

FOSTERING
A COMMERCIAL
JOB-MATCHING
MARKET IN ALBANIA:
PROFESIONISTI
RECRUITMENT
SERVICE

INTERVENTION BRIEF

FUNDED BY:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

IMPLEMENTED BY:



HELVETAS
Swiss Interooperation

ALBANIA



PARTNERSALBANIA
FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

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1. Understanding the job-matching market in Albania

In 2013 RisiAlbania conducted an extensive study on the job-matching system in Albania. In so doing, the project discovered that the role of private job-matching providers was weak: there were only a small number of private job-matching service providers, with very few paying clients, and only around 40-50 recruitments a month. Moreover, providers' services were underdeveloped, lacking complementary services such as career guidance and wider human resource services. Job-matching services, furthermore, did not have a strong focus on youth: young Albanians represented only 20% of their total recruits.

Generally speaking, the job-matching system resembled a three-tier system: high profile recruits were mediated by private recruitment services, educated urban recruits through job portals, and uneducated recruits (low and middle skilled) through the National Employment Services (NES). Considering that almost 60% of all registered unemployed people had low and middle skills, this in effect meant that NES was the sole job-matching provider catering for this specific category – an overwhelming task.¹

The situation for low and middle job-seeks, in short, was particularly dire. This is precisely where RisiAlbania saw an opportunity to intervene.

