THE WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAMME

success stories
This brochure was kindly supported by UNDP’s Active Labour Market Programmes. The main objective of ALMP is to improve the capacities of the labour market institutions to design relevant, gender-responsive policies at the central level and to deliver integrated services at the local level, focusing on the most vulnerable groups among the unemployed.

During 2014-2017, ALMP is kindly funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Embassy of the United Kingdom and the UNDP.

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The aim of the Wage Subsidy Programme, a joint effort of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is to create employment opportunities for job-seekers in Kosovo by subsidizing employers who are willing to hire them on a long-term basis. It is a unique opportunity to support gradual growth of Kosovo enterprises.

In addition to supporting the local companies by subsidizing employment, the Wage Subsidy Programme facilitates the entire recruitment process for the new vacancies by using the expertise of the employment offices to match each job vacancy with the appropriate job-seekers.

The Wage Subsidy Programme provides a fifty percent subsidy to the employer for each newly hired unemployed person in a duration of six, nine, and twelve-month period, based on the profile of the job seekers.

Since 2005 when the Programme was introduced, 2,749 persons have benefited from the program. In addition, during 2015-2016, 618 women and men were employed for a period of one year. A total of 25% of the beneficiaries were below 24 years old, with a record of 37% of the beneficiaries being women.

Mr. Arban Abrashi
Minister of Labour and Social Welfare

“The Wage Subsidy Programme is a unique opportunity for jobseekers who risk of becoming long-term unemployed, by subsidizing the employers for each new hire. This way we are focusing on enhancing livelihoods of the citizens through the provision of employment opportunities to disadvantaged jobseekers.”

Mr. Andrew Russell
UN Development Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

“UNDP is proud of its longstanding partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, which—with the generous support of the Government of Finland—has led to a wide variety of strategies and concrete actions to create jobs and promote economic development in Kosovo. I am particularly pleased that one of the latest examples of this partnership—the Wage Subsidy Programme—has focused so strongly on the employment of young women and men. In addition, and in line with UNDP’s longstanding commitment to gender equality, the Programme has helped many young and disadvantaged women enjoy equal access to employment opportunities through training and skills development.”
FLORJETA BUQAJ
Florjeta Buqaj is 26 years old and works for a shoe design and manufacturing company. After graduating from high school, Florjeta wanted to get university studies, but her lack of finances made it difficult to register for higher education.

Due to difficulties in landing a job by herself after seven months of searching, Florjeta registered as unemployed with the Kosovo Public Employment Services. “I was guided throughout the whole process. I created my personal CV, and the counsellor advised me for the job profile based on my skills,” Florjeta explains.

And, not surprisingly, just one month later Florjeta got the call from her counsellor that she was selected by her employer as a Production Assistant. “I was lucky, I know. But I truly believe in the services of the Employment Office and the work the counsellors do day in day out. Without their help I could never have gotten this job.”

Today, when asked to define what success means, Florjeta says that focus and the ability to deliver on tasks she is assigned to is the recipe to success. In the day-to-day, Florjeta mainly conducts quality check and ensures the machines are working properly.

“I am very happy and satisfied with my current job,” Florjeta says while describing all the good times she is having with her co-workers and her relationship with her employer.
ARBNOR FANGU
“Life can be tough, but you have to prove it otherwise,” is the first thing Arbnor tells me. Arbnor Fangu, a custom furniture producer from Bllace/Blaca, is only 22 years old. He is the oldest son of the family, making him the one responsible for caretaking. As young as he is, Arbnor is able to help his younger brother get a higher education in Prishtina/Prištini, the capital.

Being around Arbnor is energizing. He moves gracefully and while we visit his workplace, everyone greets him with admiration. "We build custom made furniture for homes and offices," Arbnor tells me proudly as his machines run in the background. "I am responsible for industrial sowing, and you have to be very focused and determined to do the job properly." He continues to explain his job is tightly linked with the design department: working with the designers makes his job fun, as they have to consult each other on a daily basis. For Arbnor, this is the most challenging yet also the most important part of his job. He concludes saying that he is the motor behind the process, due to his willingness to produce only the best.

But in order to achieve this, Arbnor spent years at low paying jobs, working on the black market or only seasonal work, and spent a year with no job at all. Through a good friend, Arbnor was introduced to the Kosovo Public Employment Services. It took Arbnor no time to establish contacts with counsellors in Suhareke, the employment office’s closest branch, who helped with registration and application of finding employment.

