

DOUBLE BARRIERS



Education, Employment and Discrimination
against LGBTI+ Individuals in Kosovo

CENTRE FOR EQUALITY AND LIBERTY OF THE LGBT COMMUNITIES IN KOSOVA (CEL)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare	MPMS
Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation	MESTI
Ministry of Justice	MJ
Ministry of Finance, Labor, and Transfers	MFLT
Office for Good Governance	OGG
Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo	EARK
Agency for Free Legal Aid	AFLA
Kosovo Agency of Statistics	KAS
University of Prishtina	UP
Kosovo Chamber of Commerce	KCHC
Vocational Training Center	VTC
Center for Social Work	CSW
European Commission	EC
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex	LGBTI+
Small and Medium Enterprises	SME
State Owned Enterprises	SOE
Center for Equality and Liberty of the LGBT Community in Kosovo	CEL Kosovo
Non-Governmental Organization	NGO
Civil Society Organizations	CSO

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About CEL Kosova

The Center for Equality and Liberty of the LGBT Community in Kosovo (CEL Kosovo) was established in July 2013 to empower LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo, prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, raise public awareness about LGBTI+ rights, advocate for equal rights and combat discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in alignment with the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and applicable laws. CEL Kosovo was founded as a response to the persistent discrimination, stigma, and prejudice faced by LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovar society. The programs provided by CEL Kosovo include:

- Support Program
- Capacity-Building Program
- Advocacy and Activism Program

CEL Kosovo is considered to be a driving force for fostering a progressive, diverse and tolerant society in Kosovo. It serves as a catalyst for changing views of the people and traditions and also serves as a system that guarantees equal rights and opportunities for all. CEL Kosovo has consistently worked to strengthen the legal framework promoting and protecting the rights of LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo, enhance their participation in local and international mechanisms and implement projects that benefit the community and contribute to society as a whole.

Over the years, CEL Kosovo has emerged as one of the leading organizations and a key advocate for the empowerment of LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo. It is dedicated to promoting and protecting LGBTI+ rights and building an inclusive society that ensures equal opportunities for all. CEL Kosovo's approach is rooted in the belief that every individual should be valued and treated with respect, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Introduction

The report “Double Barriers: Education, Employment and Discrimination against LGBTI+ Individuals in Kosovo” was published as part of the Queer Revolution project, funded by the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports (MCYS) and implemented by CEL Kosovo. The primary aim of this research is to analyze and understand how formal and non-formal education impacts the employment opportunities of LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo in both public and private sectors. The study also seeks to identify the challenges and forms of discrimination that LGBTI+ individuals may face in the contexts of education and employment.

Key Areas and Research Questions:

Impact of Education

- How does formal and non-formal education influence employment opportunities for LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo?
- Are the available education programs and training tailored to the needs of LGBTI+ individuals and do they help prepare them for the labor market?

Experiences of LGBTI+ Individuals

- What are the experiences of LGBTI+ individuals entering the labor market in the public and private sectors across Kosovo municipalities?

- Do LGBTI+ individuals feel they have equal employment opportunities?
- What barriers do they encounter during the job application process?

Discrimination and Perceptions

- How is discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals perceived and addressed in the contexts of employment and education in Kosovo?
- What current policies and practices address or should address the inclusion and protection of LGBTI+ individuals in employment and education contexts?

Research Goals and Outcomes

These goals and research questions provide a clear framework for collecting and analyzing data to assess the situation in regards to Education, Employment and Discrimination against LGBTI+ Individuals in Kosovo. Through the analysis and findings, this research offers recommendations for improving access to education and employment for LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo.

Methodology

The research methodology for the study “Double Barriers: Education, Employment and Discrimination against LGBTI+ Individuals in Kosovo” has been tailored to account for the unique aspects related to the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo regarding their access to education, the labor market and the public and private sector policies aimed at providing equal employment opportunities for all.

The research begins with a review of existing literature on education and employment of vulnerable and marginalized groups, specifically focusing on LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo. Further, it will emphasize studies addressing discrimination, social inclusion and access to economic opportunities. Furthermore, the study will examine current policies and legislation related to the rights of LGBTI+ individuals in the fields of education and employment.

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture diverse experiences and perceptions. Surveys were designed and distributed electronically and through in-person interviews and focus groups to gather data from LGBTI+ individuals. Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including central and local government institutions, vocational training providers, private companies/businesses, and LGBTI+ individuals who have completed formal and non-formal education programs and are interested in entering the labor market in the public and private sectors.

The report presents research findings, practical and theoretical discussions on their implications and recommendations targeted at relevant institutions. Findings

will be shared through conferences, academic publications, and collaboration with organizations advocating for the rights of LGBTI+ individuals.

This structured approach ensures an effective exploration of the complex topics of education, employment and social inclusion for LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo, ultimately contributing to the formulation of evidence-based recommendations and advocacy strategies.

General Information

Formal and Non-Formal Education

Formal and non-formal education in Kosovo represent two main pillars for the educational and professional development of individuals, including vulnerable and marginalized groups such as LGBTI+ persons.

Formal Education is structured into several levels such as: primary and low secondary education (grades 1-9), upper secondary education (grades 10-12) and higher education (public and private universities that provide bachelor, master and PhD programs). All educational institutions, both public and private, are licensed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MASHTI) and follow the standardized national curriculum.

Non-formal education includes educational activities and training provided outside the formal schooling system such as: training and professional course, adult education programs, workshops offered by various organizations, private institutions and civil society organizations.

While formal education builds the academic and professional foundation, non-formal education contributes to the development of practical and social skills, making individuals more flexible and prepared for changes in the labor market.

KAS in cooperation with MESTI has published data on Education Statistics for the academic year 2023/2024. The report highlights a decrease in the number of students compared to the previous year. The table below presents the number of children, pupils and students involved in all levels of education in the private and public institutions, 2022/2023-2023/2024.¹

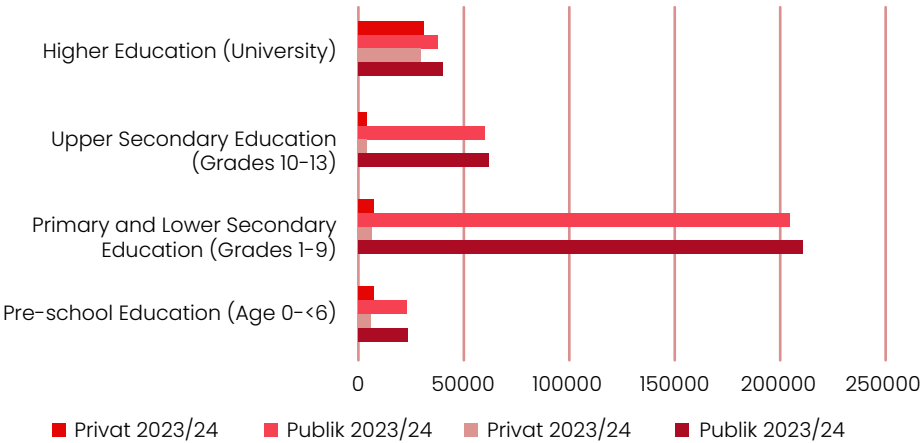


Chart 1: The Total Number of Pupils and Students in the Public and Private Sector

