



VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LABOUR MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Original scientific paper

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ABSTRACT

To analyse democratic and legal labour relations in the current conditions of economic and social development means, first and foremost, to highlight their essence and main features, as well as the development trends and future improvements of these relations. The year 2021, like 2020, has been characterized, among others, by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has produced various effects. As an effort to mitigate these effects, the Government of Kosovo has undertaken measures to support employment through the economic recovery package. Based on this context, the main and only purpose of the 1st Measure of economic recovery is the support of employment. Active employment measures have played a very important role in the integration of unemployed persons into the labour market. One of these measures with the largest number of beneficiaries is Vocational Training. Vocational training is a fundamental and very important process to get a job. In this sense, even the latest statistical data (2021) of the official authorities of Kosovo prove that the largest beneficiaries of active labour market measures are the persons who have undergone vocational training. The purpose of Vocational Training is to enable an increase or adoption of professional knowledge, namely to acquire additional knowledge, skills and abilities to perform efficient work, in order to increase the prospect of employment or retain their employment. Based on the international aspect, employment and the labour market are under the pressure of many factors, such as demographic, technological, economic and political ones; therefore, vocational training is considered as one of the most successful active labour market measures.

Keywords: *employment, employment relationship, vocational training, mediated employment.*

INTRODUCTION

Active labour market measures reflect the great importance these measures have in support of unemployment. One of the main strategic objectives of the Public Employment Services in Kosovo is to increase employment, develop skills in accordance with the labour market demands and better labour market administration. This objective aims to enable increased employment in Kosovo by addressing the challenges of workforce skills and mismatches between demand and supply in the labour market, which will be made possible by strengthening

the capacities of Public Employment Services, expanding the range of services and improving their quality. In the field of vocational training, the focus should be on improving the quality of programs and their better matching with the labour market. Vocational training means all activities aimed at providing knowledge, training and new experience for necessary training, efficient work within the occupation. The objective of vocational training is the institutional training provided to job seekers for a certain occupation, based

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on the increase or adoption of professional knowledge, skills and practical knowledge, with the aim of improving professional capacities to ensure and protect qualitative work, and facing with changes in technology and labour market conditions. Vocational training, as well as other active labour market measures, have played a very important role in the integration of unemployed persons into the labour market. Materials and work methods During this research, I have used various scientific and professional sources, including university texts, scientific papers and articles, analysis, statistical data, constitutional and legislative acts of domestic and international labour law. The research employed various scientific methods, which are typical for scientific research of social and humanitarian sciences.

DISCUSSION

Employment

The state, in the conditions of a market economy, appears as a regulator in function of a progressive social policy. This political function aims to mediate, as much as possible, the employment of people capable to work. However, this mission cannot be properly fulfilled, except in agreement with employers and professional organizations (Robaj, 2017: 48). The economic crisis and unemployment in the world constitute a serious concern in the employment policy of every democratic state. In this context, some solutions are required, such as in the form of reducing working hours, lowering the retirement age, reviewing immigration and emigration policies, modernizing the economy and seeking improved competition, investment policies in creating new jobs, etc., (Robaj, 2017: 49). In order to establish a legal employment relationship, a consensual contract is required in written form and signed by the employer and the employee (Law on Labour of Kosovo, 2010: Article 10). Definition "employment contract" in French: *Contrat du travail* (Pélissier, 1986: 321), in English: Labour contract, and the definition "employment contract" in French: *Contrat d'emploi*; in English: employment contract; contract of hire (Goldman, 1984: 43) are synonymous and there is no special difference in their content, which would be of theoretical importance (Tintic, 1969:168). In labour legislation, the definition of employment contract first appears in Belgian law (Humblet, Rigaux, 2004: 41), then also in French law in 1901, Dutch law in 1907, etc. The right to work, in the general sense, is defined only with the establishment of the employment relationship, as a safe and decent

job (Constitution of Kosovo, Article: 23). In foreign legal doctrine, theories related to the legal nature of the employment relationship have emerged, such as: contracting theory (Kovacevic, 2011: 49-51; Bajic 1937: 9; Deakin, Morris, 2009: 63-64); the theory of loyalty (Supiot, 2007: 18); and institutional theory (Vannes, 2005: 16-21). However, it should be noted that the legal doctrine of labour recognizes, as a more accurate thesis, the theory of those authors who affirm that the individual labour contract is an autonomous contract, a contract of a special type (Çela, 2013: 25-30; Berenstein, Mahon, 2001: 53, 56-57; Weis, Schmidt, 2008: 87).