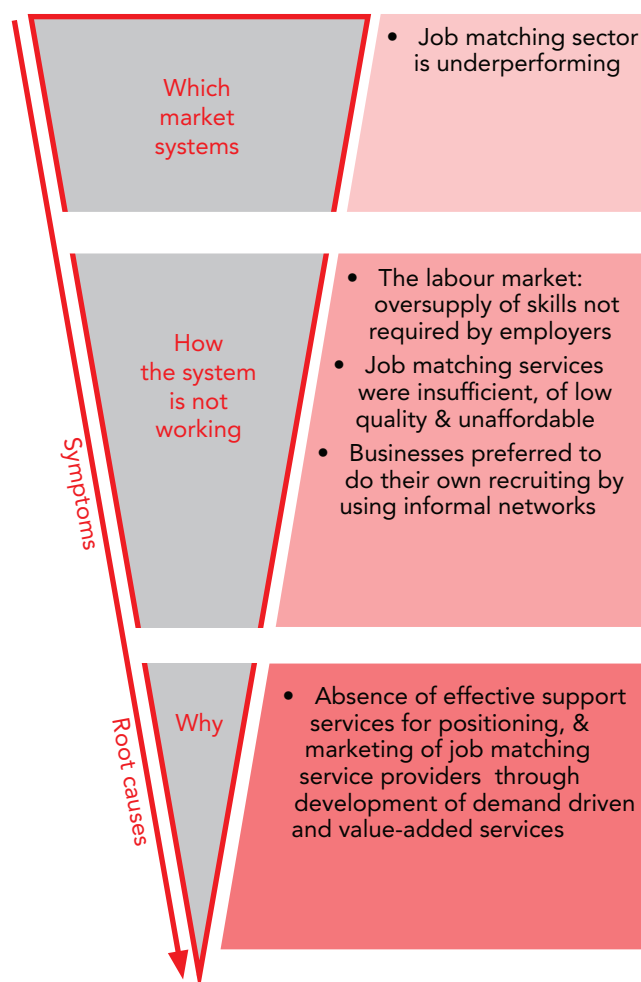


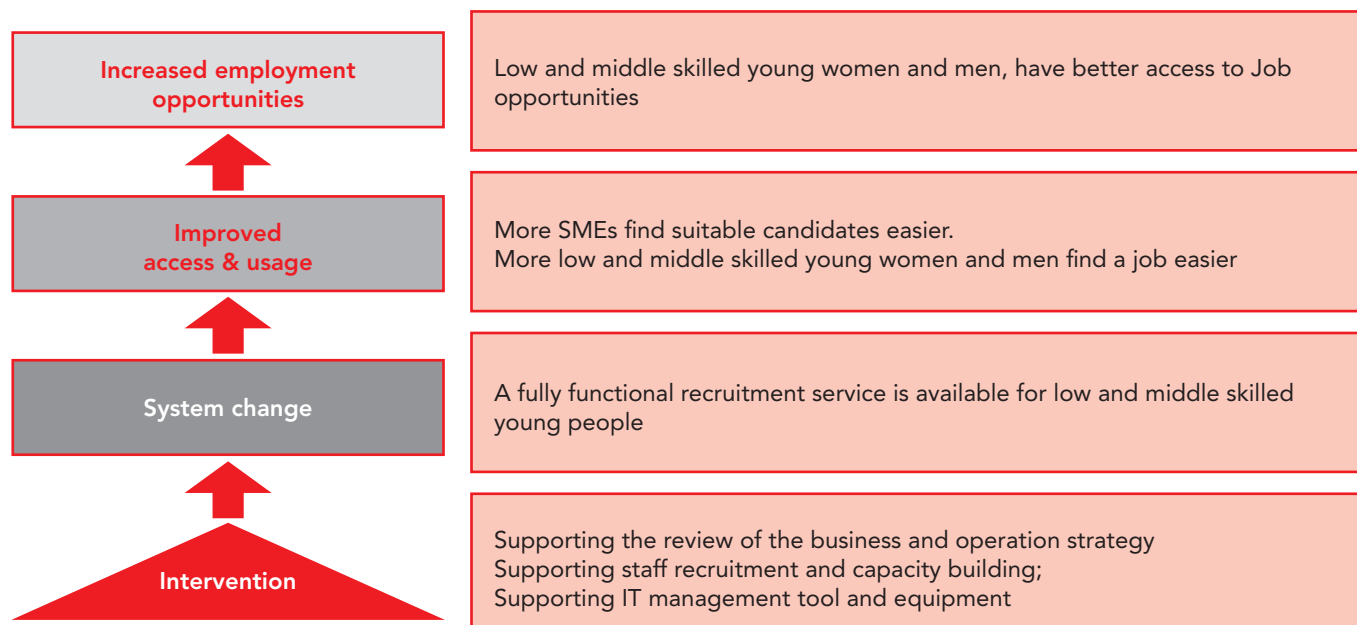
Figure 1: symptoms & root causes

¹ Although NES is the largest player in this field, and the only one catering low and middle skilled unemployed young people, most of the job seekers and businesses complain that NES' resources are insufficient. The statistics of 2012 provided a wide picture of NES performance (approx. 141,000 job seekers registered 37,600 young job seekers versus 16,000 job offers and 5,800 youth placed in 2012).

2. Overall Vision and strategy

RisiAlbania's vision was the **establishment of a sustainable recruitment service environment that allows low and middle skilled youth and employers to connect more easily.**

The project partnered with "Çelesi shpk", an innovative business which founded the print-newspaper Çeles. 34% of all job announcements in Çeles came from small and medium enterprises that specifically targeted low to middle skilled workers. Çelesi knew, in other words, that focusing on low and middle skilled job-seekers had business potential, and launched a dedicated recruitment service (called Profesionisti) for low and middle skilled job-seekers.



Working together with Çelesi, RisiAlbania devised a strategy which rested on two main pillars:

- 1. Designing and improving Profesionisti's business model**
- 2. Raising awareness of Profesionisti's service:** Businesses were already aware of their inefficient recruitment practices, but lacked a viable alternative. Through focus group discussions, the project determined that Çelesi's service would provide a more professional and transparent recruitment process, thereby offering high potential to match young, middle-to-low skilled job seekers with job opportunities

3. Implementation

The implementation consisted of three key measures:

- 1. Identifying a suitable business model, namely offering fee-based services to employers:** The project's support to Çelesi consisted of (i) continuously reviewing Profesionisti's business and operational strategy; (ii) building and up the capacities of the Profesionisti team to provide high-quality services; (iii) increasing effectiveness and efficiency through improved management tools (for handling and processing a high number of CVs, etc.). While RisiAlbania's assistant meant acting as a sounding board, so fine-tuning and developing business plans and ideas, the project also provided limited financial support to 'buy-in' risk
- 2. Promoting the relevance of recruitment services for low and middle skilled young people**
- 3. Establishment of a robust monitoring system of customer satisfaction**

Where the project intervened

- Support market system to stimulate changes in capacity & behaviour of job matching providers & users

Who the project engaged

- “ÇELËSI Media Group” the leading content provider of the practical information sector in Albania
- Considered the ambition, realism, validity and positivity of the potential job matching service providers

What facilitative support means

- Development of business plans
- Co-financing to mitigate risks in introduction of new service
- Monitoring & knowledge management system
- Overall consistency of action with strategy

4. Results

From November 2014 till June 2017 Profesionistit facilitated 1409 job placements (permanent and temporary), 986 held by women. Most critically, more than half the placements were filled with low and middle skilled job-seekers: 801, out of which 161 are women.

Profesionisti is indeed establishing itself as a key actor in the job intermediation market for low and middle skilled job seekers. In 2016, Profesionisti was selected to provide recruitment services for a major project of the Albanian electricity distributor (OSHEE) which required more than 1,000 low to middle skilled professionals.

Moreover, there is notable interest among other HR companies to specialize in low and middle skilled job recruitment services, in particular in sectors such as the Business Processing Outsourcing industry. Other job matching services, in other words, are following Celesi's lead.

5. Lessons learnt:

- 1. Managing adaptively:** The initial proposal served as a starting point of the intervention, yet it had to be continuously adapted and adjusted, as circumstances changed and new lessons were learnt. For example, Profesionisti's initial business plan was overly optimistic and targets were not achieved. To address this, RisiAlbania assisted Profesionisti in conducting a strategic review of its operations and addressing key bottlenecks in its business model. In parallel, Profesionisti undertook a structural reorganization of the company, putting greater emphasis on increasing its sales capacities. Remaining flexible, adjusting to the situation on the ground, therefore remains critical in the successful implementation of an intervention
- 2. Realistic business models:** It is critical to prepare a realistic business plan from the start. This can be achieved by investing time in thorough market analysis, carefully analyzing all aspects that might impact the profitability of a business and by closely involving the partner
- 3. Scale can mean depth:** While the project only worked with one job-matching service provider for low and middle skilled job seekers, the project understood that the depth of the intervention, namely the outreach to youth, will be significant. The project, in short, emphasized outreach over attracting a large number of players into the job matching industry.

RisiAlbania was established in 2013 to address the problem of youth unemployment in Albania. The project was established by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and is implemented by a consortium of partners consisting of HELVETASSwiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania. The 4 year project has two main pillars. The first focuses on job creation through growth in specific sectors (tourism, agriculture and ICT) and the second focuses on improved labour market information and intermediation services.

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