¹ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2024), Education Statistics in Kosovo 2023/2024, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Releases/Details/8174>

According to this table, the total number of students in upper secondary education for the academic year 2023/2024 was 65,757 out of which 60,837 students (92.5%) were enrolled in the public sector, while 4,920 students (7.5%) attended private schools. In comparison, during the previous academic year 2022/2023, there were 67,373 students in total, with 63,029 (93.6%) in the public sector and 4,344 (6.4%) in the private sector. This indicates a decrease in the overall number of students, with a more significant decline observed in the public sector compared to the private sector.²

The total number of students in higher education for the academic year 2023/2024 was 70,357. Of these, 39,033 students (55.5%) were enrolled in public universities, while 31,324 students (44.5%) attended private colleges. Compared to the previous academic year 2022/2023, when the total number of students was 71,948, with 40,996 students (57.0%) in public universities and 30,952 students (43.0%) in private colleges, there is a slight decrease in the overall number of students.³

According to the KAS, the field of study "Business, Administration and Law" continues to be the most preferred field among students at the bachelor's level, with a total of 4,380 students, representing 26.4% of the total number of enrolled students. On the other hand, the field with the lowest number of enrolled students is "Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary," with a total of 381 students, or 2.3%.⁴

² Kosovo Agency of Statistics (June 2024), Press Release, page 2, available at: <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/342dd1c3-961c-4dc9-ade5-85a51a804378.pdf>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (October 2024), Press Release, page 1, available at: <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/16fdb8ef-028d-4745-9704-bac2c79ed3b9.pdf>

Fusha e studimit	Vajza	Djem	Gjithsejt
Education	545	13	467
Arts and Humanities	1,438	529	1967
Social Sciences, Journalism, and Information	876	305	1,181
Business, Administration, and Law	2,452	1,928	4,380
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics	333	104	437
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	1,314	1,890	3,204
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction	895	813	1,708
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Veterinary	281	100	381
Health and Welfare	1,966	486	2,452
Services	140	285	425
Total	10,149	6,453	16,602

Table 1: Fields of Study and the Number of Students Divided by Gender

Education		Arts and Humanities		Social Sciences, Journalism, and Information		Business, Administration and Law		Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics	
2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
1075	425	1016	1169	648	764	3853	3208	310	622

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)		Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction		Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Veterinary		Health and Welfare		Services	
2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
549	685	1273	1266	325	321	1172	1055	474	349

Table 2: Total Number of Master's Students for the Academic Years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

Also at the Master's level, the field of "Business, Administration, and Law" continues to be the most preferred field of student registrations, with 1,314 students or 34.0% of the total number. Meanwhile, the smallest number of students registered have chosen to study in the field of "Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Veterinary," with a total of 81 students, or 2.1% of the total.

MESTI in collaboration with the KAS, published the report "Education Statistics in Kosovo 2023-2024" in June 2024. The aim of this report is to inform the public and anyone interested in statistical data in the field of education. This report, among other things, contains data on:

- The number of students in upper secondary education by gender, nationality, vocational schools/gymnasiums, and educational staff for this level;
- The number of children/students with special needs by gender, grade level, and type of impairment/difficulty;
- The number of students in higher education by gender, nationality, faculties/academic programs, level of study (bachelor and master), the number of graduates at the bachelor and master levels, academic staff, etc.⁵

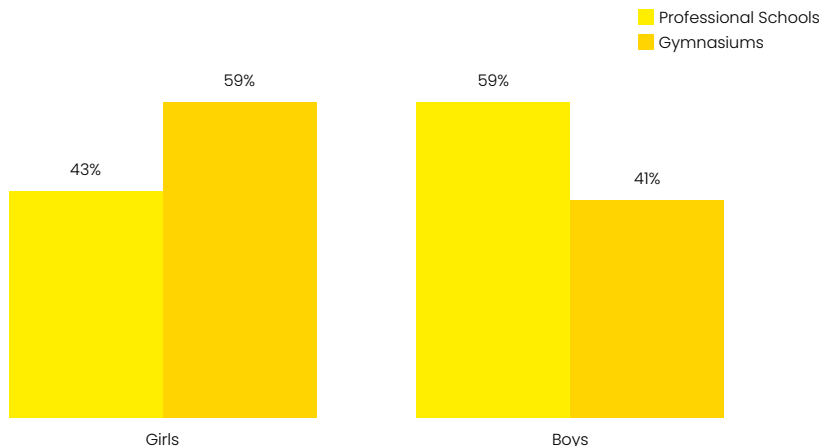


Chart 2: The Number of Students Enrolled in Vocational Schools and Gymnasiums, Divided by Gender

⁵ Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and Kosovo Agency of Statistics (June 2024), "Education Statistics in Kosovo 2023-2024, page 9, available at: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Statistikat-e-arsimit-ne-Kosove-2023-2024.pdf>

According to the data presented in the graph below, it is shown that out of the total number of students in upper secondary education, 59.0% are girls in gymnasiums, while 42.5% are girls in vocational schools.

The report "Education Statistics in Kosovo 2023/2024" does not mention other vulnerable and marginalized categories, aside from individuals with special needs and members of non-majority communities.

Public Educational Institutions

Preschool education

- Public preschool institutions include nurseries and kindergartens, which provide care and education for children aged 0-5 years. These institutions are primarily funded by municipalities and aim to prepare children for primary education.

Primary and lower secondary education (grades 1-9)

- Public primary schools are distributed across all municipalities and provide compulsory education for children, offering a unified curriculum based on national standards.

Upper secondary education (grades 10–12)

- General secondary schools: Gymnasiums are the main institutions for students who wish to pursue university studies.
- Vocational schools: Offered by municipalities and supported by development partners, these schools provide training in fields such as technology, agriculture, healthcare, and craftsmanship.

Higher education

Kosovo has several public universities that offer various programs at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. The main universities include:

I. University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" (UP)

- The largest and oldest university in Kosovo, established in 1970.
- Offers programs in various fields such as natural sciences, social sciences, technology, and medicine.

II. University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti"

- One of the public universities established after the declaration of independence.
- Focuses on business, education, and technology programs.

III. University of Peja "Haxhi Zeka"

- Offers programs in business management, tourism, and agriculture.

IV. University of Mitrovica "Isa Boletini"

- Focuses on technical and engineering sciences.

V. University of Gjilan "Kadri Zeka"

- Primarily offers programs in educational fields and social sciences.

VI. University of Gjakova "Fehmi Agani"

- Focuses on education and medical sciences.

VII. University of Ferizaj (specialized in design and innovation)

- A relatively new institution focused on design and architecture.

Vocational education and technical training

- Vocational Training Centers: MFLT through the EARK manages eight (8) VTCs which are concentrated in seven Regions of the Republic of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Mitrovica and Doljane (northern part of Mitrovica) with 69 workshops and 30 different professions. In these centers is done the training and retraining of persons who are registered as jobseekers, unemployed and those who receive career guidance services, at all Employment offices in municipalities.

Private Educational Institutions

Private educational institutions in Kosovo play an important role in providing educational alternatives alongside the public system. They offer education at various levels and are typically characterized by greater flexibility in curricula, modern teaching environments, and an approach oriented towards the labor market.

