Serbia experiences high levels of international emigration and rural-urban migration, leading to a shrinking population and workforce, particularly in rural areas. 50,000 citizens, disproportionately young and well-educated, migrate to Western Europe each year, with many more migrants transiting through Serbia towards Western Europe.

Given Serbia’s challenges with youth emigration and social cohesion of the returnees, the M4SD Programme promotes opportunities for unemployed youth and returnees, mostly Roma, under Readmission Agreement, with a particular focus on the employment of women. The hope is that more people will have the choice to migrate or to remain in small towns and continue to see Serbia’s rural economy and social bonds thrive.
PUTTING POLICIES INTO PRACTICE
TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Strategy of Diaspora Business Council of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the period 2023-2027 developed. New convocation of the Council comprised of more than 50 diaspora entrepreneurs, scientists, and community leaders, representatives of bilateral chambers of commerce, local governments, academia, national institutions and line ministries was established.

Technical assistance to 30+ national institutions on migration, youth and employment to update, revise and include migration into 3 national laws, strategies or action plans

624+ young people received training, employment and entrepreneurship coaching in practical career skills (e.g. tailoring, CNC machine operation, English, computer skills, business development). Roughly 1 in 4 (27%) are returning migrants, many of whom are Roma. 47 per cent are women

Projects were co-created and evidence-based, built upon a labour market analysis in 3 cities, private sector and diaspora mapping of approx. 650 businesses and engagement of 17 businesses

PUTTING POLICIES INTO PRACTICE
TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Target 8.b
Develop a youth employment strategy

Target 8.6
Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Prokuplje
1 technical school expanded curriculum options and enhanced training tools/materials
1 employment fair
1 informal needs assessment of Roma community, led by Roma Association Prokuplje

160 youth trained with a specific focus on returning migrants, including Roma community
45+ youth employed, mostly Roma returnees
17 Roma returnees

Ivanjica
1 education fair
2 analyses to understand the needs of a) unemployed youth and local businesses and b) youth interest in self-employment, and 3 analysis related to training needs

384 youth trained
20 youth hired by local furniture business Matis, after an apprenticeship to become CNC (Computer Numerical Control) operators
40 other young people placed in internships and work practice with 8 local business. 20 of them were hired

Knjaževac
1 new training center established in a local technical school to expand curriculum options with 3 new and 10 used machines for practical training donated by local businesses
5 local mentors support youth during their training and receive three-day training on mentorship skills

80 youth trained
5 youth employed

This fiche has been developed under M4SD, a global programme operating in 11 countries from 2019-2023. The M4SD Programme aims to harness the development benefits and reduce the negative effects of migration for host and home communities, migrants and their family members. It is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The fiche illustrates not only the work of this programme but also the country's overall achievements on migration and sustainable development.

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