

Western Balkan Peer Reviews on Employment Policies and Programmes

Peer Review on on-the-job training (Hosted by Albania)

Review for Kosovo*

This study is conducted in the framework of the *Employment and Social Affairs Platform* (ESAP), a regional project financed by the European Commission and jointly implemented by RCC and ILO in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The project, which began its implementation in 2016 and lasts for 3 years, aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations, employers' and workers' organisations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU enlargement process.

This review covers in depth stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of "On-the-job training" programme. The data for the review were collected through a questionnaire with the specialists of the PES Kosovo*.

1. General information

The Public Employment Agency in Kosovo* offers a specific programme for the workplace training named "On-the-job training". The main goal of PES in Kosovo* is to expand the employment services and ALMPs as well as to provide quality services with greater efficiency. The main objective of the programme is to increase the employment prospects of unemployed people, to acquire basic knowledge and skills for doing a job during their engagement in productive work. The programme covers the entire territory of the economy. The funds for this programme are provided by the state budget and donors. The training period lasts from 2 – 6 months, and varies depending on the training modules. The PES does not have a separate budget for this specific programme; the budget is jointly determined for all ALMPs.

The main target group includes youth, long-term unemployed, women and vulnerable groups. The legal framework for on-the-job training programme is based on:

1. The law on registration and provision of employment services for unemployed, jobseekers and employers. Article 12 of the law specifies the Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) which are provided by the Employment Offices for the registered

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

unemployed persons and the registered employers. The paragraph 1.2 of Article 12 clearly states that on-the-job training is an ALMP offered in collaboration with employers.

2. The rulebook No. 1 / 2018 for the ALMPs, which regulates the implementation procedures of this programme. In Article 3 of the rulebook, the paragraph 1.5 defines on-the-job-training as "...an active labour market measure aimed at offering to participants the knowledge, skills and competencies, that are necessary to perform certain jobs at the workplace or work environment. On-the-job training is offered with the aim of increasing the employability of the registered unemployed jobseekers by acquiring essential knowledge and skills for the performance of certain jobs and engagement in productive work.". The Article 13 of the rulebook determines the procedures of implementation of the measure, compensation amounts for training expenditures, as well as obligations and restrictions.

3. The operational manual for on-the-job training lists the implementation steps for the measure, starting with the dissemination of information, collection of employers' requests, selection of jobseekers, design of the training plan, signing of training agreements, implementation, monitoring, financial compensation, and assessment of trainees and programme evaluation.

4. The document on Employment Policies 2016 – 2018 specifies the number of potential trainees who will benefit every year from on-the-job training, among others.

2. Programme design and promotion

The responsible institution for the design of the programme is the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Department for Labour and Employment. Regarding the implementation of the programme, the PES of Kosovo* is not the only implementing agencies. In addition to PES, which provides services and employment measures for all categories of jobseekers, other institutions, such as the non-public employment agencies, registered and licenced by the Department for Labour and Employment, may implement this programme. Non-public providers of employment services may be contracted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare or any other ministry, for the implementation of on-the-job training programme dedicated to special and specific categories of jobseekers.

During the design of the programme, some regional and local labour market statistics provided by the Statistics Agency of Kosovo*, are used. In addition, other data collected by PES itself and some statistics produced by the Employment Offices are also used. The inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the programme is guaranteed:

1. By designing and implementing specific on-the-job training programmes for these categories. For example, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has developed and implemented on-the-job training programme for unemployed jobseekers from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community.

2. By utilising quotas. Prior to the project implementation, quotas are set for each project with regards to the participation of the disadvantaged groups.

While no specific criteria are set for these groups (such as Roma, disabled persons, etc.) quotas impose a positive discrimination for the participation of these categories.

Priority sectors/fields of intervention are selected by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Kosovo* based on their potential for economic development of the economy. The priority

sectors/industries are the same for each ALMP, including on-the-job training. These sectors are:

1. Food Processing and Packaging Industry;
2. Information Technology;
3. Sector of Client Support Centres;
4. Metal Processing Industry;
5. Wood Processing Industry;
6. Textile Industry;
7. Tourism;
8. Other fields.