Content of the individual employment contract

As a rule, people have an employment contract whereby they are employed by providing their services within the framework of the employer's organization and orders, for a certain salary (Çela, 2013:171; Vannes, 2005 :16-21; Holbach, 1994: 25; Spasiq, 1950: 160; Kovacevic-Kustrimovic, Lazic, 2008: 244-245). In fact, according to jurisprudence, it is obvious that the capacity of the contracting parties is important in the individual employment contract, which means that the contract belongs to the group of personal contracts, namely *intuitu personae* (Brun, 1962: 1719; Pélissier, Supiot, Jeammaud, 2000: 52-53; Stojanović, 1981: 149; Rade, 1997: 78; Kulic, 2006:109; Jovanovic, 2003: 41). Based on the comparative law, the individual employment contract, as a rule, represents the consensual contract where the written form is legally provided, such as English (Wedderburn, 1987: 133-136), American (Player, 1992: 5), Canadian (Opie, 1996: 256), French (Rivero, Savatier, 1987: 462-464), German (Weiss, Schmidt, 2008: 87), Swedish (Edlund, Nyström, 1988: 60), Japanese (Hanami, 1985: 55-56), etc., labour laws. Thus, the European labour law also defines the employment contract as a consensual contract between the contracting parties (Blanpain, 2006: 237-239; Treu, 2007: 61; Scognamiglio, 1992:202; Gams, 1974:203; Dauti, 2004:64). So, the written form is necessary in the employment contract, because if the written form is missing, then the contract does not create legal consequences and the legal employment relationship is considered not to exist, but in fact the so-called factual work exists (Weis; Schmidt, 2008: 89; Humblet, Rigaux, 2004: 62; Amon, 2010: 238; Tintic, 1972: 674; Despotovic, 1978:37-38). However, in addition to the dependent work, jurisprudence also recognizes the independent

work, which is regulated by special legislation (*lex specialis*), subject to the scope of work, e.g., to practice the private activity in health sector (Law Private Practices in Health of 2004); to practice advocacy (Law on Advocacy of 2009 and 2013); to practice the private enforcement (Law on Enforcement Procedure of 2012), etc. All these activities are not considered employment relationship, even though the employee works and generates income from work. In fact, according to jurisprudence, independent work is considered self-employment, not a legal employment relationship.

Vocational training

Vocational education and training aim to provide knowledge and practical skills, for the efficient realization of activities within an occupation or a group of occupations, regulated by the Law on Vocational Education and Training, the Law on the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on Registration and Providing of the Services for Unemployed, Jobseekers and Employers³, and the Regulation on Active Labour Market Measures⁴. Vocational training includes three components, namely: 1. Institutional training, which means the training provided by Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) for unemployed persons and job seekers for a certain occupation; 2. Combined training, which means cooperation with

companies for the inclusion of the unemployed and jobseekers in vocational training, with the aim of providing the highest quality vocational training services, through training in partnership with businesses; 3. Combined training from accredited external providers, which means training provided by external providers and can only be provided for those occupations that are not provided by Vocational Training Centres. The training at the Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) is quite advanced and is based on the candidate's individual skills, with a training duration of 3-6 months. The trainings involve 30% theory and 70% practice, and after each developed module, the candidate undergoes a test, as well as the final test at the end of the training, and upon successful completion, the candidate receives a certificate on the acquired knowledge. Vocational Training, as an Active Labour Market Measure, is organized and provided by eight (8) Vocational Training Centres, operating under the Employment Agency administration⁵. Vocational Training, like previous years, also during 2021, represents one of the Active Measures with the largest number of beneficiaries. This measure participates in a proportional share with 45.3% or with 2,923 references in vocational trainings, and about 230 persons or 3.5% were referred in the combined training. So, a total of 3,153 job seekers were referred to vocational trainings (See Tab.1).

