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INCLUSION OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Project Facts and Results



The Project is implemented by



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FOREWORD

CARE in the Balkans is very pleased to present this brochure which outlines the main project results, but also key approaches and steps utilised to motivate, engage and include ethnic minority women into the labour market in the Republic of Macedonia. In cooperation with partner organisation Women's Civic Initiative ANTIKO – a network of 16 grass roots organisations from Macedonia, CARE has successfully implemented the project „Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Women in the Labour Market“, targeting five regions in Republic of Macedonia – Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola, Stip and Kumanovo.

This project is part of the wider CARE's effort to economically empower women not just in the Balkan region, but also globally. The objectives and activities of the project „Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Women in the Labour Market“ are in a very core of CARE's global mission to end poverty while placing women empowerment in the centre of our programme. With this project, we have addressed the issue of marginalization of ethnic minorities and access of vulnerable and excluded women to labour market.

The project team of CARE and ANTIKO, together with our associate CSOs in the target areas paid particular attention to reaching out to the marginalized ethnic minority women and providing information, training, mentoring and support needed for the increase of employability of each project beneficiary. On the other hand, the cooperation with local stakeholders and their involvement in social dialogue that was initiated by the project, opened the door for greater acceptance and raising community awareness about the issue of access to labour market of those who were practically never before active job seekers.

We are very proud that the projected results have been overachieved for more than 30%. This is a product of the comprehensive methodology, team dedication, collaboration in the field with various stakeholders and the great effort of field associates to reach out and target those that were in need for assistance. We hope that the project has greatly influenced the lives of 326 women who were direct beneficiaries, but also many of those who are going to benefit by the project advocacy efforts and replication of approach that has been utilized. We would, thus, like to thank all associates who, collaborating on achievement of project results, contributed to increasing inclusion of ethnic minority women into labour market and raising awareness of importance of women economic empowerment.

Sumka Bučan, MSc
Director, CARE International Balkans

ABOUT CARE INTERNATIONAL AND ITS WORK IN THE BALKANS



CARE International is a federation of international non-government organizations founded in 1945 to distribute lifesaving CARE Packages to survivors of World War II. Today, we are operating in 95 countries around the world with a mission to fight against poverty, social exclusion and injustice, with women and girls at the centre of our activities. CARE International has been active in the Balkans since 1993, when its principal activity, the same as in the years just after the war, was delivery of humanitarian aid and medicines to the population struck by war. For many years after the wars in the ex-Yugoslav countries, CARE was active in reconstruction and support to return, which included housing, livelihood assistance, psychosocial support and peace building activities.

Over the years, as the needs changed, focus of the organisation's work in the Balkans also changed, with developmental component becoming more dominant. Our aim in the Balkans today is to ensure recognition and fulfilment of social, economic and political rights of the vulnerable and marginalized groups, thus contributing to sustainable peace in the region. We are promoting values of gender equality, tolerance towards differences and non-violence. CARE Balkans mission encompasses programs in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania.

CARE places gender equality and women's empowerment (and particularly women's economic empowerment) in the centre of all its programmes. All projects and initiatives seek to empower women and minority groups in the Balkans to get more included in the society and fully exercise their rights. We are achieving this by providing direct support to beneficiaries, but also by support to develop strong civil society with an active role in the political and social life. We partner with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and work with them to improve quality of services they provide, development of better cooperation with their authorities and achievement of sustainability of our outcomes, as well as the long-term impact.

What is economic empowerment of women?

