



Transition in Kosovo: Perspective of practitioners

THE TOBP CASE STUDY RESEARCH PAPER

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1. Executive Summary

In Kosovo have been conducted two interviews between 03/2019-05/2019 with service providers that work directly to the migrant families and help them adopt to the changes that happened in Kosovo during the time they were at the other country. The methods adopted to select the sample were the connection of migrant families and service providers when they came back, service providers in the migrated country, migrant families, and support of citizens in migration country. The aim of the paper is to give a clear vision of expertise that service providers give to migrant families once they are returned home. The information collected was on a base of questionnaire that we conducted mainly with the points:

- The expertise they provide (the reintegration)
- Policy options and recommendations to support their socioeconomic inclusion
- Better integrated migrants with higher self-esteem, well-being, and career development prospects
- Skills and instructions



- Building capacity and provide information for returning migrants to contribute to the development of their country of origin and enable existing migrants to have links with diaspora services and remain in contact with their country of origin

2. Background/Context

Kosovo's migration has grown in scale and complexity since the turn of the century, Kosovo war made a lot of families migrate to different states for a better social and economic future. Migration has a close tie with economy and diaspora population are a daily reality for many in Kosovo. According to the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo "One in four Kosovars currently lives abroad. Financial flows from members of the diaspora - including remittances emigrants and travel expenses - correspond to one-fifth of Gross Domestic Product" (UNDP 2014)

Since 1989, deteriorating political climate and rising unemployment among Kosovo Albanians caused a great exodus, where many emigrants relocated to Switzerland and Germany. During the 1998/1999 conflict, many individuals sought housing in neighboring countries and those of Western Europe. A large proportion of these refugees were returned to Kosovo after the situation stabilized. Since 2000, there has been a steady outflow of migrants in response to high unemployment and lack of economic opportunities in Kosovo.

The aim of this study was to conduct information about the experiences of professionals who worked with the returned families in Kosovo. The interviews were conducted in Kosovo, municipality of Pristina between 03/2019-05/2019. The total number of interviews was from two different service providers in Kosovo at the same time they are the biggest organizations in Kosovo that work with reintegration of migrants.

Interviews lasted approximately 30-40 minutes and were recorded and then transcribed. We applied semi-structured questionnaire, in the two cases. All interviews were recorded, and the persons authorized the recording. The first case of migrant family were with low income and had migrated to Germany 3 years before, they worked in a Market in Germany for 1 year. The other family spent 2 years in Germany and they had an unborn child in the refugee camp, the only assistance they had were their family money since the father was unable to work due to heart disease.

In Kosovo, the migrants that seek for help in Migrant centers are typically labor migrants who are back to the home country after 2-3 years, unemployed college graduates seeking employment, and low-income families that usually had financial problems in Kosovo before migration. This led the organizations to target specific outreach activities and information towards migrants.

The service provider organizations provide information on safe migration and protection for vulnerable migrants, facilitating labor migration, reintegrating returnees and enhancing the developmental effects of migration. These objectives are implemented through information and counselling, as well as outreach services to a range of clients (migrant workers, family migrants, resettled refugees and students).



3. Findings/Results

3.1 The return of migrants, employment, and the connection with service providers

From those who currently plan to return home, 54.6 percent hold managerial positions and work in professional jobs while returned emigrants tend to work in jobs that require higher qualifications than current migrants. Qualified returning migrants will be able to raise it human capital stock and human development in Kosovo. (GAP Institute, 2015)

Through the interviews and data gathering from service providers we have found that immigrants tend to accumulate capital, knowledge, and skills and then to return home, a fact which has been observed by 2011 census data, which shows that returnees are much more capable than resident population. With this case service providers find difficulties in integrating them in jobs because with their skills they gained in migrant countries they are paid less in Kosovo. Unfortunately, the high unemployment rate in Kosovo may mean that the labor market may not be able to absorb all returnees, although the private sector has recently stressed that the lack of skilled labor represents serious problem for business development, especially for high level jobs.

“As service providers we provide: Information and assistance in searching for employment and job matching in Kosovo. This should take account of the following: Availability of information and assistance that empowers migrants to seek employment that guarantees decent work, pay and conditions of employment, and opportunities for skills and professional development”.

Organizations that deal with return migrants provide information, assistance, and referrals for returning migrants on reintegrating into their country of origin, including legal support for those who have experienced exploitation and may want to pursue redress against their recruiters or employers. They can make a significant contribution in helping returned migrants to find work and deal with the social, economic, or other changes that may have taken place in their country while they were abroad. This is particularly important for migrants who have returned after many years overseas and who may have lost their social networks or links to employment.

3.2 Transition phase/ Reintegration of migrants. The method service provider organizations use towards the integration of migrants

The first thing service providers do towards migrant families that come to office to seek help is cover some main issues:

- General profile of potential migrants: data on age, gender, ethnicity, number of children, educational and professional qualifications, current employment and professional experience, language skills, type of job sought, choice of country of destination, reasons for choosing country of destination and previous work experience abroad.
- Obstacles and opportunities in finding a job in a country of destination (ex. Germany): for example, language skills, unemployment, up-to-date training, qualifications, difficulties in gaining work permit or unrealistic expectations.