Table 1. Active Labour Market Measures

Types	2018	2019	2020	2021	%	Difference 2020
Vocational Training	5497	6603	3436	2923	45.3%	-14.9%
On-the-job training	493	420	1498	28	0.4%	-98.1%
In-Company training	197	322	396	228	3.5%	-42.4%
Public work	680	827	540	9	0.1%	-98.3%
Wage Subsidy	336	445	51	462	7.2%	805.9%
Self-employment	390	214	96	10	0.2%	-89.6%
Professional internship	1101	2705	3446	2788	43.2%	-19.1%
Total	8.694	11.536	9463	6448	100%	-31.9%

Vocational Training during 2021 has managed to achieve 3,153 referrals, reflecting a downward trend of 8.2% compared to the previous year⁶. This downward trend for 2021, like the previous year,

is a result of the global pandemic and the closure of certain profiles of Vocational Training Centres. The Vocational Training Department for certain profiles has reflected a lack of

¹ Law on Vocational Education and Training, 2013.

² Law on the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, 2014.

³ Law on Registration and Providing of the Services for Unemployed, Jobseekers and Employers, 2016.

⁴ Regulation on Active Labour Market Measures, 2018.

⁵ Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Annual Report, 2021.

⁶ Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Annual Report, 2021.

trainers and in this respect many job seekers have not been able to attend the trainings. The number of job seekers referred to Vocational Training Centres is 3,153 persons for 2021, distributed in 7 Vocational Training Centres.

However, this number has fluctuated over the years, thus, in 2019 there were 6,603 persons referred to vocational training, while in 2021 there were 3,153 job seekers referred to vocational training (see Fig.1).

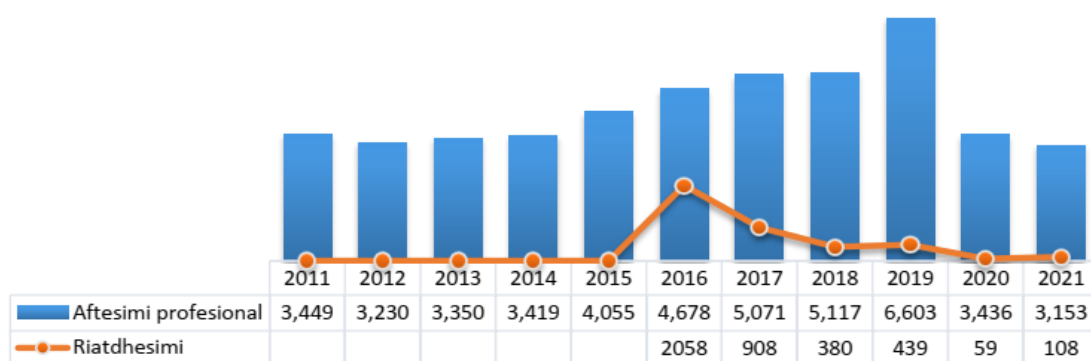


Figure 1: Trend of entry into Vocational Training, by years

The highest number of participants in Vocational Trainings is mainly among people with the secondary qualification level “Secondary school - Gymnasium” and “secondary vocational education” who together make up 67.8% of the participants in the training. This is followed by job seekers with primary school with 23.9%.

The smallest number of participants is among people with Master’s qualification level, who make up 0.2% of the total number. Mainly, the number of those referred to highly qualified vocational trainings comes as a result of new career guidance, the mismatch of supply and demand in the labour market. (See Tab. 2).

Table 2. Active Labour Market Measures

Vocational Trainings	Vocational training	%	TP	Certified	CP
Unqualified	-	-	-	-	-
Grades I –IX (Primary School)	753	23.9%	4.8%	588	78.1%
Secondary vocational education	828	26.3%	4.8%	605	73.1%
Secondary school - Gymnasium	1309	41.5%	24.8%	1061	81.1%
Bachelor	258	8.2%	4.4%	201	77.9%
Master	5	0.2%	0.9%	4	80.0%
Doctor of Science	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3153	100%	3.8%	2459	78.0%

The training rate in Vocational Trainings for the “Secondary school - Gymnasium” level is 24.8%, followed by the Secondary Vocational Education and Primary School qualification

level with 4.8%. Other qualification levels, such as Masters’ degree, have the lowest share, with a training rate at only 0.9%. (See Fig. 2).