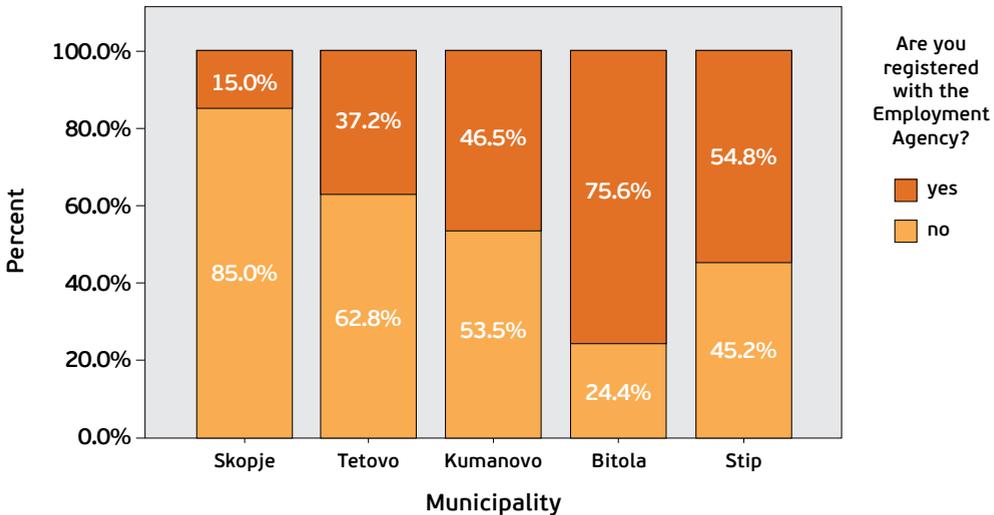
CARE defines women's economic empowerment as the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions to benefit themselves, their families and their communities. This requires equal access to and control over economic resources, assets and opportunities as well as long term changes in social norms and economic structures that benefit women and men equally.



ABOUT WOMEN CIVIC INITIATIVE ANTIKO

WCI ANTIKO is an interethnic network comprised of 16 grass root CSOs from Macedonia. ANTIKO has been established in 1999, as a response to the need of the society for multi-ethnic networking and team action in the field of democracy, pluralism and tolerance - promoting the inter-ethnic cooperation, gender equality and active participation of citizens in building peace in the community through economic, social, cultural prosperity and respect for fundamental human rights of all people. ANTIKO's network with coordinated actions and in partnership with other civil society organizations, local governments, the business sector, the media and other stakeholders, implements continuous activities that make a positive impact on 3 levels: the level of individuals, groups and communities.

THE PROJECT



Responding to the current situation in the Republic of Macedonia, where the activity rates of women are continuously below the EU average (particularly evident among women from ethnic minorities) and wishing to contribute to realizing an inclusive labour market in Macedonia, where all citizens, including those from vulnerable categories, will have equal access opportunities, CARE International and partner organisation Women Civic Initiative Antiko initiated the project „Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Women in the Labour Market“ in January 2016. The aim of the project was to increase access and presence of women from ethnic minorities on labour market in five regions of Macedonia - Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola, Kumanovo and Štip, through strengthening individual capacities of women and outreach within their immediate and wider environment, to promote new roles of women as employees, trained workers, and entrepreneurs and support their employment.



The project „Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Women in the Labour Market“ was funded by the European Union in the amount of 200.000 € and co-financed by CARE Deutschland/Luxembourg e.V (10.520 €), managed through Central Financing and Contracting Authority of the Ministry of Finance and implemented by CARE International (CARE Deutschland/Luxembourg e.V) and Women Civic Initiative Antiko. The project was realised in 18 months.

The project „Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Women in the Labour Market“ targeted women from ethnic communities in Skopje, Tetovo, Štip, Kumanovo and Bitola, reaching them and their families directly and implementing particular project methodology, a combination of capacity building and mentoring, to increase the motivation and conditions for their active inclusion in the labour market. The project provided support, in terms of increasing knowledge for active job search and obtaining new employment skills, for 326 ethnic minority women – Albanian, Roma, Turkish, Serbian, and others to become more competitive in the labour market. In contacts with the authorities at all levels and institutions in charge of work with marginalised groups, the project strongly promoted the concept of creating equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market, as one of the most important pre-conditions for achieving a sustainable social improvement. This was achieved through:

