

# Self Reliance Assistance Serbia



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*"I could never afford to pay for the training myself. One can always learn more, and earn more"*

- Zorica Stanojević  
a refugee from Croatia

## LOCATION

Belgrade, Serbia

## DURATION

January-December 2009

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

MicroFinS  
[www.microfins.org.rs](http://www.microfins.org.rs)

## DONOR

UNHCR

## BUDGET

US \$ 200,000

## OVERVIEW

Serbia hosts the largest refugee and internally displaced caseload in the region and in Europe. Currently there are over 200,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo (IDPs and 86,000 persons with refugee status, who fled Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina fifteen years ago. Despite a certain economic growth after the year 2000, the latest global economic crisis has taken its toll. The economy and society of Belgrade have been affected in the following ways:

- Prevalence of long-term unemployment
- Prevalence of the youngest age group (15-25) in overall unemployment
- Higher level of unemployment among female population
- According to the findings of the Living Standard Measurement Survey, the rate of unemployment among refugees, IDP's and Roma is twice as high as among the domicile population
- In such circumstances one needs to follow the trends of the job market, which often means learning and being qualified in a different profession.

## AIM OF PROJECT

- Provide vocational training for 164 vulnerable refugees, IDPs and the vulnerable local population in 2009, with the aim to help them acquire skills
- MicroFinS organizes trainings for 12 different professions which are in demand
- Trainings will increase their chances at the labour market or help them become self-employed
- The project will enhance social integration into the local community in terms of education and employment
- Enrolment of female trainees is strongly supported

## PROJECT OUTPUTS / RESULTS

- IDPs, refugees and local vulnerable population (mainly Roma minority) completed vocational trainings and acquired specific skills
- The new skills help them find employment or become self-employed
- In 2007 the employment rate was over 60%, while in 2008 40% of interviewed beneficiaries reported to earn income
- Participation of female is 35%-40% on average, while the participation of Roma minority is 20%-30%
- Participants' living standard improved, and they had better chances to integrate.
- Provided veterinary services including insemination, vaccination and regular check up
- Provided follow up an guidance by the IP including marketing skills and contacts

## **IMPACTS**

This project provides the most vulnerable beneficiaries with skills to increase their chances at the labour market or help them become self employed. They also create contacts during the training which can be useful for their future employment. When beneficiaries from various groups and backgrounds train together, like in Serbia, they have a chance to socialize and create contacts and friendships which result in better social cohesion and promotes tolerance in the society.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

- In order to be successful, the project needs to be adjusted to prevailing local conditions
- As trainees themselves say, it is most important to emphasise the practical part of the training.
- Curriculums should be adapted to the length of training;
- Training is more effective when groups are small
- When refugees, IDPs and the domicile population attend trainings together, social inclusion and tolerance are easier to achieve
- If beneficiaries take two trainings in complementary professions, their chances for employment increase (e.g. hairdressing/ pedicure and manicure, central heating/ plumbing, ceramic tiling/wall painting are just a few examples of trainings in Serbia).