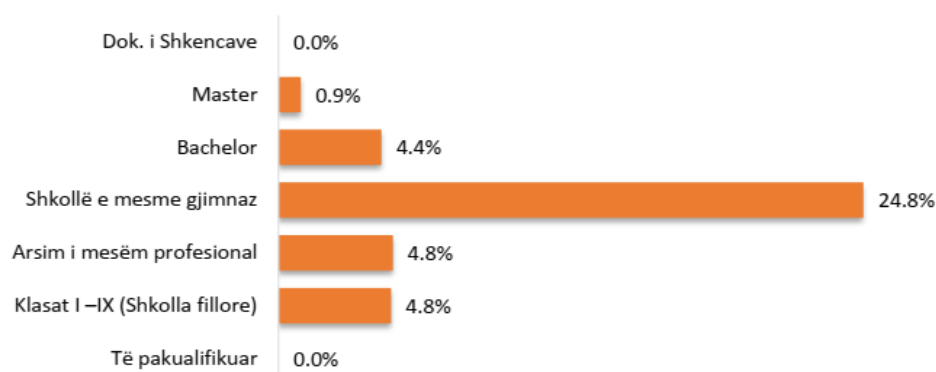


Figure 2: Training rate by qualifications

In relation to the age group, the data for 2021 show that the highest number of participants in Vocational Training was focused on persons in the age group of 25-39 years, who make up 41.5% of all trainees. Persons in the 15-24 age group also have a similar percentage to the first

group with 40.85. While the percentage of other age groups participation is lower (see Tab. 3). As for the Certification Rate (CR), the highest percentage is achieved by older age groups, namely people of the 55+ age group with 86.7%.

Table 3. Vocational training by age groups

Age group	Vocational Training	%	TR	Certified	CR
15-24	1285	40.8%	9.4%	968	75.3%
25-39	1309	41.5%	3.7%	1055	80.6%
40-54	529	16.8%	2.3%	410	77.5%
55+	30	1.0%	0.3%	26	86.7%
Total	3153	100%	3.8%	2459	78.0%

Young people, despite being the main priority for Vocational Training during 2021, reflect the activation of 1,285 persons or 40.8%, or a training rate of 9.4%. While the number of certified persons is 968 or 75.3%.⁷

In terms of gender, the referrals of jobseekers in Vocational Trainings for 12 months show that women are under-represented, where the percentage of women's participation is significantly lower than the participation of men (See Tab. 4).

Table 4. Vocational training by gender

Trainings	Vocational Training	%	TR	Certified	CR
Women	932	29.6%	2.4%	737	79.1%
Men	2.221	70.4%	5.1%	1,722	77.5%
Total	3.153	100%	3.8%	2.459	78.0%

Although women have a lower participation in vocational trainings, they have a slightly higher certification rate than men. Thus, the certification rate for women is 79.1% while for men is only

77.5%. The dominant region of referrals in vocational trainings is that of Prizren, followed by the Region of Peja and Ferizaj. These together contain over 67% of all trainings in Kosovo.⁸

⁷Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Annual Report, 2021.

⁸*Ibid.*

Employment mediation

One of the main strategic objectives of the Government of Kosovo is to increase employment, develop skills in accordance with the labour market demands and ensure better labour market administration. This objective aims to enable increased employment in Kosovo through the Public Employment Services, by addressing the challenges of workforce skills and mismatches between demand and supply in the labour market, which will be made possible by strengthening the capacities of the Public Employment Services, expanding the range of services and improving their quality. In the field of vocational training, the focus will be on improving the quality of programs and their better matching with the labour market. For analysis purposes, mediations provided as a service will be divided into:

(i) Regular mediations in employment, and

(ii) Mediations in employment by Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs).

