

Supporting public and private job-matching & recruitment providers to offer better, socially inclusive services to young jobseekers and employers

Our Aim:



Public and private matching and recruitment service providers offer more and improved socially inclusive services to young jobseekers and employers

Our Approach:

1. Support private job matching service providers to build feedback mechanisms into their business model, thus enabling them to gather updated information about their client's needs.
2. Work with private job matching services to identify services relevant for marginalized groups and foster the development of new services.
3. Support job matching companies to promote their services and improve communications and outreach.
4. Work with job matching companies to diversify and develop specialized services and tools.

Context

Kosovo faces big challenges with unemployment. Reasons such as an outdated education system and mismatching of education and training with labor market demands are often cited for the highest unemployment rates in Europe—a staggering 29.1% in early 2020¹. Yet, in Kosovo, some 82.1% of Kosovo businesses² that have recruited in the last three years have had difficulty finding qualified employees. So how does this happen?



The reasons behind the high unemployment rate are many, but one particularly persistent challenge in Kosovo's labor market is the mismatch between education and labor market needs, and not everyone is affected equally. The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, for example, disproportionately face high rates of unemployment and poverty and aren't widely targeted by employment-generating initiatives and active labor market measures. This makes inclusive and responsive job-matching services—both public and private—crucial for the labor market in Kosovo to work for everyone.

Yet, job-matching service providers also face their fair share of challenges. They often fail to effectively play the intermediary, and thus, the unemployment rate continues to remain high in Kosovo, which is particularly concerning as every year, around 30,000 young people enter the labor market. And as COVID-19 rapidly spread in Kosovo in 2020, it severely impacted job-matching platforms in Kosovo, drying up the number of new job vacancies which are the main sources of revenue for these service providers.

¹ Ceicdata

² https://www.institutigap.org/documents/71734_Gap%20analizapergaditjaprofesionale.pdf

Our Approach

At EYE, seeing the lack of innovative solutions in the job-matching sector and the lack of platforms for non-majority communities, we set out to create program interventions around some of the main challenges facing the sector. Our aim was clear: help alleviate some of the barriers which give rise the mismatch of supply and demand of skills in the labor market by working with both public employment services managed by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, and private job matching service providers.

We did not aim to change the demand for specific skills. Rather, we worked to improve the supply of skills to match the existing market demand, improve the flow of market information, and enable access to the labor market for marginalized group such as Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

Our interventions were two-fold:

- A.** Public Employment Services- run by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo; and
- B.** Private job-matching service providers.

Public Employment Services

EYE visited over 30 public employment service offices to assess their functioning, staffing and operations. We delivered a report to the Head of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (EARK), which also served as a basis for agreeing on further joint activities between the EARK and EYE.

We supported EARK to conduct a perception survey about EARK among Public Employment Service (PES) clients, namely jobseekers and businesses. The survey gathered feedback by some 1,061 jobseekers and 406 businesses from across Kosovo. This provided a crucial overview on what the EARK needs to focus on improving.

At the same time, EYE began working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) to carry out an ex-post Evaluation of the Law 04/L-205—a law for the creation of the employment agency—to measure its impact, effectiveness, results, and identify key difficulties for its implementation.

Private Job Matching Services

Many interventions carried out by the project focused on improving the flow of labor market information and outreach by job platforms to reach larger audience. Furthermore, we supported new and innovative ideas such as matching platforms and apps created entirely for non-majority communities. In addition, marginalized groups were closely involved in the co-creation of these job matching components, thus, bringing closer such communities with employers and real world of work. We supported virtual job fairs, helped local matching service providers create digital tools and algorithms aimed at facilitating the matching of skills with job vacancies, and platforms that provide unsuccessful applicants with individual list of skills that could help them score the next job, also linking them with training providers that.



Key Results

EYE worked with partners big and small, helping establish virtual job fairs aimed at connecting employers with the best talent in Kosovo, improving the internal architecture of online job-matching platforms, introducing CV databases, mobile apps, interactive tools like organogram generators, communications, HR tools, and a wide range of other interventions. Our main achievements were:

- 3 new job matching services; (MIRECK matching tool, Euroeapan College of Kosovo (ECK), puncaime.org)
- 2 innovative and sector-specific matching services: ECK (recruitment services specialized in sales), MIRECK- job matching for businesses operating in renewable energy and metal prozcessing sectors)
- Increase of competition between job portals;
- 1 new HR tool for SMEs (SIMBA)
- 1 new matching tool for Serbian community - 'RTV KIM' matching tool, as well as the inclusion of Serbian language content within the largest job portal in Kosovo, Portal Pune.
- Inclusion of RAE in the labour market, focused on low-skilled and seasonal work in the agriculture sector

Lessons Learned

- **By supporting new and innovative entrants in the job matching market, EYE has had a noticeable impact in increasing competition and improving access to matching services.**
- **Despite having established sustainable business models, matching platforms still face challenges in attracting employers to utilize matching platforms, either due to mindset differences, affordability, or a lack of outreach and marketing efforts.**
- **Public Employment Services have an ample range to operate in, but, they should be more active in reaching out to employers just as much as jobseekers. They should also explore new avenues to operate in, and should ensure that they hire staff that is committed.**
- **Many donors provide support to the EARK and such contributions need to be more coordinated and avoid overlapping. In addition, more focus should be placed on improving the quality of the services as opposed to physical infrastructure investments.**
- **Kosovo-Serb media outlets do not have access to commercial advertisement sponsored by bigger companies in Kosovo, therefore hampering their long-term financial sustainability. Furthermore, job matching service providers in the Serbian language face difficulties sharing job ads because of a lack of cooperation and language barrier.**
- **Over the years, EYE has observed positive changes in job matching services, particularly in private providers, who are embracing new trends in the market and are being much more responsive to labour market demands.**
- **Marginalized groups such as Roma, Egyptians, and Ashkali face multiple challenges and lack access to the labor market due to their dependency on social transfers; lack of transport, exploitation, and discrimination.**

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