- Capacity building program in the form of workshops for the total of 326 women from local communities of the target area with the largest percentage of ethnic minorities, aiming at increasing the women’s employability on the following topics:
 - ▶ Gender equality, gender concepts in the labour market, individual motivation for employment;
 - ▶ General life skills: communication and soft skills;
 - ▶ Job counselling, matching and career guidance advise;
 - ▶ Basic information on business development and self-employment;

- Individual work with 153 women included in the project capacity building, for increasing motivation for employment.
- Job and career counselling for 145 women included in the project capacity building.
- Vocational trainings for 172 women, for skills such as sewing, computer skills, languages, beauty courses, etc. in communication with local labour market stakeholders.
- Providing professional practice for 30 women (6 per target region) in the local companies.
- Outreach activities and psychosocial support dealing with traditional norms and attitudes with more than 150 families.
- Project organized 15 social dialogue sessions in the local communities of all target regions, with more than 150 participants, between the target groups and their representatives (local CSOs) and local stakeholders – representatives of authorities, institutions and businesses. One of issue prioritised within the discussions was lack of information on employment and educational opportunities offered by Agency of Employment. Thus, the Project included Agency of Employment staff in activities with an aim to present as much information as possible on the existence of active measures from Agency for Employment.



<http://sheisbuildingfuture.org/en/about-the-project/>

Ardiana Ramadani, Kumanovo

"I was reluctant to become part of the trainings provided through the project as I haven't believed that they could support me in any way. Eventually, I decided to give them a chance and the knowledge I'd gained helped me to prepare the CV and motivation letter on my own. I used them to apply for professional practice with the Agency for Employment in Kumanovo and got it! I am attending professional practice in Tutunska Banka and there is even a chance to get a permanent job at the bank after completion of practice. At the same time I'm participating German language course provided by the project. The combination of professional practice and German language course will help me to increase my capabilities and competences and eventually my chances for employment".



SITUATION REGARDING ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN IN MACEDONIA

The activity rates of women in the Republic of Macedonia are continuously below the EU average. High unemployment among women in Macedonia is particularly evident among women from ethnic minorities. Traditional values, with the reduction of women to their traditional roles of housewives and mothers preventing them from considering a job or a career are still widely present in local communities, particularly among different ethnic minorities. In 2015, the activity rate of women in Macedonia was 44.9%, as opposed to 64.3% in the EU (Source: EUROSTAT). According to the 2016 report by the World Economic Forum, Macedonia is ranked 103rd in the world with a gender gap of 0.66 in labour force participation.

	Skopje Region	East Region	Pelagonia Region	Polog Region	Northeast Region
2011	56.1	58.2	63.9	43.9	53.7
2012	55.3	61.5	62.8	44.5	52.1
2013	55.3	61.0	64.4	46.6	54.2
2014	56.3	63.6	65.3	46.1	54.2
2015	54.4	62.5	66.3	47.1	54.0

Table 1. Activity rates by regions in 2015

When it comes to employment, situation is even worse: there is generally a great discrepancy in the rate of employment between men and women, especially in rural areas (where there are many ethnic communities). Men are more employed full time – 60.8% (women 39.2%). Concerning the type of employment, women in the Republic of Macedonia are traditionally predominantly represented as employees and unpaid family workers: women account for 42.5% of the employees, 61.7% of the unpaid family workers, while only 24.8% are employers, and 18.4% are self-employed.

Unemployment rates of women vary across regions and among rural and urban population as stated in table 2: Unemployment rates in the target regions (women) in 2015.