The total number of employment mediations carried out during 2021 is 6,252 mediations. Most mediations took place through active labour market measures, whereby 3,297 people were mediated during 2021, which, compared to 2020, represent a decrease of 41.4%.⁹ However, the case is different for regular mediations, where in this category a significant increase was noted, which is quite positive for public employment services. So, through regular employment, 2,955 persons were mediated or 122.2% more than the previous year. Job Vacancy Filling Rate (JVFR) is approximately 58%. In this context, the comparison with the previous year 2020 reflects a decrease in this job vacancy filling rate reported with a difference of 4 percentage points. The Employment Rate (ER) for 2021 is 7.62%, compared to 2020, there was a decrease of 4.77 percentage points (See Tab. 5).

Table 5. Employment Rate

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Unemployment	93.866	95.890	70.790	168.980	82.042
Job vacancies	12.511	14.847	15.647	11.160	10.747
Employments	6.042	6.764	8.771	6.961	6.252
- Regular mediations	3.215	3.764	4.160	1.330	2.955
- Employment mediation by ALMM	2.827	3.000	4.611	5.631	3.297
JVFR	48%	46%	56%	62%	58%
Employment Rate	6.44%	7.05%	12.39%	4.12%	7.62%

The research of the labour market and the registration of all requests coming from the labour market is the result of the daily activity of the employment counsellors. So, all the developments that are related in this context reflect a result of mediations in employment divided by economic sectors.

The largest number of employment mediations were made through the processing industry sector and the trade, automobile repair and household goods sector. These two sectors together make up about 48% of all mediations made during 2021. (See Fig. 3).

⁹ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2021.

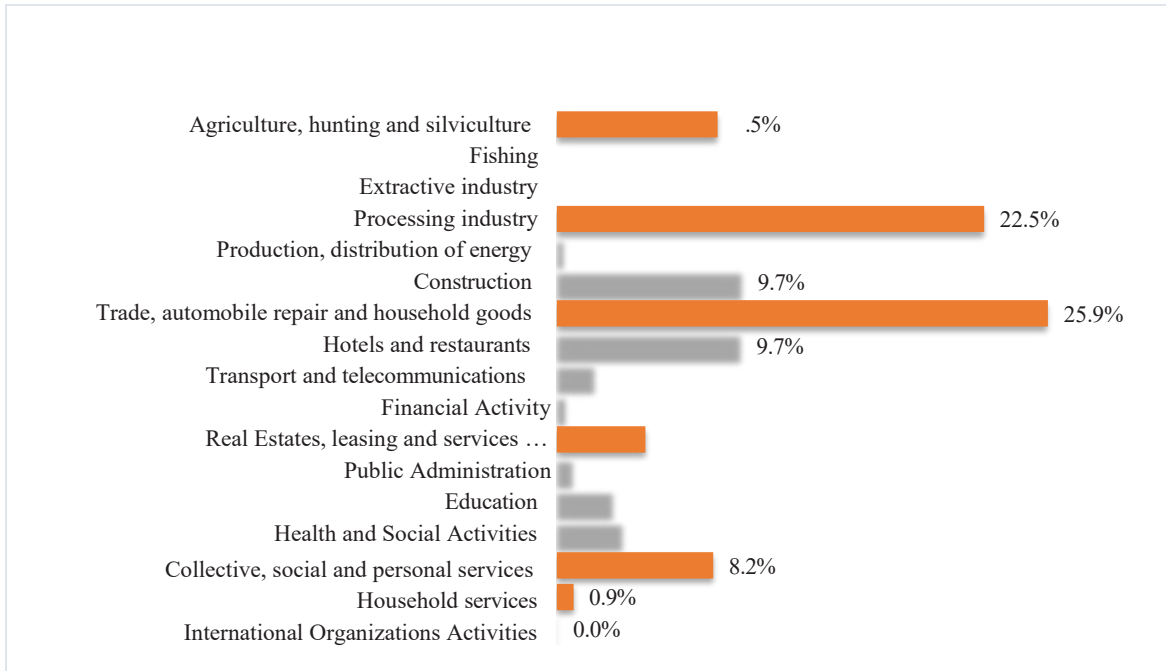


Figure 3. Regular employment by economic sectors

As regards the ownership, it can be concluded that the private sector is dominant in the regular employment rate. Since 2015, there has been a declining trend in employment in the public sector, and a significant increase in regular employment in the private sector. (See Fig. 4).

