the end of assignment were agreed.

Following, questionnaire forms were prepared and meetings with around 30 relevant stakeholders were scheduled. For scheduling and organising meetings, strong support was received by the project staff.

4.1 Desk research

The desk research involved main activities, including literature review, desk review of secondary data including project documents, assessments, evaluations and previous labour market surveys and situational analysis based on quantitative information. Firstly, we carried out a literature review on the labour market trends and skills mismatch, but with a specific focus on identification of priority sectors. The review of national strategic documents such as National Development Strategy, Economic Reform Agenda, competitiveness and sectorial strategy documents (ICT, Wood Processing sector for example), Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy of Kosovo, Smart Specialisation Framework, EU Progress report and other labour market studies has been consulted to provide an overview of the labour market trends.

Further, we expanded the scope of analysis with other studies and surveys conducted by various institutions/organisations in the area of labour market skills assessment. These important studies were carefully reviewed in to inform the analytical and methodological approach of the current study and ensure that the most relevant methodology is used to investigate the labour market and skills needs analysis in Kosovo.

Secondly, a situational analysis is used as an after-desk research as a first step in the process because one needs to evaluate the current situation and how and recommendations for the future can be made. The situational analysis provided quantitative information about recent

trends in the Kosovo labour market. The secondary data and existing surveys are used to produce new information on current labour market trends in Gjakova region.

4.2 Interviews

In addition to the secondary data analysis and review of key strategic development documents, the fieldwork was carried out in the second phase of the project. More specifically, it involved semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from relevant institutions, private businesses, training providers, etc.

In doing so, the consultant identified stakeholders at municipal level, agencies, and other key stakeholders such as, but not limited to, private sector employers, business associations, VET schools, HEI's providers, etc. A special focus of the interviews was on understanding of the skills needed in the labour market, with special interest in the analysis of current labour market trends and future dynamics in order to come up with future labour market prospects. The interviews also enabled the consultant to fill any gaps in the review of the literature carried out in the desk research component of the research activity.

Another group of stakeholders included private employers, including owners or managers of a sample of key employers in selected priority sectors. It was carried out a focus group of owners/managers within each priority sector identified. The aim of this set of interviews was to gain a qualitative understanding of the current and future labour market trends.

Questionnaires gathered data on topics as follows:

- I) The sector the business is operating,
- II) Information related to the current number of employees, and the number of additional employees required,
- III) Information related to the profile and qualifications of additional employees required,
- IV) The capacity of business to engage new employees for internship work,
- V) Offer of businesses for new interns, etc.

5. Results

Job opportunities are currently scarce in Gjakova and inactivity and unemployment rates are high, and only less than one third of the working-age population (those between 18 and 24 years of age) is employed and women and youth are most at risk for labor market exclusion. Low access to employment is compounded by a lack of productive job opportunities reflected in the high informality of existing jobs. Poor labor market outcomes are at the center of poverty and exclusion, high emigration rates, and disenchantment in Kosovo.

What follow are key findings of the report and proposals on how to reduce the current gap of the private sector for qualified workforce.

Unemployed youth lack the skills that firms need. A majority of recruiting firms in Gjakova find hiring new workers challenging because applicants have neither the skills nor work experience they require. According to interviews, firms were more likely to recruit for higher skill occupations than medium to lower skill occupations. All firms interviewed are lacking enough staff and encounter problems because of applicants' lack of skills and/or experience.

Skill gaps have negative consequences for firm growth and job creation. Although skills are not the most pressing constraint that firms face, skill gaps limit their ability to hire and grow. This is especially true for more productive firms, such as large firms, foreign-owned firms, and innovative firms. These firms are more likely to have actively recruited workers and have the potential to create more jobs and, importantly, more productive jobs than other firms. Yet, these dynamic firms are also more likely to identify skills as a major constraint on recruiting efforts reporting skill gaps as a major challenge in the recruitment process.