	Skopje Region	East Region	Pelagonia Region	Polog Region	Northeast Region
Men	28.1	20.7	21.7	27.6	41.7
Women	22.1	20.5	21.2	35.6	45.7
Urban					
Men	24.5	25.1	28.7	31.9	39.9
Women	20.5	14.8	27.8	34.1	47.7
Rural					
Men	35.3	14.7	12.2	25.7	44.5
Women	27.6	11.2	8.8	36.7	41.1

Table 2. Unemployment rates in the target regions by gender in 2015 (Regions of Macedonia 2016: Regional Yearbook, 2016)



Governmental institutions invest efforts to achieve the society of equal opportunities for all its citizens where women, ethnic minorities, poor, people with disabilities and other vulnerable people will exercise equal opportunities, among which the opportunities for employment. However, because of the lack of outreach towards the deprived citizens, the official programs for integration do not take into much consideration

the life conditions in ethnic communities and this far they have taken very limited actions to improve the access of ethnic minorities to the labour

Rafeta Kriezi, Skopje, student of faculty of Medical sciences



“Entire project implemented by CARE and ANTIKO with all its activities helped me greatly, at first through the professional practice organized by the project. Attending professional practice helped me to increase my practical knowledge, complementary to the theory I’m acquainted with, being a student of medical sciences. Besides that, I had an opportunity to meet many other Roma girls that have participated in the project organised activities. I learned about gender equality concepts, active job search, business planning trainings”.

market. Thus, improvement of the knowledge of professionals involved in this matter is crucial for more efficient governmental programs targeting vulnerable categories.

Women from ethnic minority groups face multiple segregation when addressing the issue of employment. In addition to the usual reluctance of employers (who are 75% men, as statistics show) to engage women, with prejudice that they will be less educated and professional, take



more absence etc. women from ethnic minorities are traditionally more oriented towards occupying the roles of housewives, wives and mothers. This long-term tendency lead to practical inactivity of women from ethnic minority communities when it comes to entering the labour market, lack of entrepreneurial skills and motivation. Their immediate communities are encouraging the conservative attitudes and the government institutions are lacking capacity and programs to address the problem.

Women from ethnic minority communities are generally interested in entering labour market. What they lack is self-confidence!



PROJECT RESULTS

The project approached addressing the problem in a holistic way: introduced the alternatives to the traditional role types, implemented concrete methods to improve women's skills and education status, advocated for their fundamental rights, including for the right to employment. It worked with immediate environment of the targeted ethnic minority women, in effort to alter the social norms that hinder women from entering the labour market. The project associated with institutions dealing with employment, presenting the method of work with vulnerable populations to integrate this issue in their long term work and to scale it up.

After almost 18 month of intensive work with women and their counterparts project managed to achieve some results which are shown as following:

Project in numbers:

326 women participated the project training program on: Gender concepts in the labour market; Communication and soft skills; Job counselling, matching and career guidance advises; Basic information on business development and self-employment;

61 training days for 1,479 women;

30 women finalised professional practice in the local companies;

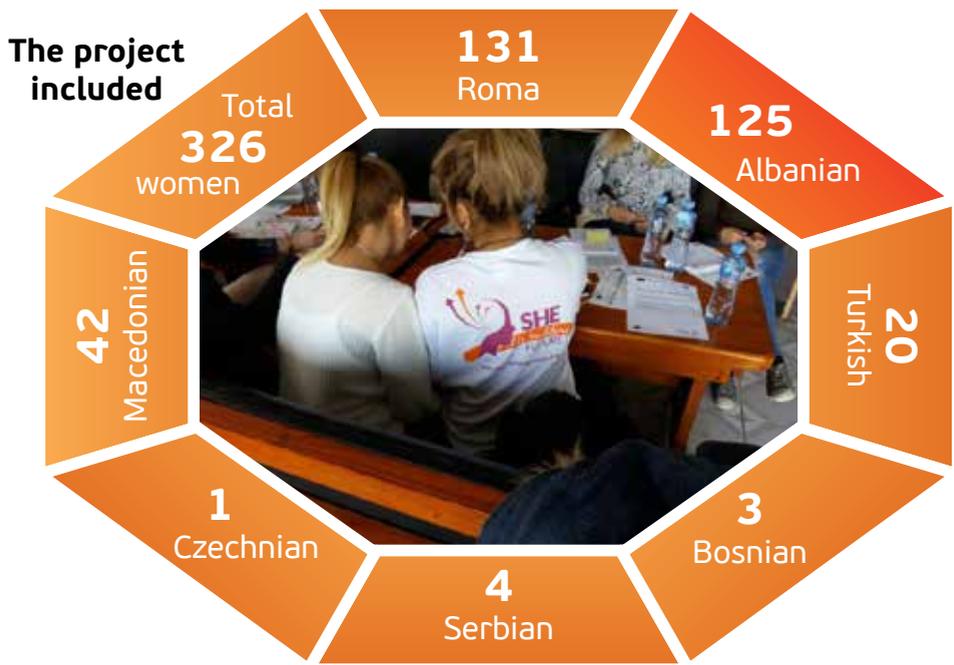
172 women successfully completed vocational courses;