Privat higher education

Kosovo has several accredited private universities and colleges that offer bachelor, master, and doctoral level programs. These institutions are known for their practical approach and collaboration with the labor market.

Notable private universities and colleges include:

1. Riinvest College: Focused on economics and business sciences.
2. American University in Kosovo (AUK - RIT Kosovo): Offers American programs in partnership with the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).
3. University for Business and Technology (UBT): One of the largest private colleges, offering a wide range of programs.
4. AAB College: A leading institution in social sciences and humanities.
5. Heimerer College: Known for its programs in health sciences and social sciences.

Private vocational education

In Kosovo, there are many organizations, businesses, and various institutes that offer professional training programs in various fields aimed at developing specific skills such as technology, foreign languages, hair and makeup, digital marketing, programming, design, and others, for different target groups. Certification from licensed educational institutions is of great importance for the professional and academic development of individuals, as it ensures that the qualifications obtained are recognized and valid both within the country and internationally.

Private educational institutions are an important alternative for those seeking higher standards or specialized programs in Kosovo, contributing to the diversity and competitiveness of the education sector.

Kosovo's Economy

According to a report published by the World Bank “Kosovo has experienced steady economic progress since independence, with a nearly 50% increase in per-capita income and a 35% reduction in the poverty rate. The country has successfully transitioned away from a growth model based on high dependence on foreign aid inflows, outperforming peer countries of similar per-capita income thanks to a steady expansion in consumption and investment, with a strong impetus from diaspora inflows, public investment in infrastructure, and financial deepening, amid a stable fiscal stance and an environment of low inflation.⁶

⁶ The World Bank of Kosovo (updated on October 2024), Kosovo is an upper-middle-income country which has experienced solid economic growth over the last decade, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/overview#1>

Furthermore, the Kosovo 2023 Report published by the EC ⁷ and the Economic Report published by the Swiss Embassy in Kosovo⁸ emphasize that Kosovo⁸ has made progress in developing a functional market economy and has managed to increase its economy the most among the countries in the region. In 2022, Kosovo experienced a reduction in investments and the household consumption slowed down due to high inflation, which reached double digits as a result of rising energy, food and transport prices. As in many countries worldwide, the Russia-Ukraine war had indirect negative effects on price increases and created uncertainty. According to the Kosovo 2023 Report published by the EC, "sustained vigilance is required in the context of slowing economic growth, tightening financial conditions, and rapid growth in mortgage lending to individuals." In Kosovo, the country's economy, according to the EC, was not significantly affected during the global crises of recent years, but it is noted that the private sector continues to face structural challenges such as the informal economy, corruption, and overall weak rule of law. Participation in the labor market and the employment rate, particularly among women and youth, remains very low, while unemployment remains high.⁹ Moreover, "despite some progress, the labor market continues to suffer from very low participation, high unemployment and significant gender gaps".¹⁰ Furthermore, in line with economic activity, the employment rate was increased to 36.3%, up from nearly 34% in 2022. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate dropped to 10.9% from 12.6%, despite

⁷ European Commission (November 2023), Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo 2023 Report, page 59, available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/760aacca-4e88-4667-8792-3ed08cdd65c3_en?filename=SWD_2023_692%20Kosovo%20report_0.pdf

⁸ Swiss Embassy in Kosovo (June, 2024), Economic Report 2023: [file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/Economic_Report_2023%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/Economic_Report_2023%20(1).pdf)

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ European Commission (October 2024), Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo 2023 Report, page 51, available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c790738e-4cf6-4a43-a8a9-43c1b6f01e10_en?filename=Kosovo%20Report%202024.pdf

the increase in the labor force participation rate to 40.7% from 38.6% during the same period.¹¹

According to an analysis published by the KCHC, the sectors that have contributed the most to the economic growth during the period 2021-2023 in Kosovo are manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, information and communication, and financial and insurance activities. According to this analysis, although there is economic growth with the functioning of the aforementioned industries, their growth and development are not in line with their full potential and regional developments.¹²

An analysis published by the KAS, Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo 2024, the unemployment rate in Kosovo is 10.9%, equivalent to 51,851 people.^{13 14} Thus, the press release published by KAS, in Kosovo, presents that two-thirds of the population, or 1,171,763 people, are of working age, marking a decrease of 23,663 compared to the previous year. Furthermore, the number of employed individuals was 425,499 (an increase of 21,686 compared to the previous year); consequently, the employment rate was 36.3% (an increase of 2.5% from the previous year). The employed population by gender is presented in the table below.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (2024), Key Sectors in Kosovo's Economic Development, available at:
https://www.oek-kcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sektoret-Kryesore-ne-Zhvillim-Ekonomik-te-Kosoves_OEK.pdf

¹³ AKosovo Agency of Statistics (September, 2023), Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo 2024, available at:
<https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/323bbe7d-f5d2-47ce-a814-8dc7299fa4e3.pdf>

¹⁴ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (July 2024), Press Release, available at:
<https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/bc92d0bc-927e-49f8-8461-522179da40c1.pdf>

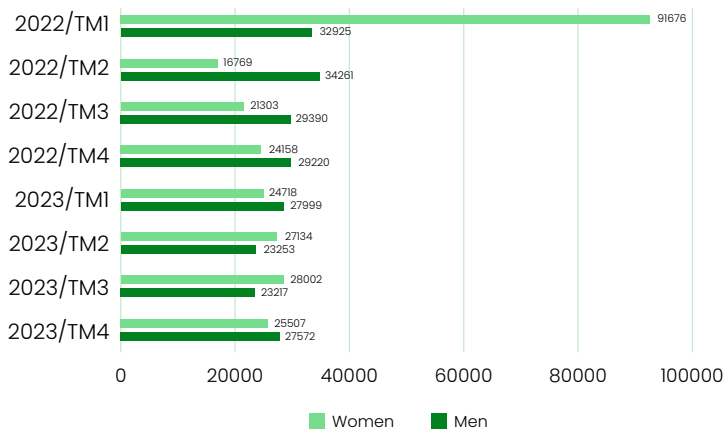


Chart 3: Unemployment and unemployment rate by gender, age group 15-64, Q1 2020 - Q4 2023

KAS has published the level of wages in Kosovo during 2023. According to the KAS,¹⁵ in 2023, the average gross wages in Kosovo were 570 Euros, compared to 521 Euros in 2022. This represents an increase of 49 Euros from the previous year. Meanwhile, the net wages in 2023 were 506 Euros, compared to 446 Euros in 2022, marking an increase of 60 Euros.

In the private sector, the average gross wage in 2023 was 515 Euros, compared to 473 Euros in 2022, reflecting an increase of 42 Euros. Meanwhile, the average net wage was 459 Euros,

¹⁵ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (October 2024), Press Release, Wage Level in Kosovo 2023, available at: <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/b05e5128-a620-4b49-a19e-6d47fb491895.pdf>

compared to 401 Euros in 2022, marking an increase of 58 Euros.

The average gross wage in the public sector in 2020 was 624 Euros, while in 2023, it increased to 713 Euros, reflecting a rise of 89 Euros or 14.2%. Similarly, the average net wage increased from 552 Euros in 2020 to 630 Euros in 2023, marking a rise of 78 Euros or 14.1%. In the public sector, a significant wage increases of approximately 18% compared to the previous year was observed, driven by the enforcement of the Law on Wages in the Public Sector,¹⁶ which came into effect in January 2023.