Firms are not active in skill development. Few firms provide further training to upskill their employees, and work-based training for students through internships or apprenticeships is underdeveloped. Firm-provided training is largely a complement to and not a substitute for school-based training. Most firms, however, do not offer training to their staff, especially training that is external to the firm. Dynamic markets for products and services are also likely to change demand for skills among those currently employed. The limited opportunities for skill development, once employed, are hence likely to hold back both labor market flexibility and firm productivity and expansion.

Firms are not well connected with education and training systems. The involvement of firms is critical to support the development of labor market relevant skills, but there is little interaction between educational institutions and firms, especially at the level of design and evaluation of the content of training.

There is shortage of information sharing. Namely, there is no regular communication between relevant stakeholders related to share and exchange of information between main actors and stakeholders of the labor market: education institutions, municipal employment office, municipality, training centres, and youth and women organisation concerned with employment of youth and women and disadvantaged groups

According to the extensive desk research and based on the detailed interviews with all relevant stakeholders, most potential economic sector to employ highest number of employees are: i) textile, ii) construction, iii) wood processing, iv) metal processing, v) ICT, and gastronomy. What follows is the description for every sector in regard to specific requirements and recommended activity for each program to be organised in order to meet demand from these sectors for qualified workforce.

5.1 Textile

The textile company Creative is at the expansion phase and continuously looking for new women tailors to employ. According to the senior management representative from Creative, the company currently has around 110 employees but looking continuously to increase the number of them. Moreover, there is a lack of women tailors in Gjakova and nearby municipalities, thus, they are obliged to employ women from Albania. Company for the moment needs another 20 women with tailoring skills. In addition to Creative, there are also other local textile companies looking to employ tailors, thus, the number of tailors is in the constant increase.

The Proposed Activity: OTJ Training Program will provide vulnerable youth with time-bound in-company training opportunities that seek to increase their long-term employability. The scheme also seeks to facilitate the match of interested workers with companies. The OTJ Training Program will counter a sense of disillusionment among youth, who often feel marginalized, and are considered to be at high risk of remaining long-term unemployed. It will provide short-term youth training opportunities that enable the targeted youth to gain skills that will enhance their chances of finding sustainable jobs in the future.

OTJ Training program plans that **30 unemployed youth (women)** will undergo and complete a 3-month in-company training based on the provision of basic total remuneration as per the company policies program, of whom **at least 10 will be retained** into a job or be employed at the end of the training. To ensure successful implementation, JIC will assist the involved companies/employers in identifying skills shortages and develop relevant training for the trainees. In addition, it will implement the Activity in close collaboration with the Municipal Employment Office, Vocational Education Training centers, municipal authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. JIC will promote the Activity in continuous basis and at the end, it will organize a certification and closing conference where JIC and the donor will present the results of the project, and discuss outcomes, lessons learned, and next steps.

Beneficiaries: Vulnerable and marginalized youth and participating private sector companies. The proposed targeted age group is 18 – 24 (mostly women), but not limited to potential youth participants who are registered at the municipal employment office. JIC in collaboration with host companies will develop a more detailed selection criteria for youth participants during implementation. Beneficiaries also include the private sector companies that will absorb trainees. The participating companies that will agree to provide cost-shares toward the cost of engagement of trainees, which will be clearly stated in individual Cooperation Agreements that the JIC will sign with each participating company.

5.2 Construction

With the construction sector continuing to grow, also the demand for employees in this sector is remaining high. Additionally, the high demand is the result of youth leaving the country for Western Europe. This is confirmed also by the Head the VET centre, that the incentive for considerable number of youth to complete the training in construction is the willing to leave the country and get employed in foreign markets.

The Proposed Activity: JIC will initially identify interested companies that would like to be part of the OTJ Training program and engage at least **15 youth**, 18- 24 of age, for 3 months of in-bound training program, of whom **at least 5 will remain employed** by companies. Subject to internal company policies will remain the payment of trainees engaged in the training. Parallel to this, JIC will liaise with the Municipal Employment office and VET center to identify youth of this age that would like to be part of the program. JIC will support private companies in prepar-

ing and concluding agreements with trainees, in coordination with company representatives monitor the progress of trainees, and prepare certifications for trainees that successfully have completed the training.