15 social dialogue sessions in the local communities of all target regions, with more than 150 participants, between target groups and representatives of government and non-government institutions/ organizations;

Around 180 project beneficiaries were subject to door-to-door visits with more than 500 ethnic minority women family members reached by the project team.

The project paid particular attention to the needs of the training participants. Parallel to the training program for women, the project organised interactive workshops for their children in order to make this training program accessible even to those women who could not have alternative care for children. Thus, the workshops with children enabled their mothers to, relaxed, actively participate in the trainings.

Total number of children accommodated in this creative workshops was 360 age 5-10. Through creative workshops (44 in total for all targeted regions), children were encouraged to explore their creative potential and their motoric skills were developed through the individual and group work.



Out of the total 326 included women, 26% were from Tetovo region 20% from Štip, 19% from the Bitola region, 18% from Kumanovo and 17% from Skopje.

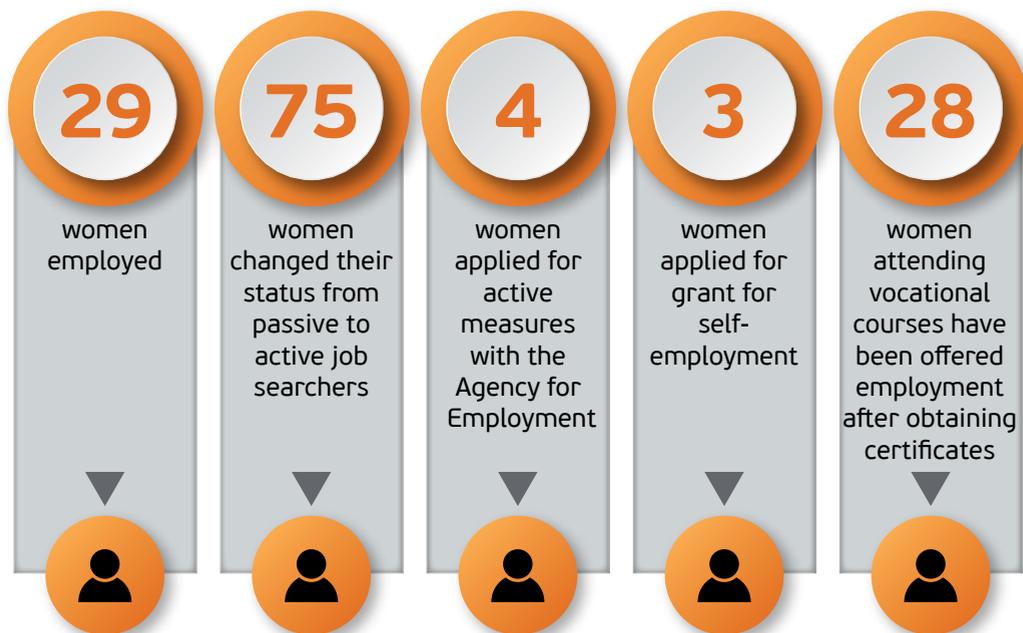
The Project ensured that participants in the training program had at:



Even though the educational structure of the groups had many diversities, the training program had to be designed in a way to be understandable for everyone, at the same time being interesting for the participants.