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Mining and quarrying	1.8	1.6	0.7	1.9
Production	16.3	17.0	17.0	16.7
Supply of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	2.7	2.6	2.9	3.3
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and land revitalization activities	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.5
Construction	9.6	10.3	10.9	11.0
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles	32.5	34.3	34.1	34.8
Transportation and storage	3.5	3.9	3.8	4.2
Accommodation and food service activities	8.2	9.4	9.1	8.5
Information and communication	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.6
Other service activities	17.1	12.6	13.0	11.4

Table 3: Distribution of employees by economic sectors over the years (%)

¹⁶ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (January 2023), Law on Salaries in the Public Sector, available at: <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/b05e5128-a620-4b49-a19e-6d47fb491895.pdf>

Public Sector

The public sector in Kosovo is a key component of the country's economy, influencing various aspects of economic development, governance, and social welfare.

Structure of the Public Sector in Kosovo

The public sector in Kosovo includes state institutions and agencies that provide services and implement public policies for citizens. This sector is established and regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, relevant laws, and strategic development frameworks, playing a crucial role in the country's economic, social and political development.¹⁷

The public sector in Kosovo consists of the following structure:

- Central Institutions which include the Assembly, the Presidency, the Government (including all ministries), and the judiciary.
- Local Institutions which include municipalities, responsible for services such as education, primary healthcare, and urban planning.
- Agencies and Independent Bodies which include regulatory agencies, supervisory institutions, and other entities with specific functions.

¹⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (September 2023), Law on Public Officials, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=81430>

The public sector operates according to a well-defined legal framework, including the Law on Public Officials,¹⁸ the Law on Public Finances,¹⁹ the Law on Public Procurement Management,²⁰ as well as all other laws published on the official website of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo.²¹

The public sector is one of the largest employers in Kosovo, providing jobs for approximately 81,000 people.²² The public administration and state-owned enterprises serve as stable sources of income, especially in regions with limited private sector activity. The advantages of being employed in the public sector include job stability, which consequently impacts family economic security.

The public sector in Kosovo has a significant impact on the economy, offering both opportunities and challenges. While it provides essential services and employment, inefficiencies and governance issues hinder the realization of its full potential. Over the years, the government of Kosovo has contributed to the creation and/or advancement of various reforms that have positively influenced sustainable economic growth and improved the standard of living for its citizens.

18 Ibid

19 Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (September 2023), Law on Public Financial Management and Accountability, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=12387>

20 Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (September 2011), Law on Public Procurement in the Republic of Kosovo, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2772>

21 Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Laws, Draft laws, and other documents are available at: <https://www.kuvendikosoves.org/shq/projektligjet-dhe-ligjet/>

22 Kosovo Agency of Statistics, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net>

Private Sector

The private sector in Kosovo is an essential component of the economy and plays a significant role in job creation and the economic development of the country. This sector includes SMEs, large corporations, and self-employed businesses, spanning various sectors such as trade, construction, manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, and services. In the private sector, approximately 320,000 people are employed.²³

According to the Statistical Report on Economic Enterprises in Kosovo, published by KAS,²⁴ a total of 996 enterprises were registered in September 2024. Compared to August 2024, there was a 9.4% increase in registered enterprises. When compared to the same month of the previous year, there was also a 9.4% increase in registered enterprises.

The most preferred economic activities during this month were: wholesale and retail trade, motor vehicle repair, and motorcycle repair with 234 enterprises (23.5%), construction with 120 enterprises (12.0%), manufacturing with 105 enterprises (10.5%), professional, scientific, and technical activities with 98 enterprises (9.8%), accommodation, and food service activities with 84 enterprises (8.4%), and more.

In the chart below, you can see the number of registered and closed enterprises over the years, starting from 2009 to 2024.²⁵

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Kosovo Agency of Statistics (September 2024), Economic Enterprises in Kosovo, available at: <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/4e09a68b-c7c5-4a10-b474-19d2e442050c.pdf>

²⁵ Ibid

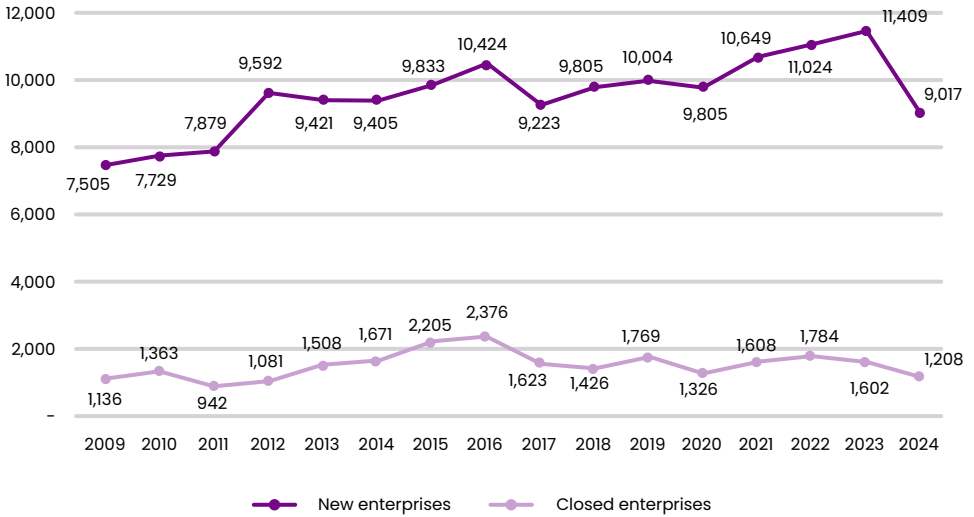


Chart 4: Number of Registered and Closed Enterprises Over the Years

The majority of enterprises in Kosovo are SMEs, representing the largest number of businesses operating in Kosovo. These businesses are mainly focused on trade, manufacturing, and services. In recent years, information technology and innovation have experienced rapid growth, offering great potential for export and economic development.²⁶

The private sector has great potential to contribute to the economic development of Kosovo, but it requires strategic support from state institutions and international partners to address existing obstacles and capitalize on opportunities.

²⁶ Emerging Europe, (December 2024), IT sector in focus: Kosovo, available at: <https://emerging-europe.com/analysis/it-sector-in-focus-kosovo/>

Kosovo's Legislation

Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo

According to the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, Article 3, General principles of Pre-University Education, the Ministry, municipalities, educational institutions and all other responsible bodies must provide opportunities for education for all children, in line with their abilities and specific needs, as well as promote their educational and social development. Furthermore, Article 3 also states that " Access to and progression through all levels of pre-university education shall be enabled in compliance with the provisions of this Law without discrimination on any real or presumed ground such as sex, race, sexual orientation, physical, intellectual or other disability, marital status, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a Community, property, birth or other status of the pupil or the pupil's family."²⁷

Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo

Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo regulates the organization of public educational institutions and the provision of public education at the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education levels in the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo. One of the main responsibilities of MESTI and the local level institutions is to work on promoting a

²⁷ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2011), Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2770>

²⁸ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2008), Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2543>

non-discriminatory educational system in which each person's right to education is respected and quality learning opportunities are available to all.²⁸