Beneficiaries: Vulnerable and marginalized youth and participating private sector companies. The proposed targeted age group is 18 – 24 (mostly women), but not limited to potential youth participants who are registered at the municipal employment office. JIC in collaboration with host companies will develop a more detailed selection criteria for youth participants during implementation. Beneficiaries also include the private sector companies that will absorb trainees. The participating companies that will agree to provide cost-shares toward the cost of engagement of trainees, which will be clearly stated in individual Cooperation Agreements that the JIC will sign with each participating company.

5.3 Wood processing

The wood processing sector is growing by expanding in foreign markets, accordingly, the demand for employees from this sector is growing. However, the profile of employees required are with skills able to operate the advanced machinery and technology.

The Proposed Activity: JIC through the public announcement in its social media but also through other media (local radio and TV stations) will invite private companies to become part of the program. Further, JIC will identify interested companies that would like to be part of the OTJ Training program and engage at least **15 youth**, 18- 24 of age, for 3 months of in-bound training program, of whom **at least 5 will remain employed** by companies. Subject to internal company policies will remain the payment of trainees engaged in the training, though almost all companies have shown readiness and willingness to co-finance the program with €170- €200 per candidate. JIC will liaise with the Municipal Employment office and VET center to identify youth of this age that would like to be part of the program. JIC will support private companies in preparing and concluding agreements with trainees, in coordination with company representatives monitor the progress of trainees, and prepare certifications for trainees that successfully have completed the training.

Beneficiaries: Priority will be given to vulnerable and marginalized youth, targeted age group 18 – 24 who are registered at the municipal employment office. JIC in collaboration with host companies will develop a more detailed selection criteria for youth participants during implementation. Beneficiaries also include the private sector companies that will absorb trainees. JIC jointly with a company representative will develop training curricula for trainees in addition to progress monitoring process. Beneficiary companies will regularly report to JIC on the trainees attendance in the working place, through timesheets, and their performance through performance monitoring reports developed by JIC.

5.4 Metal processing

The situation of this sector is very similar to wood sector, where profile of employees required are with skills able to operate with advanced technology.

The Proposed Activity: JIC in cooperation with the Municipal Employment Office and, through the public announcement in its social media, will identify and invite private companies to become part of the program and engage at least **15 youth**, 18- 24 of age, for 3 months of in-bound training program, of whom **at least 5 will remain employed** by companies. Subject to internal company policies will remain the payment of trainees engaged in the training, though

almost all companies have shown readiness and willingness to co-finance the program with €170- €200 per candidate. At the same time, JIC in collaboration with the Municipal Employment office and VET center will invite and identify youth of this age that would like to be part of the program. JIC will support private companies in preparing and concluding agreements with trainees, in coordination with company representatives monitor the progress of trainees, and prepare certifications for trainees that successfully have completed the training.

Beneficiaries: Priority will be given to vulnerable and marginalized youth, targeted age group 18 – 24 from the municipality of Gjakova, Deçan, and Junik, who are registered at the municipal employment office. JIC in collaboration with host companies will develop a more detailed selection criteria for youth participants during implementation. JIC jointly with a company representative will develop training curricula for trainees in addition to progress monitoring process. Beneficiary companies will regularly report to JIC on the trainees attendance in the working place, through timesheets, and their performance through performance monitoring reports developed by JIC. At the end of each group of trainees, JIC will prepare certifications for those that successfully completed the training.

5.5 ICT

The hit of pandemics has changed drastically how businesses are operating by having to digitalise in order to remain in businesses. Therefore, the need for youth with ICT skills is in high demand. Furthermore, the ICT sector in Kosovo is rapidly expanding in foreign markets further increasing the demand for youth with ICT skills.

