

Self-reliance assistance to refugees and IDPs Serbia



“The training and loan that I got from MDF provided me economic independence and helped me to gain self-confidence and prosperity for my family”

- Marinela Ilic,
an IDP from Kosovo

LOCATION

Leskovac, Serbia

DURATION

January - December 2009

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Micro Development Fund (MDF)

DONOR

UNHCR

BUDGET

USD 280,000

OVERVIEW

Serbia hosts the largest refugee and internally displaced caseload in Europe. Currently there are over 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have arrived from Kosovo since 1999. There are also 86,000 refugees who fled Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina fifteen years ago.

Despite some economic growth since the year 2000, transition and the recent global economic crises have caused a downturn in the Serbian economy. The unemployment rate has risen quickly, and consequently the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- The youngest age group (15-25 years) included in overall unemployment.
- Higher unemployment rate among the female population.
- The unemployment rate among refugees, IDPs and Roma are twice as high than among the domicile population (according to the findings of the Living Standard Measurement Survey).

Consequently, it is necessary to follow the trends at the job market, which often means acquiring skills for a different profession.

AIM OF PROJECT

- To improve the skills of IDP's and refugees
- To enhance their chances of employment in the local labour market or within their own businesses.

PROJECT OUTPUTS / RESULTS

- Since the beginning of the 2009, the Micro Development Fund commenced vocational trainings for 203 POC with the average duration of the training of 3-6 months.
- Participants standard of living improved
- Their chances for integration were improved

LESSONS LEARNED

This project consequently provides refugees with entrepreneurial skills in order for them to improve their quality of life.

THE STORY

Marinela Ilic arrived in Leskovac with her family in 1999 from Gnjilane, Kosovo. Her family consists of her mother and three other siblings. Marinela was supported by MDF (UNHCR's implementing partner) and she was approved for the vocational training program. She has successfully finished training to become a hairdresser. After improving her skills and knowledge, Marinela applied for a micro loan with MDF and has started her own business in hairdressing. The vocational training and micro loan program made it possible for Marinela to enhance her chances of employment, consequently contributing to the family income..

Marinela now has her own beauty salon, and employs all her siblings. Her sister will also improve her knowledge and skills to become qualified in cosmetics. As a result of the MDF support, the Ilic family has become economically self-sufficient.