- Services that migrants need: such as help seeking job vacancies in home country, training opportunities, techniques for writing application letters and CVs, opportunities to participate in microcredit schemes, database of job vacancies in countries of destination, study opportunities abroad and visa procedures.

Migrants are often not aware of their rights in relation to the processes and procedures of seeking employment, integrating into the country, or accessing public services. Without accurate and up-to-date information, migrants seek information from the mass media, friends, or social networks, which may be inaccurate. This can leave them vulnerable to fraudulent migration brokers and recruitment agents, using irregular means of migration, and being at risk of exploitation and abuse. A key issue for migrants is to be properly informed and therefore empowered so that they can identify misinformation from fraudulent recruitment agents and benefit from ethical recruitment practices. Service providers can enable migrants to make well-informed choices about migration and thus avoid brain waste, bad job-matching, false expectations, and difficulties encountered in integrating into the host country.

“Service providers usually call the migrant families when they see a job available on the website for example we had a case one time that one of the returned migrants knew German language very well at C1 level and there was a vacancy open from a call center, so we called the guy and sent him the vacancy, also we helped him get a certification of German language from the trainings we provide.”

Once there is a clear picture of the target groups and the types of information and counselling services to be offered, it is important to draw up a plan for how these services will be provided.

There are several different ways in which services can be delivered. Consideration should be given to the best ways in which services can be provided to meet the needs of different groups of migrants.

These can include the following:

- Face-to-face individual consultations.
- Individual telephone information services and hotlines.
- Web-based information and online services.
- Outreach services provided in targeted locations such as colleges, schools, or community centers.
- Mobile services provided in different locations, for example, in rural and remote areas.
- Referrals to other services and specialist agencies

3.3 Provide information, assistance, and services to support the reintegration of migrants who have returned to their countries of origin

During the interviews with social providers, it was concluded that each organization has a handbook with personalized information services and advice services to migrants and their families.



This helps to provide independent, accurate and up-to-date information services and advice to migrants to empower them to make informed choices to participate in safe, planned, and legal forms of migration, and enable them to make informed decisions that affect their mobility, integration and economic and social advancement.

The following are some additional services migrant organizations for re-integration can provide for returning migrants:

- Assistance in finding temporary accommodation; and in the case of migrants with little or no funding, assistance in finding support networks that can help with food and other personal requirements.
- Information on job searching, including career development plans that address training and skills development and relevant career opportunities.
- Information for skilled workers on job searching that may include job matching to maximize the skills and knowledge gained from working overseas.
- Direct services to support health, safety, and integration.
- Directly provided psychosocial services or referrals to services to support physical and mental health, including on-site medical assistance and provision.
- Accessing childcare and services for pre-school children, including costs.
- How to access psychosocial support services such as help-lines, safe houses, and legal assistance; and remedies for migrants who have experienced discrimination, racism, hate crimes, gender-based violence or other forms of violence or abuse in countries of destination.

4. Discussion

One of the most important elements of service provision is to ensure the information provided is accessible to a diverse population base, and that services are provided in inclusive and equal ways.

Ensure that planning considers the needs and experiences of different groups of migrants and potential migrants, including women, people that are vulnerable or at risk, and the children and family members of migrants and migrants. Identifying barriers, and planning to overcome them, is a crucial step.

Since migrants are not able to benefit from existing opportunities, resulting in poorer integration resilience and self-reliance and dependence on social welfare systems, one of the main objectives of service providers is helping the migrants effectively integrate into society (meaning a citizenship conception of participation, membership, entitlement and provisions to a responsible political and social role in a collectivity).

5. Conclusion

The main reasons of emigration were the high level of unemployment, poverty, corruption and organized crime, the loss of hope for a developing perspective of the country, reunion with the family and relatives and other reasons.



It is important for service providers to avoid creating false expectations about the services that can be provided; it is important to be realistic about the types of information and assistance that can be delivered and ensure that migrants know what they can expect from organizations and what is expected from them. Most of migrants upon returning home think that service providers will give them money or pay for their rent, but that is not the case.

Getting back to our research analysis and the action competences that are needed we can conclude that it is important providing an independent, impartial, and confidential service that is responsive to all potential clients means taking account of applying the following as part of service development, it is a must for service provider to absolve a course, or training prior to working with immigrants. As a service provider he/she needs to be aware first about how to enable citizenship and how to support and foster this empowerment for returning migrants. A service provider needs to know what the meaning of participation, political partaking, social roles, responsibility, being active in claiming, etc.

The experience of many service providers is that migration-related information can be highly complex. It is therefore very important that time is given to providing individualized responses. A particularly good practice is to promote a culture of listening, to enable clients to explain their situation fully. This may, for example, involve family circumstances and family reunification issues, different patterns of migration including temporary and circular migration, language and integration issues or gender-related issues. If necessary, staff will need to be trained to deal with complex cases and/or know where to refer a client for specialist help. And this is what we are trying to do with the course (badge). By doing so the service provider will feel better on understanding the instructions on how to access to returned migrants.

The course (badge) should have a cultural, health and social aspect that will help the service provider to approach the migrant in the right way. By doing so the migrant will feel more welcome and will understand the instructions. As many refugees and migrants lack access to health care services, there should be a legal status in health systems that provides to migrants at least basic conditions and knowledge.

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