The proposed activity: Professional Courses is dedicated to equipping the candidates with the necessary knowledge and skills of programming using different languages of programming and with German language skills. The **Java Programming** course is designed to provide participants with the basic knowledge and skills of Java Programming through practical exercises, lectures, demonstrations and examples. The course introduces delegates to programming using the Java language. It explains the concepts of programming using the Java technology stack and gives delegates a practical introduction to the Java landscape.

The Web Development course has been designed to equip the student with knowledge and skills in web programming by using HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript. The course acknowledges that the candidate has little or no knowledge with respect to these technologies. The course content has been designed with content that addresses the needs of web application programming in front end, be it for academic purposes or for professional ones.

Professional German Language Courses is dedicated to participants who already possess intermediate level of German language and wish to be trained for entering the call center job market. Participants will undergo through an intensive training in German language and call center strategies by identifying different types of motivations, learning the phone etiquette skills, managing individuals and teams, outbound and inbound calls etc. Finally, yet importantly, participants shall receive guidance by instructors in delivering a mock job interview and participate in call simulations.

Beneficiaries: All applicants must 18– 24 years old and live in the municipality of Gjakova, Junik, and Deçan, registered in respective municipality employment offices. Namely, there will be **at least 40 youth that will complete the training in programming and German language, of whom at least 10 will be employed.** For fast processing of applications, JIC will establish an online application form, which will include all the relevant information, thus allowing the team to assess the eligibility of the applicants. Participants can also apply at JIC offices and on site

during the informative sessions that the project team intends to organize. The project team will be available for any query related to the application and training. The application form will include questions regarding participants' registration at the respective municipality employment centers. Moreover, the application form will include questions from Self-Disclosure section, which will enable the applicant to declare (voluntarily) if they belong to any of the following marginalized groups: people with disability, minority, etc. In this way, the project team will be able to ensure diversity in selection by giving priority to potential candidates coming from those groups and priority will be given to participants coming from marginalized groups (women, people with disability, minorities) and to participants registered in the respective municipality employment centers. The latter is an important factor of confirming that the participant is unemployed youth.

5.6 Gastronomy

Even though the sector of gastronomy is mostly hit by the pandemic, the sector is expected to recover fast and expand, though looking for qualified staff, mostly cooks. This is also confirmed by the Head of VET with an increase of young people asking for training in cooking.

The Proposed Activity: JIC in collaboration with the Municipal Employment Office and, through the public announcement in its social media, will identify and invite private companies to become part of the program and engage at least **12 youth**, 18- 24 of age, for 3 months of in-bound training program, of whom **at least 5 will remain employed** by companies. The sector of gastronomy is the one mostly hit by the pandemic, thus with most difficult financial situation, which makes it difficult to finance the trainees. Nevertheless, JIC will encourage gastronomy businesses to stimulate the work of trainees either financially or with other forms of stimulation. At the same time, JIC in collaboration with the Municipal Employment office and VET center will invite and identify youth of this age that would like to be part of the program. JIC will support private companies in preparing and concluding agreements with trainees, in coordination with company representatives monitor the progress of trainees, and prepare certifications for trainees that successfully have completed the training.

Beneficiaries: Priority will be given to vulnerable and marginalized youth women, between age of 18 – 24 from the municipality of Gjakova, Decan, and Junik, who are registered at the municipal employment office. JIC in collaboration with host companies will develop a more detailed selection criteria for youth participants during implementation. JIC jointly with a company representative will develop training curricula for trainees in addition to progress monitoring process. Beneficiary companies will regularly report to JIC on the trainees attendance in the working place, through timesheets, and their performance through performance monitoring reports developed by JIC. At the end of each group of trainees, JIC will prepare certifications for those that successfully completed the training.