Law for Vocational Education and Training

Law for Vocational Education and Training regulates the provision of formal vocational education and training (VET) by both public and private institutions to young people and adults, without discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability. The Article 27 Student assessment of this Law, mentions that MESTI will make provision for an independent appeals system for those who consider that their achievements have not been fairly assessed or that they have been subject to discrimination.²⁹

Education Strategy 2022–2026

The Education Strategy 2022–2026, as the main document for the development of the education sector in Kosovo during the 2022–2026 period, does not specifically address discrimination on any basis. However, it emphasizes that “Activities that contribute to the implementation of measures to prevent and report all forms of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, neglect, sexual harassment, and exploitation), homophobia, bullying, hate speech and extremism in schools should be planned.”³⁰

Furthermore, as part of Specific Objective 2.7, which focuses on the provision of quality textbooks, resources, tools and teaching materials in accordance with the relevant curriculum and standards, it is stated that “Special attention

²⁹ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2013), Law for Vocational Education and Training, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2868>

³⁰ Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (2022), Education Strategy 2022 – 2026, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8676>

will be paid to the building of mechanisms and capacities for quality preparation of textbooks and teaching materials, printed and digital, in accordance with the relevant curriculum and standards including gender equity,³¹ in official languages, foreign languages, in the languages of non-majority communities, as well as for different categories of students with special needs.”³²

Government Program of the Republic of Kosovo 2021–2025

The Government Program of the Republic of Kosovo 2021–2025 reflects the approach and principles of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, as well as the fundamental priorities and initiatives to be undertaken across all areas to improve the situation in the country. One of the Government’s priorities for 2021–2025, among others, is the promotion of human rights and ensuring gender equality through the empowerment of women. Furthermore, Government program also focuses on the promotion and protection of the rights of non-majority communities by improving policies, fostering social inclusion, and contributing to overall stabilization, the return of displaced persons and sustainable solutions.³³

Law on Labour

Law on Labour, Article 5, Prohibition of all Forms of Discrimination employer is obliged to create equal opportunities and criteria to both male and female applicants. Furthermore, Article 8 Public Competition obliges

³¹ Agency for Gender Equality, Office of the Prime Minister (2019), Preventing Gender Stereotypes and Promoting Gender Equality in School Textbooks and Materials, available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Programi-i-Qeverise-se-Kosoves-2021-2025.pdf>

³² Ibid

³³ Government of the Republic of Kosovo (2021), Government Program of the Republic of Kosovo 2021–2025, available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Programi-i-Qeverise-se-Kosoves-2021-2025.pdf>

the employer to treat the competition equal for all aspirant candidates, without any kind of discrimination, as defined by this Law and other applicable acts.³⁴

The Law on Labour foresees also punitive provisions for individuals and legal entities that violate this law or the relevant laws and applicable international instruments in Kosovo.

Law on Protection from Discrimination

Law on Protection from Discrimination aims to establish a general framework for prevention and combating discrimination based on nationality, or in relation to any community, social origin, race, ethnicity, colour, birth, origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, citizenship, religion and religious belief, political affiliation, political or other opinion, social or personal status, age, family or marital status, pregnancy, maternity, wealth, health status, disability, genetic inheritance or any other grounds, in order to implement the principle of equal treatment.”³⁵

The provisions of this law must be implemented by all state and local institutions, individuals, and legal entities in both the public and private sectors. Specifically, this law focuses, among other areas, on the following:

- Conditions for access to employment,
- Conditions for self-employment and occupation;
- Social benefits;
- Any other rights provided by the applicable legislation.

³⁴ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2010), Law on Labour, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>

³⁵ Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (2015), Law on Protection from Discrimination, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10924>

Types of unequal treatment, are presented in Article 4 and are as follows:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Incitement to discrimination
- Victimization
- Segregation
- Discrimination based on association
- Failure of a reasonable adaptation/accommodation for persons with disabilities
- Discrimination based on perception
- Multiple discrimination

All these forms of unequal treatment must be reported to the competent authorities, as they are punishable by law.

Action Plan for the Rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Kosovo 2024–2026

The Government of Kosovo, through the 2024–2026 Action Plan for the Rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Kosovo expresses a clear commitment to advance: the process of implementing international human rights standards, legal and policy frameworks, for the protection and promotion of the rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Kosovo. The comprehensive objective of the 2024–2026 Action Plan for the Rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Kosovo is to ensure that the rights and needs of LGBTI persons are respected, protected and implemented by the responsible institutions.³⁶ This plan, as one of its strategic objectives, also aims to advance equal access for LGBTI individuals through education and cultural activities.

³⁶ Office of Good Governance, Office of the Prime Minister (2024), 2024–2026 Action Plan for the Rights of LGBTI persons in the Republic of Kosovo, available at: <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/viewConsult.php?ConsultationID=42547>

Economic Reform Programme (ERP) 2022–2024

Within the dialogue for economic governance between Kosovo and EU, the Government of Kosovo has drafted the Economic Reform Programme 2022–2024. The program consists of four main chapters and includes: macroeconomic framework, fiscal framework, structural reform priorities and the budget for the next three years. The fourth chapter, Structural Reform Priorities, should provide a clear picture of the structural obstacles (challenges) of competitiveness and inclusive economic growth. Based on the analysis of structural barriers, 15–20 reform measures should be identified which directly help to unblock structure constraints in terms of competitiveness, economic growth and job creation.

The overall ERP policy framework is a combination of: (1) economic recovery program which aims to support post-pandemic economic recovery; (2) a rules-based fiscal policy oriented towards stability of public finances and, within the available fiscal space, supporting economic growth through capital investments and increased funding for priority development areas; and (2) a set of priority structural reforms addressing the key obstacles to economic growth, supporting the development of competitive economic sectors, and assuring that economic growth is inclusive and welfare enhancing.³⁷

³⁷ Government of Kosovo (2022), Economic Reform Programme (ERP) 2022–2024, available at: <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/viewConsult.php?ConsultationID=41299>

Findings

Kosovo has an advanced legal framework which aims at guaranteeing human rights and addressing discrimination in various fields, including education and employment. However, these laws do not contain specific provisions addressing the position and inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in these areas.

In the education sector, the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo and relevant laws guarantee equal access to education and prohibit discrimination. However, the Law on Pre-University Education and the Law on Higher Education do not provide specific measures to support LGBTI+ individuals or address the potential barriers and discrimination they may face. Furthermore, there is a lack of policies and administrative guidance focused on creating a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ individuals in educational institutions.

In the employment sector, the Law on Labour prohibits discrimination, including sexual orientation as a protected ground. However, there are no specific provisions to protect LGBTI+ individuals in the workplace or ensure equal access to recruitment and professional advancement. The Law on the Protection from Discrimination includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected categories, but its implementation remains weak, and discrimination cases often go unresolved.

Although the legal framework in Kosovo is among the most advanced in the region regarding the fight against discrimination, its enforcement remains a challenge. The absence of specific provisions and policies that clearly address the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in education and employment creates space for silent discrimination and

social exclusion. This highlights the need for amendments to existing laws and the creation of inclusive policies to address these gaps.