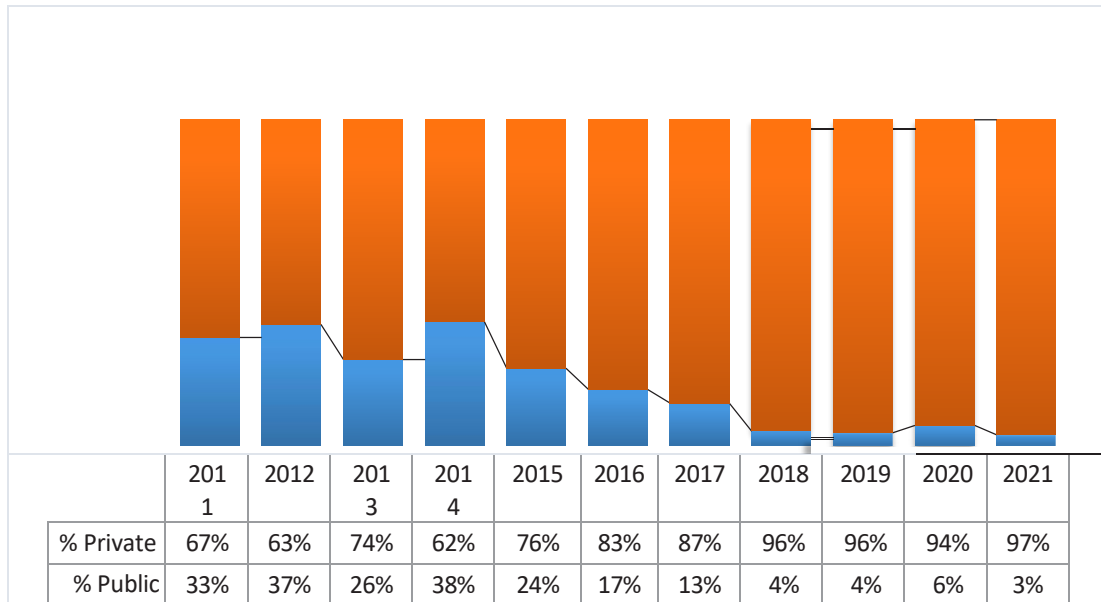


Figure 4. Regular employment rate by ownership

By the end of 2021, the private sector has mediated in the employment of 2,864 persons or 97% and, if compared to the previous year, the percentage values have increased by 3 percentage points.¹⁰ Whereas, the number of mediations in employ-

ment by occupations presents a more proportional division. The occupations of service and sales workers are dominant with 22.2%, followed then by professionals with 16.3%, elementary occupations with 16.3%, etc. (See Tab.6).

Table 6. Regular employments by occupations

Occupations	Regular employments	Proportion	ER	Difference 2020
Managers	64	2.2%	9.5%	137.0%
Professionals	483	16.3%	7.1%	143.9%
Technicians and professional associates	403	13.6%	5.7%	116.7%
Office workers and assistants	278	9.4%	9.6%	198.9%
Service and sales workers	656	22.2%	9.2%	180.3%
Workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing	113	3.8%	9.0%	22.8%
Employees of crafts and similar occupations	397	13.4%	4.1%	119.3%
Operators and installers in factories and machines	78	2.6%	6.5%	59.2%
Elementary occupations	483	16.3%	1.1%	78.9%
Total	2.955	100.0%	3.6%	122.2%

While the increase in mediations compared to the previous year was reflected in all occupations, the highest increase, however, was recorded in office workers and assistants with 198.8%, then service and sales workers with 180.3%.¹¹ It should be emphasized that professional skills play a very important role in getting a job. Therefore, mediations in employment carried out through occupations, best show which occupations are most in-demand by employers in the labour market. This is also due to the fact that the labour market is characterized by a strong workforce supply, as estimates show that

30-35 thousand young people enter the labour market every year.¹² Also, according to the latest statistics, the unemployment rate in Kosovo is 25.8% of the working-age population (15-64 years old), which is the highest in Europe.¹³ Therefore, employment mediation is considered as an objective and mechanism for reducing unemployment, namely increasing employment. The employment rate for mediations in regular employment mostly refers to the occupation "Office workers and assistants" with 9.6%, then "managers" with 9.5% and "Service and sales workers" 9.2% (See Fig. 5).