Disclaimer: *The proposed interventions with regard to numbers of trained persons from the target groups and the corresponding remuneration solely reflect the results of interviews and feedback from key industry companies and institutions in the region. The results portion and proposed measures of this analysis do not inhibit the project objectives in terms of numbers and industries where potential beneficiaries will be engaged. The on-job trainings will be conducted in relevant fields as proposed in the description of the action.*

6. Recommendations

Based on the interview results, the following are main recommendations for different stakeholders in the field of workforce development in Gjakova:

a. The involvement of firms in multiple dimensions of skill development. Connecting employers, workers, education systems and students is essential to increase the relevance of school-based training. Collaboration can take different forms, ranging from public-private sector partnerships involving shared financing and management responsibilities, to providing technology and equipment, job skills need assessments, mentoring and career advice, partnerships around curricula reform, and work-based learning

Increase the access of young people to the labor market, through the provision of quality services of employment and active employment measures. In particular, updating the present curricula of the VET centre with new training modules.

b. Harmonization of vocational education and training with the demands of the labor market and providing career guidance and counselling services. VET center needs to regularly meet with biggest employers and update their curricula based on specific demands for the private sector.

c. Work based-training, in the form of internships and apprenticeship, can increase the relevance of skills and provide youth with both experience and references. Internship and apprenticeship systems are under-developed in Gjakova. Well organized, these arrangements have several advantages: (i) they provide trainees with an opportunity to participate in actual work place situations and solve concrete work-related problems; (ii) they contribute to building job specific skills as well as transversal labor market relevant skills that are highly valued by employers; (iii) they bring together firms, students and education systems and facilitate collaboration between stakeholders to improve education systems; (iv) they provide trainees with references from the private sector that can signal capabilities, which may be especially important given employers' emphasis on work experience; and (v) they provide an entry into a professional network for students. In the EU, an estimated 60-70 percent of apprentices find employment immediately after graduation. To work well however, these arrangements need strong institutions and governance systems, including three party collaboration (e.g., firm-student-school, or firm-student-employment agency), formal learning arrangements or learning plans, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance systems. Recently, cooperation agreements have been signed with companies for internships in Kosovo, but monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives are weak.

Improving the quality of practical teaching in school and professional practice. The practical teaching for students in secondary school becomes mandatory. Municipality might allocate from its own budget or identify any other donor that will cover cost of private businesses and of students to engage students in practical work.

d. To fulfil its core function to match jobseekers with employers, the Employment Agency needs timely information on the number of available vacancies. According to the survey, there remains significant potential to increase this matching because only a minority of employers recruit through the Agency. To this end, strengthening outreach to employers may be needed, as well as providing high quality services to them (e.g., through effective pre-selection of candidates, and fast response times). In preparation, the Employment Agency can also provide job seekers with critical information on workplace skills that matter. Socio-emotional skills like discipline and perseverance are developed over many years. However, the

Employment Agency can emphasize the importance of various workplace-related competencies, including timeliness, independent work, and teamwork in order to influence priorities and incentives. Increase cooperation between different stakeholders in exchanging and sharing information. Cooperation and information sharing between main stakeholders needs to be strengthened.

e. Assisting parents, children and youth in making informed choices on schooling, training, and jobs can have significant benefits for education and employment outcomes.

The private sector must be involved in collaborative efforts to strengthen the availability of labor market information. Students and jobseekers need adequate and timely information on current opportunities, wages of different sectors and occupations, and qualifications needed for various careers, as well as forecasts on future skill needs. Strengthening Gjakova's Labor Market Information System will require (i) establishing a systematic collection of information on growth sectors with high employment potential, as well as wages across sectors and occupations, (ii) integrating labor market information from key stakeholders (employers, the Employment Agency, the Statistical office); and (iii) making labor market information accessible through relevant channels such as the Employment Agency website, Busulla, and others. Career guidance systems in school (both general and vocational) can also assist students and their parents in choosing vocations that match labor market demand, their own aptitudes, and interests, and in making the most appropriate educational choices to pursue a chosen career

f. Increase employment through entrepreneurship development. There should be regular programs and training in supporting new entrepreneurs and their initiatives in establishing new startups. The support might be offered with specific training in order to increase their entrepreneurial skills as well as by supporting them with small grants.