Some additional findings from the research and analysis of relevant legislation and other documents are presented below:

- There are no specific policies or action plans focusing on improving conditions for LGBTI+ individuals in education.
- There are no training programs for teachers and employers addressing diversity and the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals.
- Statistics and data on the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in education are scarce, limiting the basis for creating effective policies.
- Data segregation in the KAS does not include the LGBTI+ category.
- The Action Plan for the Rights of LGBTI+ Persons in the Republic of Kosovo 2024–2026 includes promising initial activities but does not offer actions that directly address equal access through education and employment.
- Administrative Instructions related to school safety and violence prevention often do not include aspects related to protecting LGBTI+ individuals from harassment or stigmatization.

Although the legal framework in Kosovo provides a solid foundation, the gaps in specifically addressing the needs of LGBTI+ individuals in education and employment create serious challenges. The lack of dedicated policies, support programs and accurate statistics hinders the full inclusion of this group in the Kosovo society. Improving these areas

requires amending existing legislation and greater institutional commitment to ensure equal access and support.

Furthermore, policies and measures to promote the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in the labor market are lacking. From the literature review, it can be concluded that there are no programs aimed at integrating LGBTI+ individuals into the labor market through training, mentoring, or subsidization opportunities. Although the current legislation prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, there are no proactive policies addressing the structural barriers faced by LGBTI+ individuals during the employment and career advancement process. From the research conducted for the publication of this report, it can be said that, to date, no partnerships have been developed with the private or public sector to promote inclusive employment, and campaigns to raise employer awareness about diversity and inclusion are very limited.

Findings from the Quantitative Data

Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI)

According to the MESTI, there are specific strategies and policies for the inclusion and support of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, minority communities, people with disabilities and LGBTI+ individuals in the educational system. Furthermore, the educational programs and curricula developed by MESTI are designed to promote diversity and the inclusion of all groups in Kosovo. MESTI's educational programs that aim to address discrimination and promote the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women, youth, minority communities, people with disabilities, and LGBTI+ individuals, include teacher training programs. Additionally, when organizing non-formal activities, MESTI ensures that components for the protection and support of vulnerable and marginalized groups are incorporated in the education system.

MESTI collaborates closely with local and international organizations to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups such in the educational system. As an institution, MESTI has developed and plans to continue developing training programs for teachers on issues of diversity and inclusion.

The key measures taken by MESTI to better support the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, minority communities, people with disabilities, and LGBTI+ individuals in formal and non-formal education

include the development of inclusive legislation/policies and continuous support and affirmative programs for vulnerable groups. The current legislation fully addresses both formal and non-formal education, as alternatives that support inclusion and reintegration into society. Additionally, aside from legislation and operational measures, issues of equality and inclusion are addressed in the Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework (in the goals, principles, competencies, and subject descriptions) and in other curricular documents, such as core curricula (in the learning outcomes for competencies, learning outcomes for fields, and treatment of cross-curricular issues) and subject curricula/programs (in the learning outcomes for the field, learning outcomes for subjects, themes, and educational content).

MESTI offers a reporting mechanism for cases of discrimination or bullying against vulnerable and marginalized groups in schools. Moreover, MESTI monitors the implementation of anti-discrimination policies in schools through school inspections.

The main barriers to the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, minority communities, people with disabilities, and LGBTI+ individuals in the education system, according to MESTI, are linked to social, economic, and cultural factors, as MESTI believes that adequate policies and training already exist.

The Directorate of Education at the Municipal Level

The Directorates of Education have specific policies and guidelines that support access to education for marginalized groups. However, there are no specific policies or guidelines addressing access to education for LGBTI+ individuals. Although there are no dedicated programs or directives for the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in education, training sessions are organized for teachers and administrative staff focusing on inclusiveness, diversity and the rights of marginalized groups. These initiatives are conducted in collaboration with various organizations.

The preparation of staff for inclusiveness plays a critical role in creating a work and educational environment that respects and supports diversity. Well-prepared staff can directly contribute to reducing discrimination and promoting equality in workplaces, educational institutions and society in general. However, the preparation of educational staff in addressing issues affecting LGBTI+ individuals is not at an adequate level.

A major challenge faced by the Directorates of Education in promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups in education is the lack of financial resources. This highlights the need for increased budget allocations for this category to encourage greater inclusion of these groups.

The Directorate of Education collaborates with relevant institutions, such as the Faculty of Education, to prepare students for the labor market, especially those from marginalized groups.

In conclusion, the education system to prepare students from marginalized groups for employment is not at a satisfactory level. Therefore, more work is needed, and specific measures should be ensured, including:

Training for Teachers and Staff

Providing training programs for teachers and educational staff to help create inclusive environments and address the specific needs of students from these groups.

Dedicated Support for Students

Establishing mentoring and support programs to assist marginalized students in achieving their academic and professional goals.

Development of Practical Skills

Incorporating programs that develop practical and professional skills to better prepare students for the job market.

Supportive Policies

Designing and implementing policies that promote equality in education and employment for all, including students from marginalized groups.

Awareness Campaigns

Organizing campaigns to combat prejudice and promote social and economic inclusion.

Directorate of Economic Development

The Directorates of Economic Development adhere to local policies that promote the employment of vulnerable and marginalized groups and support the development of policies aimed at assisting these groups. Furthermore, marginalized groups are included in the strategies and policies related to economic development at the municipal level.

There is financial and logistical support for enterprises that employ individuals from marginalized groups, with the primary beneficiaries being women, girls and youth interested in starting their own businesses. The Directorates of Economic Development also offer professional training programs for marginalized groups, which are primarily organized within the framework of projects implemented by various organizations. Investments in programs for the economic empowerment of marginalized groups are either low or fragmented; therefore, there is a need to increase budget allocations for dedicated entrepreneurship programs focused on marginalized groups and create specific funds for startups and innovative projects.

The main challenges identified by the Directorate for Economic Development in promoting access to the labor market for marginalized groups include:

- Lack of funding: Insufficient financial resources dedicated to supporting marginalized groups.
- Lack of collaboration with the private sector: Limited partnerships to create employment opportunities and foster inclusive practices.
- Social discrimination and prejudices: Persistent societal biases hinder the integration of marginalized groups into the workforce.

Vocational Training Centers

The role of VTC is to provide opportunities to benefit from training programs and obtain certifications. VTCs have specific policies that promote the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, non-majority communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI+ individuals in education and training programs.

Issues related to gender equality and the inclusion of individuals from non-majority communities, the LGBTI+ community, and persons with disabilities are addressed in curricula or training programs. To ensure a safer and more inclusive environment for marginalized groups, VTCs contribute to raising awareness through training offered within the institution. The training and skills development programs are tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, non-majority communities, persons with disabilities and LGBTI+ individuals. VTCs staff and trainers have been trained on issues related to the inclusion and equality of individuals from vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, there remains a need for various programs to enhance the institution's capacity to address issues affecting these groups.

VTCs collaborate with numerous organizations and work to promote the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, non-majority communities, persons with disabilities and LGBTI+ individuals.

VTCs have mechanisms in place to report and address discrimination or inappropriate behavior toward individuals from vulnerable and marginalized groups.

According to VTCs, a major challenge faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups in participating in institutional programs is the lack of social or economic support. Another identified challenge is the lack of self-initiative to engage in training programs offered by VTCs. Additionally, a lack of information about the opportunities provided by VTCs is seen as a barrier to participation in organized training.