The largest interest for the project capacity building was among women age 16-27 who regularly participated in training programs – 49% of the participants were in this age group. 37% were the age 28-38 and 14% the age 39-49.

Concrete project achievements regarding inclusion of ethnic women in labour market:



OUR METHOD

Step 1:

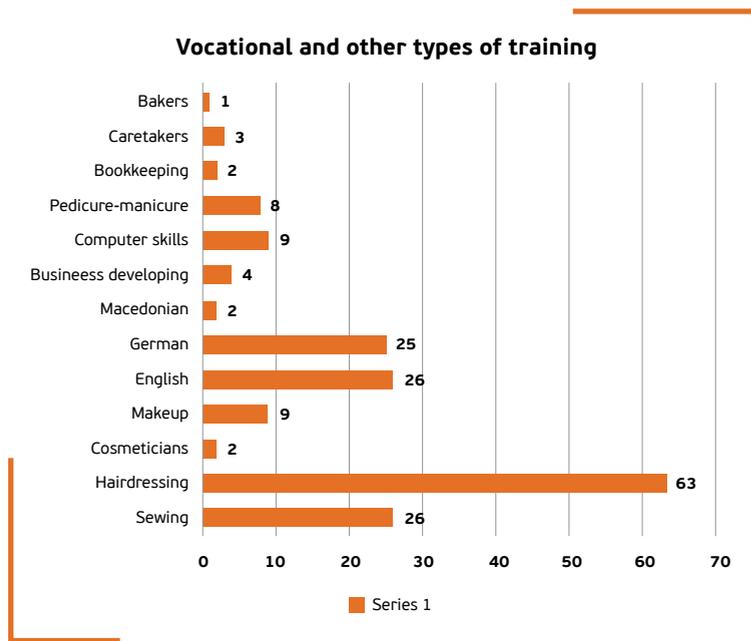
Direct contact with beneficiaries

The project team decided that success would be achieved only if permanent presence in the communities is ensured, with constant and direct communication with potential beneficiaries - women from ethnic minorities - and local stakeholders dealing with employment issues.

The issue of women still holding traditional roles of housewives and mothers which prevents them from considering a job or a career could only be overcome through support from the project team they recognise and trust.

Having this in mind, the project associated with one representative and well established local CSO from each of the target regions: IRIZ – Skopje, Florence Nightingale – Kumanovo, Happy Life – Tetovo, KLEA – Bitola and Association of interethnicsocietyforhumanrights–Štip, with knowledge and experience in working with vulnerable women and good reputation in ethnic minority communities. The project invested in capacity building of the CSOs' staff – Local Mediators, enabling





them to perform more qualitative work in the communities and organised capacity building on the following topics: gender equality issues, importance of equal economic opportunities for both women and men; fighting traditional norms around the position of women in society; methodologies of work in the local

communities; triggering social dialogue; facilitation techniques and basics of psychosocial work with entire traditional families. In addition to trainings, the project associates were involved in planning the project activities, sharing good practices within the team and mutual cooperation. Thus, the project created local capacity, equipping the associate CSOs (through their Local Mediators) with knowledge on supporting women and their families, understanding issues around employment, and being able to motivate and mobilize women to become more active in their pursue for employment thus increasing possibilities for wellbeing of their immediate families.

Step 2: Identifying beneficiaries' needs

Institutions and/or various organizations are often using top-to-bottom approach for dealing with developmental issues, not necessarily taking into account the real needs of target populations. The project however undertook a Baseline Study, to identify real needs and potentials of the beneficiaries for employment and match them with labour marked demands. The Study included personal interviews with more than 200 women and provided enough information for the project team to steer the work paths and shape the project capacity building on the basis of final beneficiaries' demands and desires. Furthermore, CARE and ANTIKO, in cooperation with the 5 associate CSOs, undertook an open application process for participation to the project trainings, to identify more concrete needs and desires of target population for their future personal development. Additionally, on the basis of this application process, the project team selected 326 women for the project capacity building activities.