¹⁰ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2021.

¹¹ Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo, Annual Report, 2021

¹² Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Labor Force Survey in Kosovo, 2021.

¹³ *Ibid.*

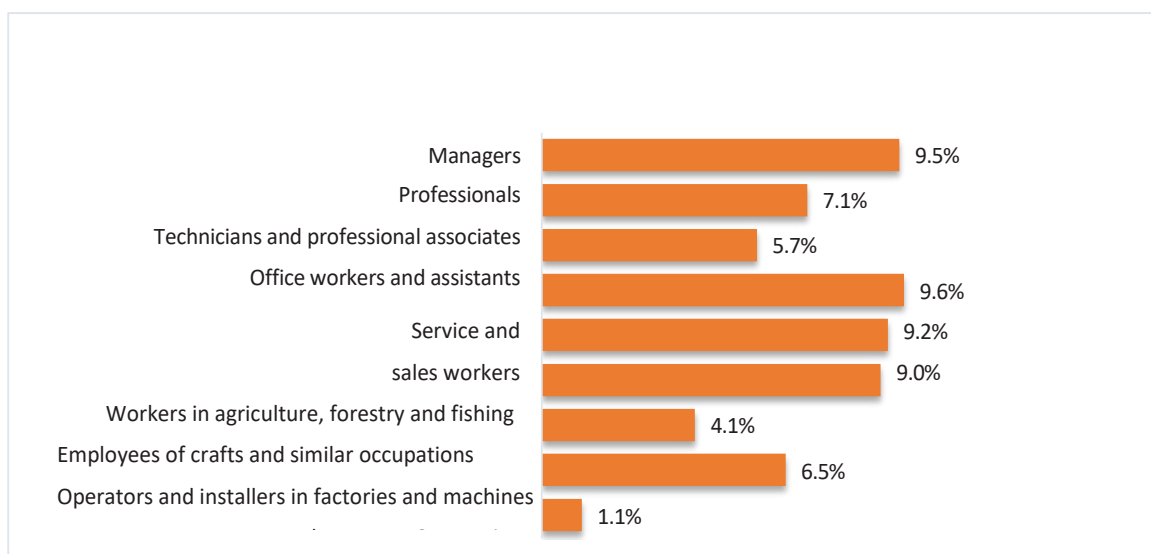


Figure 5. Regular employment rate by occupation

Regarding the issue of regular employment by qualifications, the largest number of mediations was among persons with secondary vocational education, followed by persons with a bachelor's degree and thirdly persons with primary school education.

Although the increase in mediations compared to the previous year was reflected in all levels of education, the biggest increase was with persons of secondary school education level with 202.7% and Master degree with 200.0%. (See Tab. 7).

Table 7. Regular employment by qualifications

Level of education	Regular employments	%	ER	Difference 2020
Unqualified	450	15.2%	1.2%	103.6%
Grades I –IX (Primary School)	452	15.3%	2.9%	43.5%
Secondary vocational education	898	30.4%	5.3%	128.5%
Secondary school - Gymnasium	554	18.7%	10.5%	202.7%
Bachelor	568	19.2%	9.6%	174.4%
Master	33	1.1%	6.2%	200.0%
Doctor of Science	0	-	-	-
Total	2.955	100.0%	3.6%	122.2%

The regular employment rate of 10.5% refers to the “secondary school - gymnasium” level, while

the lowest rate refers to the unqualified with 1.2% (see Fig. 6).