VTCs register data on individuals who have received training services from these institutions, disaggregated by gender, community, disability and sexual orientation.

Center for Social Work

CSWs provide services to all citizens of the respective municipality who have social needs, without discrimination. CSWs maintain close collaboration with VTCs, Regional Centers, high schools, universities, and local and international organizations to organize activities related to professional skills development.

CSWs do not have specific programs primarily dedicated to supporting marginalized groups, including LGBTI+ individuals. The challenges faced by marginalized groups, particularly LGBTI+ individuals, according to CSWs, include prejudice and stigmatization.

Organisations Providing Professional Training

Organizations that organise and deliver professional training programs in various fields have specific policies promoting the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women, youth, non-majority communities, persons with disabilities and LGBTI+ individuals. Issues of gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized groups are addressed in their curricula or training programs. Anti-discrimination policies are key measures these organizations implement to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for these groups. Organizations providing professional training programs collaborate with other organizations and relevant institutions, particularly in specific cases, to promote the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The main challenges faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, youth, non-majority communities, persons with disabilities and LGBTI+ individuals in participating in professional training programs include lack of social and economic support and insufficient integration of marginalized groups' needs into the curricula.

Organisations providing professional training programs have mechanisms in place to report and address discrimination or inappropriate behavior against individuals from vulnerable and marginalized groups. Additionally, their staff is trained on issues related to the inclusion and equality of these groups.

A targeted and dedicated campaign is recommended to enhance the inclusion of marginalized groups in training programs, events, and startup initiatives. This is considered a crucial step toward ensuring greater access and inclusion.

Businesses in Kosovo

The businesses targeted for this research have responded by stating that they have written policies on diversity and inclusion, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups. With the goal of creating equal opportunities for all, private businesses in Kosovo offer employment opportunities without discrimination, even for marginalized individuals in society. However, according to these businesses, despite their commitment and efforts to create an inclusive environment, inequality in employment opportunities persists in the private sector for vulnerable and marginalized groups in Kosovo. This suggests that the individual efforts of some businesses are still insufficient to overcome the structural and social barriers affecting equal access to the labor market.

This reality requires a broader and more coordinated approach, which includes:

- Strict implementation and better monitoring of anti-discrimination laws.
- Increasing awareness and sensitization campaigns, both in the private and public sectors.
- Strengthening public-private partnerships to promote equal employment opportunities for marginalized groups.
- Training and education on diversity and inclusion at every level of the business hierarchy.

LGBTI+ Individuals

Part of this process included fifteen (15) LGBTI+ individuals who benefited from specialized training programs organized by CEL Kosovo. Below, in the form of charts and explanations, you will find the findings from the questions posed for the purpose of publishing this research.

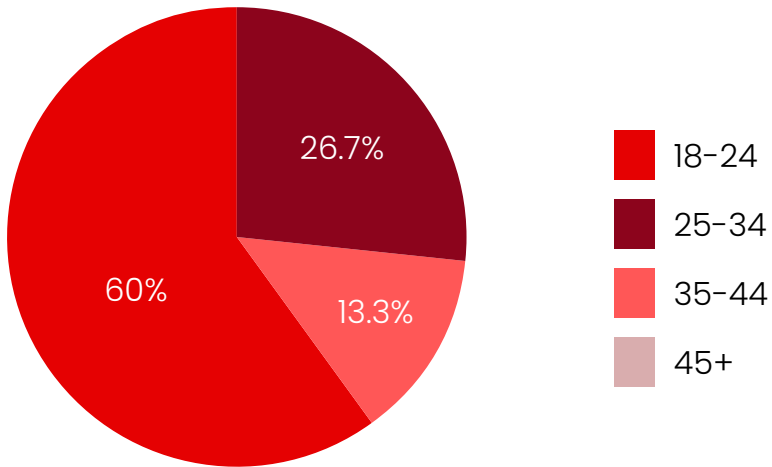


Chart 5: Age of the LGBTI+ individuals that participated in the process

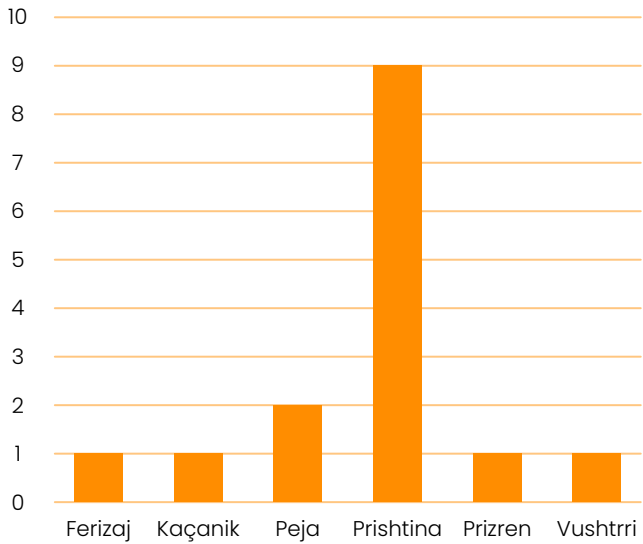


Chart 6: Municipality of origin

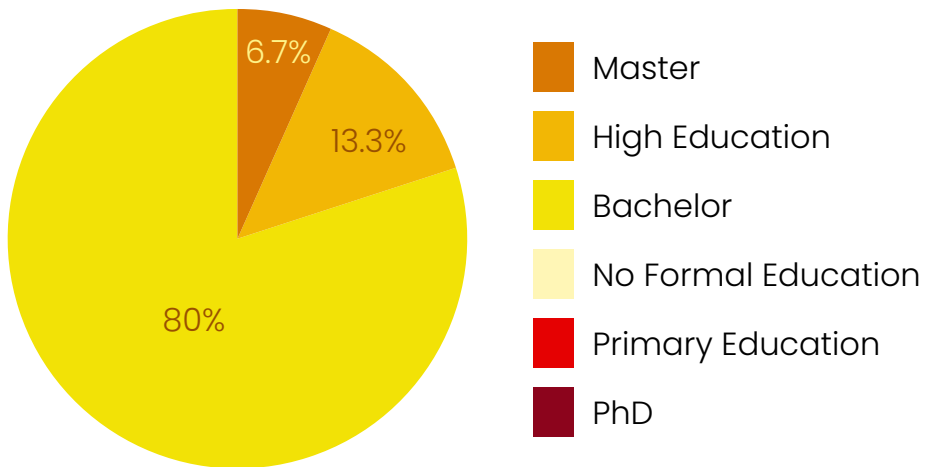


Chart 7: Level of Education

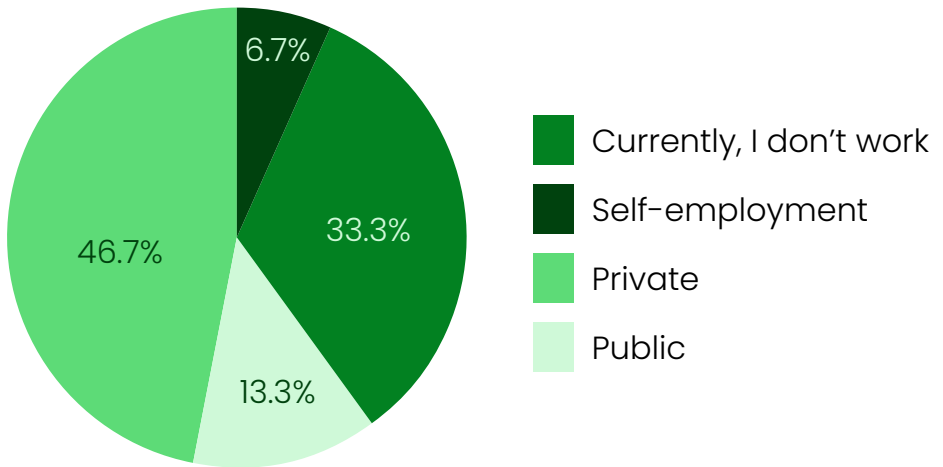


Chart 8: Employment sector

As shown in Chart 8, 33.3% of the respondents are not employed. Of this percentage, approximately 53.3% are actively seeking employment.