With regards to the selection rules for beneficiary businesses, all employers from the private sector, private – public enterprises, as well as NGOs have the right to apply for on-the-job training programme. The only condition imposed is for the businesses to be registered in the Business Registration Agency, and in terms of capacity and space, they should be able to accommodate the trainees and have skilled employees that can train the participants. Employers that have misused the scheme in other occasions are excluded from future applications. The employers express their interest to enter into a partnership by applying for the programme near the Employment Centres or through the webpage of PES-Kosovo*. The requests of the employers are recorded in the information system of the employment service (SIMP).

Social partners involvement in the stage of the programme is guaranteed through the inclusion of their representatives in the Advisory Board of the Employment Agency, which have the right to advise, and provide recommendations to the Director General of the Employment Agency for any ALMP or project that support the ALMPs, including on-the-job training. Furthermore, some programmes and projects of on-the-job training are developed and implemented in collaboration with the social partners, in particular with the economic and business chambers. The aim of these collaborations is to mobilise the participation of employers in the design and development of on-the-job training programme. A legal contract is signed between the business and PES for the implementation of the programme.

The participants of the programme should be the registered unemployed persons. Priority is given to long-term unemployed (at least 12 months). Additional criteria, such as age, gender, etc., can be imposed on specific programmes/projects by changing the target group of the programme. The programme has not changed since its launch.

On-the-job training is provided in combination or as part of more comprehensive programmes providing training and supplementary services such as counselling, mentoring, job search and placement assistance, etc. During the interview at the Employment Service Offices, the unemployed person will be registered in the database (SIMP), and will be further segmented and categorised into one of the three following groups:

- i) Low risk for long-term unemployment
- ii) Medium risk for long-term unemployment
- iii) High risk for long-term unemployment

If an individual is categorised as being in a high-risk segment to be long-term unemployed, the counsellor will offer support or intensive counselling, which combines job-search skills, career counselling, assistance to motivate the client during the job search period, and the formulation of an individual employment plan. Finally, the counsellor will inform the unemployed jobseeker about the ALMPs and provide an orientation about her inclusion in the different ALMPs based on categories and available funds.

3. Selection process (Recruitment/Admission)

The public calls for application constitute the main way of promoting the programme.

The selection procedure for on-the-job training programme is specified below. After the call is published, employers express their interest in entering into the partnerships by visiting employment offices, or by applying through the EARK website. All employers' requests are registered in the PES online information management system (SIMP). Afterwards, the employment adviser and trainer from the Vocational Training Centre visit the business site to ascertain whether the basic conditions in terms of area, human resources, and capacity are met for the implementation of the programme. If these conditions are met and the business is eligible for the programme, Employment Advisors, upon request, provide a list of candidates whose profile matches the employer's requirements. The selection of the unemployed is done by the employer from a broader list of candidates. After the selection of the candidate, the employer, the unemployed and the head of the employment office, sign an agreement for the implementation of a measure containing the rights and obligations of the parties participating in the implementation of the programme. Upon completing the selection process and assigning the participants into professions to be trained for, the trainer from the relevant Vocational Training Centre together with the employer develop a training plan for the implementation of on-the-job training. The individual training plan sets out the objectives to be achieved during the programme implementation and must be prepared within 5 working days.

The selection process takes 5 -10 working days. In the selection phase, the employment offices use information and statistics generated by their Information System for Employment Management "SIMP". Depending on the call for applications, the priority sectors are determined and only businesses operating in these fields are eligible to apply and participate in the programme. There are no special criteria related to business characteristics. The funds for each business are split based on the number of trainees participating in the training in each business.

4. Implementation and operationalization

The current main fields of on-the-job training are the service sector (trade, hospitality industry, ICT, hairdressing), construction, auto-mechanics, manufacturing (food technology, metal processing, production of plastic, wood and textile products). The training period is determined based on the complexity and specifics of the training programmes. When donors contribute to the programme, the training period is determined in consultation with the donor, otherwise the PES decides on the duration of the training period. Usually the training lasts from 2 - 6 months with an average of 4 months.