Arbnor got his job only one month after registering for job seeking with the Employment Office. Today, he is happy to tell me that he has a higher purpose. His job leads him to wake up every morning feeling useful and supportive of his family, and also on a mission to make every home and office feel comfortable. “Through good design, you not only make things look pretty-you make the spirit come alive and feel so people can feel good,” concludes Arbnor.
The wage subsidy program was recommended to me by a former jobseeker. Through the program, not only I have found myself a job.

I have gained job security, through which my family and I get to plan properly our finances.
Xhylje Gashi has worked with Burimi-AG, in the bottling industry, for five months now. Through Kosovo Employment Office, Xhylje has signed a twelve months contract with the company.
MIRJETA BAJRAMI
For Mirjeta, landing her first job as an office manager was a matter of proper career planning. Mirjeta has graduated from social studies. Yet, to be able to find her competitive edge, while continuously searching for a job, Mirjeta took computer and language courses. In Mirjeta’s opinion, receiving those certificates had a vast importance in helping her to land her first job.

Today, Mirjeta is only 22 years old and is office manager for Florimi, a touristic agency in the town of Ferizaj/Uroševcu. In her own words, Mirjeta, after a year with the agency, is responsible for bookings and coordination with their clients and partners. “I get to open the shop in the morning, then start the system to check for updates from our partners, where I learn more about the tours and tickets,” tells Mirjeta.

And, no wonder Mirjeta is successful in her job: she is determined to provide only the best service to their clients, sometimes even working after hours. “I love this job, because I get to meet people and help them through their travels.”

Asked for how she established first contacts with her employer, she confidently declares that Employment Office in Ferizaj is an insider to her success. “I went and registered with the employment office awhile ago, and even though the consultants where set to help me, I have continuously called and ask if there are any job openings. “I am truly thankful to the services the employment office offers; they have painted my way to success” concludes Mirjeta.
BASRI AJETI
Although a successful arts graduate, Basri Ajeti, as many youngsters of his generation, found it impossible to land a job after graduation. For that reason, Basri left his family behind and four years ago moved abroad seeking a better future. “Abroad is where I got to do everything possible to keep alive; I have worked as a painter in the black market. But I never knew if the next day I will be working again. Nothing was sure, so I decided to comeback home.”

“I always had a heart-to-heart with arts. As a young man I followed this dream and went on to pursue my degree in Arts from the Faculty of Arts in Prishtina,” declares Basri. Today, Basri Ajeti is a 31 years old engravalist, who through the support of the Kosovo Public Employment Services, works as a full-time designer and engraver.

Basri continues to tell his struggles in landing a job just after he got back home again. “A friend recommended me this place [Kosovo Public Employment Services]. I went a day after I got back and met with a consultant, who has been very helpful in getting me to put all necessary documents together for registration,” declares Basri.

And it was only a few weeks after when Basri received a phone call that they found him a job. “It felt like the world was given to me.” Engraving is such a special job to me, as it takes fine detailing to get an object, such as cemetery, decorated.“

Today, Basri is happily engaged in his day-to-day job. He is lead designer for the company and gets to engrave cemetery and lettering. His favorite job is to engrave portraits, as for him, an engraved portrait is timeless.
I have been searching for two years for a job.

But only after registering at the Kosovo Public Employment Services have I got a proper, well paid job.
Hatixhe Krasniqi, has been working with Fati NtSh, a textile company, as a sewer for six months now. Through Kosovo Employment Office, she has signed a twelve months contract with the company.
After graduation from high school, Shkelzen Bacaliu, a 33 year old from Kijeve/Kijeva, lost all hope in finding a proper job. This belief, has led him to seek a better future for him and his family. So he took the road and moved abroad. Having lived for a year abroad, Shkelzen has developed a new perspective about his homeland: no place ever becomes your home; no place will I invest my time but home. A month later, Shkelzen got his family and returned back home.

Meeting Shkelzen was calming as much as it was fun. He is a positive individual full of optimism. “I am a driven individual. In my job, I have been able to do many different tasks; I learn a lot;” he tells me.