Step 3:

Development of the training plan and its implementation



Based on the in-depth initial Study, inputs from questionnaires processed in the local communities by the Local Mediators and the application process, the project team tailored a capacity building program to match the demands and desires of final project beneficiaries, but also labour market demand. Thus, the participants (326 ethnic minority women in search for employment from municipalities of Skopje, Bitola, Štip, Tetovo and Kumanovo) received trainings in:

- a) Raising general awareness concerning gender equality, gender concepts in the labour market, individual motivation for employment;
- b) “Soft skills” and communication techniques, useful for the process of active job search and their employment;
- c) Profiled job counselling, career guidance advise and job matching (in cooperation with local businesses and local institutions, primarily the Agency for Employment);
- d) Basic information on business development and self-employment.

As a result, the project motivated **75 women** to change their status from passive to active job seekers which, in combination with theoretical and practical knowledge they gained, will increase their chances to secure jobs in the future.

During the project implementation and intensive communication with project beneficiaries within the trainings and individual work with families, it became obvious that most women are interested in practical training engagement through vocational trainings such as sewing, computer skills, languages, beauty

courses, etc. which caused re-shaping of project capacity building activities. Thus, even though not initially planned, 172 women were included in these vocational courses.

Step 4:

Regular visits to the families/psychosocial support

Women from traditional ethnic minority communities face difficulties in the eventual attempt to enter the labour market because of the lack of individual capacities, lack of employment opportunities, but also because of the unfavourable attitude of their immediate surroundings to overcome the traditional norms regarding the position of women in the society: that of a mother and of a housewife. This circumstance negatively influences the motivation of women to seek employment or to see themselves as equal members of the society as men.

In most cases, ethnic minority women that participated in the project were not aware of existence of various possibilities for either their additional professional development (like those offered by Agency for Employment, various NGO-s, other government institutions) or active measures for employments, such as professional practice, grants for self-employment and similar. During the intensive visits to the families, the project team introduced these information to the potential beneficiaries, also discussing in general the importance of being employed and of equal participation in the labour market. This individual approach resulted in women becoming more active, open and motivated to participate in trainings but also to actively pursue employment (29 women employed, 75 changed their status from active to passive, 4 applied for active measures in agency for employment and 3 applied for self-employment grant as a direct result of project activities).

Step 5:

Social dialogue and roundtable discussions

One of the most important activity performed by the project that had a large impact on the attitudes of local stakeholders on women's employment was the organisation of a project facilitated social dialogue between the ethnic minority women and their representative organisations and local stakeholders in charge of their employment, on the issue of inclusion of women from ethnic minorities in the Macedonian labour market.

The project organised 15 social dialogue sessions in the local communities of all target regions, with more than 150 participants from government and non-government institutions/organizations thus offering a platform for discussions, where the representatives of all stakeholders involved in the issue of employment had opportunity to exchange information, experience and views on the problem



and existing challenges, and where the obstacles for employment of women from ethnic minorities are listed, discussed and prioritized. Social dialogue represented an efficient method for influencing change in approach among the stakeholders (institutions, authorities, but also local businesses) who had the rare chance of direct exchange of information with the final beneficiaries.

Problems identified during social dialogue sessions:

- To some degree social norms are preventing women of getting employed;
- General mistrust in institutions;
- Employment is mostly offered based on political participation;
- Bad working conditions in factories across targeted regions;
- Lack of outreach by institutions to final project beneficiaries;
- Method of reaching beneficiaries is outdated and needs to be changed;
- Women are not aware of support that Agency for Employment and other institutions are offering.



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