The individual training plan is developed by the trainer of the Vocational Training Centre who is in charge to follow the candidate from the beginning of the training and monitor the progress to the final assessment. The trainer carries out these tasks in collaboration with the

responsible person within the company. The individual training plan list the objectives of the training, which correspond to the practice applied within the company and the skills that the company has the capacity to offer. The company is visited before the final decision on its selection is made to confirm the fulfilment of the conditions for the provision of on-the-job training. Trainers in Kosovo* are trained in other training programmes.

The support provided to beneficiary companies in the programme consists of the free workforce during the training period. The trainees benefit from financial support covering their daily expenses. They receive the financial support on a monthly basis. The average cost per person is about 100 Euro per month.

The participants' obligations for the training period include the attendance and achievement of training objectives. Upon completion of the training period, the skills and knowledge of the trainee are assessed by the trainer and representative of the company, and if the candidate successfully passes the assessment, a certificate of training completion is awarded to the candidate, signed by both the trainer and representative of the company.

2. Monitoring and evaluation

As stated above, the monitoring of the process is carried out by trainers who monitor whether the training is provided in accordance with the individual training plan. All payments are made from the state treasury account. The frequency of monitoring is pre-determined in the Individual Training Plan.

The internal evaluation of the programme is conducted upon completion of the programme and is based on the indicators used by PES. The last evaluation was "The Performance Report 2017", which was published in March 2018. Currently, PES is also conducting an external evaluation of ALMPs, and the results are expected by the end of year 2018.

Based on the findings from the last performance evaluation report there has been an initiative to ask for greater budget support to increase the financial support for each trainee. Furthermore, PES has also requested changes that allow for greater flexibility in terms of deadlines/duration. The sustainability of the programme is assured only by the state budget funds, and its evaluation is expected to be conducted this year, after the completion of the impact evaluation report. A research is expected to be conducted for this purpose.

3. Results

The total number of businesses that participated in the programme the last year is 478. This number disaggregated by business size is as follows:

- Micro businesses - 378
- Small businesses - 98
- Medium businesses - 2

The total number of participants in the 2014- 2017 period was 2,210, of which 1,067 were male and 1,143 female participants. 230 of them did not possess any skills before the training, 607 had primary education, 1,009 completed secondary education, 117 completed general secondary education, 223 had a university diploma, and 24 a Masters diploma. In 2018, 493 unemployed jobseekers participated in the programme (Table 1).

The percentage of the registered unemployed covered by the programme is 0.51 percent, unqualified 0.21 percent, those who have completed only primary education 0.41 percent,

high school 0.70 percent, general high school 1.74 percent, Bachelor 0.42 percent, and Masters 0.19 percent.

The percentage of representatives from vulnerable groups in the programme is around 10 percent. The Roma participants account for 1 percent of the total number of participants in the programme.

Table 1. Number of beneficiaries and expenditure of on-the-job training period during 2014 – 2018

Year	No. of beneficiaries	Expenditure (€)
2014	407	244,200
2015	250	150,000
2016	951	570,600
2017	478	286,800
2018	493	295,800

The budget of the programme is very low. Figures in Table 1 indicate that on-the-job training expenditure recorded high fluctuations over the years. The lowest expenditure for the programme was recorded in 2015 with a symbolic expenditure of 150,000 Euro. The highest amount was allocated in 2016, accounting for an increase of 280% compared to the previous year amounting to 570,000 Euros. In the last two years, the programme expenditure has been almost constant and amounted to about 290,000 Euros. The average cost per participant per month is around 150 Euros and the programme lasts an average of 4 months.

The main barrier/challenge towards better results as identified by PES specialists themselves is the limited budget, relatively large number of unemployed, while in PES' opinion the best practice is the joint development of a training plan by the trainer of the Vocational Centre and the selected business.