Through Kosovo Public Employment Services, Shkelzen started working at a gas station and car wash, with branches all around Kosovo. “I meet many different people throughout the day. I also get to travel sometimes, depending on the client requests,” declares Shkelzen. Because of his hard working and respectful personality, he was able to win great deal of trust by his boss. “I registered in faculty recently, and I got to arrange with my boss to work flexible working hours.”

Coming back in Kosovo has had two fold successes for Shkelzen. First, through the Employment Office he received long term employment, and through a legal binding contract, Shkelzen gets to directly contribute to the future of home, by paying taxes.
RAGIP SADIKU
If there is one thing that is needed to push forward in life, it is determination. For Ragip Sadiku from Shtime/Štimlja, one thing was clear: no person will ever come and knock on his door to offer him a job. Behar is married and has a son. He struggled with finding employment and when something did come around, it would be just a temporary, low paid day job.

Meeting Ragip is monumental. He is a tall man with a strong physique, yet a very friendly and welcoming personality. He is trustworthy and hardworking. However, for a long time, Ragip spent his days looking for jobs, any type of job, just to be able to provide his family with basic necessities.

Ragip was persistent to change his situation. Through the Kosovo Public Employment Services, Ragip landed his first long-term job as a farmer at a company that produces fresh fruits for companies and local sellers alike. “The people at the Employment Office are very professional. They told me about the procedures for job registration, gave me a personal contact, and were always on the lookout for opportunities for me,” said Ragip.

Ragip enjoys the personal responsibility in his work and now he also gets to plan ahead his future with the family. “I have established a strong relationship with my boss. He likes me and trusts me, because I give my best everyday,” he declares while joyfully shaking my hand goodbye.
I never have had a long-term, well-paid job in my lifetime!

**Getting this job makes me feel safe about for the future.**

I recommend everyone to register and seek employment through this program.
Leonora Shala works for a furniture manufacturing company for four months now. Through Kosovo Employment Office, she has signed a twelve months contract with the company.
Set to work in the steel industry, immediately after finishing high school, Xhymshit has registered for job seeking with the Employment Office in the region of Ferizaj/Uroševca.

Xhymshit Abazi is only 22 years old. He is the oldest sibling and because of difficult financial situation, his options were limited; his future uncertain. “Have you ever got this feeling that life of others depends on you? I know I am too young to think like that, but I had to do something about it.”

And, as determined to change his family’s financial situation, Xhymshit started doing small job, such as helping his father carry working tools from one place to the other, or paint for neighbors to get extra income. “Seeing my dad work was so motivational for me: he has taught me my job, and instilled the work habit in me. But, unfortunately my dad got sick and soon all the jobs disappeared.” Xhymshit explains.

Until recent, Xhymshit was searching for jobs through friends and family, however, only until stepping the Employment Office, Xhymshit was able to feel that his skills can be put in good use. Today, thanks to the counselling at the Employment Office, he has signed a one year contract with the steel company, Metal, in Ferizaj/Uroševcu. “I am set really well with the company; and as far as my duties go, I brush all the steel being produced, and do all the painting.” Xhymshit explains.
Behar sets out to make his job more than just about the work: he finds joy and develops positive relationships through his job. Behar is a young, all around positive guy from Kline, who is happily married and has two kids.

His positive energy sets the tone of our meeting. “My life was very challenging,” says Behar. “Having two kids and no job was a difficult life.” However, Behar was set to change that—a consultant at the Kosovo Public Employment Services explains—it took only two weeks to land Behar a job. “I could never believe this would happen, only weeks after I got back from Germany where I lived,” Behar said.

“I work in the meatery industry. We prepare qebapa, suxhuk, and vishlle for restaurants all around Kosovo.” I am very friendly, and I love going to work everyday; I get to meet my friends. And, as a lead butcher, Behar gets to oversee the whole process, from getting the meat ready for production, to filling the displays and getting the deliveries in on time, on location.

With the help of the Employment Office, Behar has been working on a fulltime contract with an above average salary for five months now. He is very happy with his current standard of living, as he now has job security and the ability to support his family.
Having registered as unemployed with the Kosovo Public Employment Services has shaped my life forever!

After signing the contract, I feel that I have purpose in every working day!
Mustafe Sahiti, has been working with Bio-Fruti as a farmer for seven months now. Through Kosovo Employment Office, he has signed a twelve months contract with the company.