Additionally, in order to increase their probability to get employed by the private sector, soft skills requested by businesses are illustrated below. Nevertheless, the detailed training program is attached as Annex 5 to this report.

1. **Business planning skills.** The purpose of this module is to come into contact with the business plan tool. The Business Plan is both a useful tool, and a self-analysis of a business idea. As a tool it is critical to present their business idea to potential customers, to potential investors, but also to attract potential human resources in the early stages.
2. **Project management.** The purpose of the module is to give participants a look on the main processes, techniques and tools in project management focusing on the most important processes. It provides a quick overview of the project management definition and presents the three pillars of project management: 'What is a project?', 'What is a Project Life Cycle' and its 5 phases, and 'What are the project manager processes', eleven elements of knowledge to consider during the project management.
3. **Time management.** The purpose of the module is to give participants a look on the main techniques and tools in time management. "Time management is a range of tools, technique and skills used to manage time and to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity when you need to accomplish specific tasks, projects and goals complying with a due date. Initially referred to work and job life now can include also personal activities. Time management is an important skill in project planning, project scheduling and project management.
4. **Negotiation skills.** Negotiation is an unavoidable part of work and everyday life. Throughout their work, head-hunters constantly make great use of negotiation skills — for example, when discussing projects, contracts and salaries; as well as when co-ordinating interviews. The purpose of this module is to get in contact with the negotiation skills.

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5. **Sales skills.** The purpose of this module is to come into contact with sales skills. Knowing how to sell is one of the most confusing things you can experience in the workplace. In our economic system we are much more focused on buying. But if there is a purchase on the other hand there is a sale. Linked with sales are words such as customers, products, competitors, ability to ask the right questions, effective communication and persuasion skills.

Annex 1: List of Respondents

1. Directorate for Economic Development- Gjakova
2. Career Center
3. Directorate for Economic Development- Junik
4. Directorate for Economic Development- Deçan
5. Voice of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians
6. Local Youth Action Council
7. Center for Vocational Education
8. HANDIKOS
9. Gymnasium "Hajdar Dushi"
10. Medica
11. YMCA
12. Employment Office- Gjakova
13. "Safe House"
14. Municipal Business Association
15. VET school
16. Public Private Council
17. "Home Style Nagavci"
18. "Gexha SH.P.K"
19. "Media Labs"
20. "Blini-BK"
21. "Fonderia E&E"
22. "Euroasphalt"
23. "Creative SH.P.K"
24. "Comodita Home"
25. "Medica"
26. "Nertili"
27. "Albina Dyla" B.I
28. "Fidani-L"
29. "Digital School"

Annex 2: Qualitative survey questionnaire for businesses

1. Name:
2. Business:
3. In which sector you are operating?
4. How many employees do you have currently?
5. Are they enough?
6. If NOT, how many additional employees do you need?
7. What profile of employees do you need?
8. Are you willing to have interns in your business?
9. How many of them can you engage?
10. For how long would you engage them in internship work?
11. Are you ready to stimulate them? If YES, how?
12. Anything to add?

Annex 3: Questionnaire for the Employment Office

1. Main responsibilities of the Office?
2. What are main activities?
3. What is the number of business looking for employees?
4. What is the profile of employees they are looking for?
5. What is the number of unemployed registered?
6. What are the main qualifications requested?
7. What is the cooperation with the municipality/training centres, youth organisations, etc?
8. What is the cooperation with business?
9. How do you communicate/share information about new employment positions?
10. How can you strengthen your role and function?

Annex 4: Questionnaire for VET Center

1. What are the training programs offered by your centre?
2. What is the number of your completing the training?
3. Which is the training module most interesting for youth to complete?
4. How many of those completing the training are employed?
5. What is your cooperation with the private sector?
6. What is your cooperation with municipality and other stakeholders?
7. Anything to add?



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