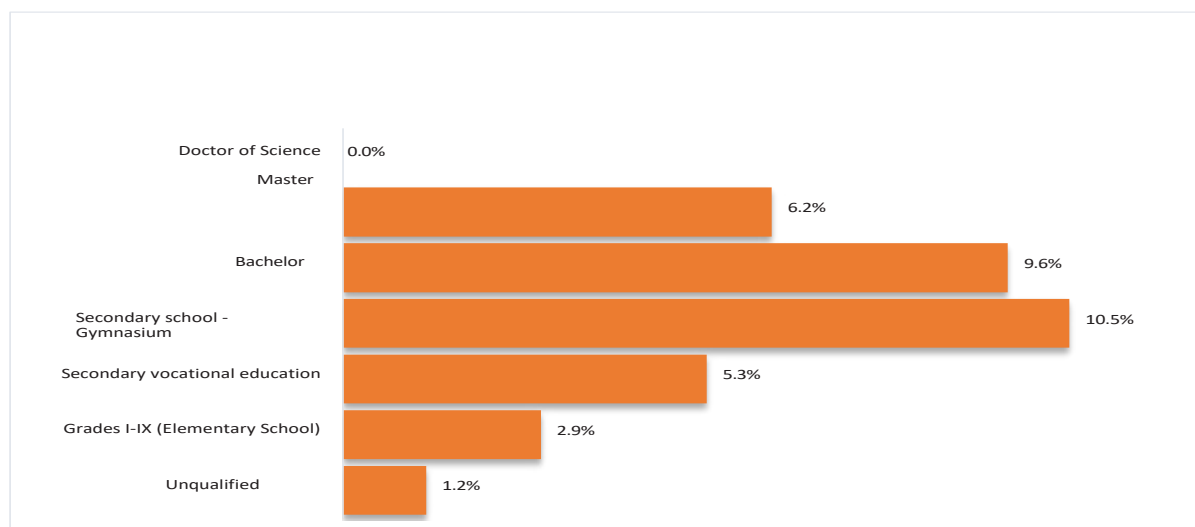


Figure 6. Regular employment rate by qualification

Half of mediations in regular employment were made among persons in the age group of 25-39 years old, who at the same time marked an increase compared to the previous year.

The smallest number of mediations was made among persons aged 55+, while the highest increase from the previous year was among persons aged 15-24 with 222.2% (See Tab. 8).

Table 8. Regular employment by age group

Age group	Regular employments	%	ER	Difference 2020
15 – 24	886	30.0%	6.5%	222.2%
25 – 39	1.486	50.3%	4.2%	104.4%
40 – 54	481	16.3%	2.1%	69.4%
55+	102	3.5%	1.0%	131.8%
Total	2.955	100%	3.6%	122.2%

Other active employment measures

Active employment measures play a very important role in the integration of unemployed persons into the labour market. Through active labour market measures, a considerable number of unemployed persons have been mediated, as well as a number of them have been referred to vocational trainings. Other active labour market measures are:

- On-the-job training;
- Internship;
- Employment subsidy;
- Self-employment; and
- Public work.

From the total number of 3,297 mediations in ALMM, the highest number of beneficiaries were persons with Bachelor degree with 1,301 mediations or 39.5%, then secondary vocational school with

1,161 or 35.2%. The largest decrease compared to the previous year was experienced by unqualified persons and persons with secondary school of gymnasium. While other categories with tertiary level of education have reflected growth, where there is an increase with Bachelor degree of 10.1% and with Master degree 28.2% compared to 2020.

CONCLUSIONS

The economic crisis and unemployment in the world constitute a serious concern in the employment policy of every democratic state. In this context, some solutions are required to reduce unemployment. Active labour market measures reflect the great importance these measures have to support unemployment. The main strategic goal of the Government of Kosovo is to increase

employment, in accordance with the labour market demands and better labour market administration. Active employment measures have played a very important role in the integration of unemployed persons into the labour market. Through active labour market measures, a considerable number of unemployed persons have been mediated, as well as a number of them have been referred to vocational trainings. In fact, according to official data, the biggest beneficiaries of active labour market measures are the persons who have undergone vocational training. Therefore, the main objective of the Government of Kosovo is to increase employment through active labour market measures, and in particular through vocational training. Finally, it must be concluded that the active labour market measures through the provision of vocational training in Kosovo have given the right results, which represent the building of a stable employment system, in function of equality and social justice.

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