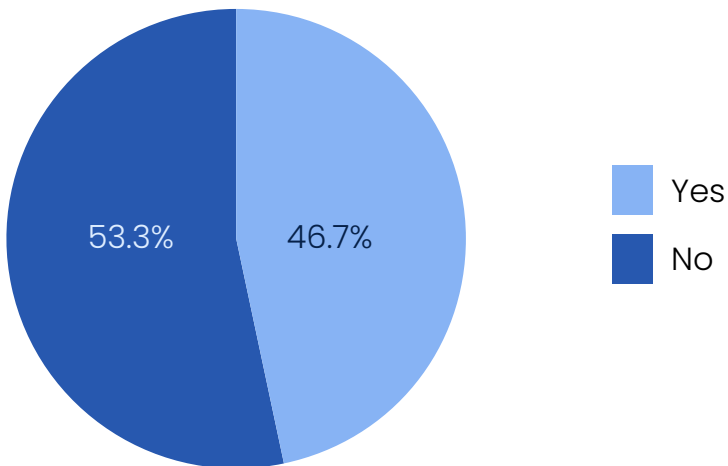


Chart 9: % of people interested to work

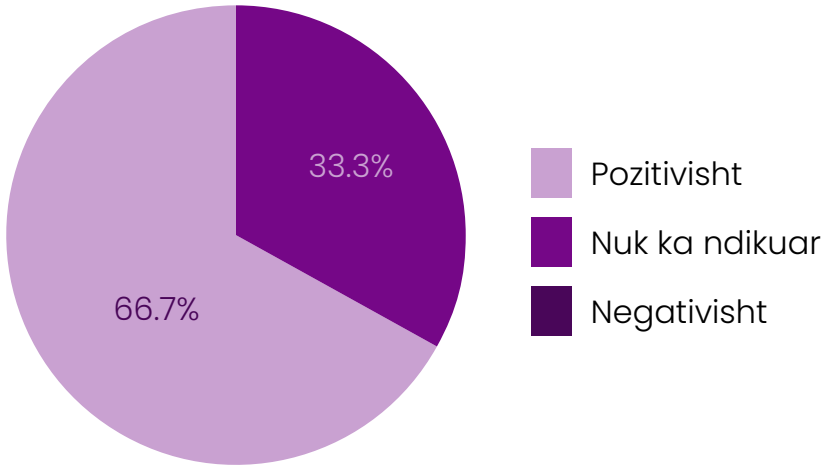


Chart 10: The impact of formal education (schooling) on employment

The LGBTI+ individuals involved in this research process directly benefited from participating in professional training programs offered within CEL Kosovo's projects. According to them, participation in these training programs has positively influenced their access to the labor market.

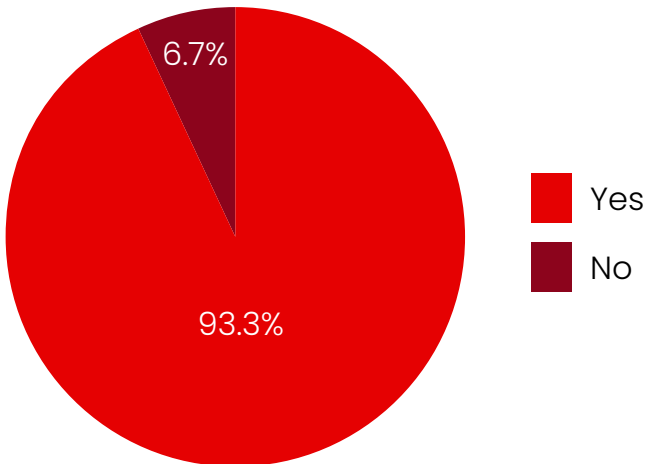


Chart 11: The impact of organizing professional training programs on preparing individuals for access to the labor market

The majority of participants or 93.3% reported that the skills and knowledge acquired through the training improved their employability, providing them with greater opportunities to access jobs. This suggests that such initiatives play a critical role in enhancing the professional prospects of marginalized groups, particularly LGBTI+ individuals.

The LGBTI+ participants in this survey have benefited not only from the professional training programs organized by CEL Kosova but also from various training programs organized by international organizations. As shown in the graph below, the majority of these professional training programs were organized by local NGOs and international organizations.

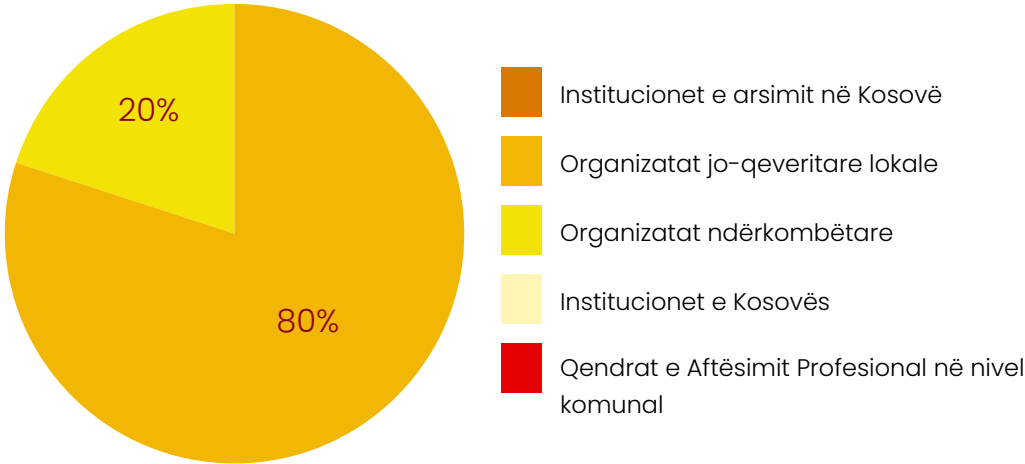


Chart 12: Institutions that organize professional training programs from which LGBTI+ individuals have benefited

This highlights the role of both local and international NGOs in providing opportunities for marginalized groups, such as LGBTI+ individuals, to enhance their skills and improve their employability. These programs are crucial for helping participants access the labor market and overcome barriers related to discrimination and lack of formal education.

As part of this research, we analyzed whether the educational and professional training programs organized by various organizations and institutions are suitable for the needs of LGBTI+ individuals. According to the participants in this survey, the majority of them believe that the programs offered are not suitable for the needs of LGBTI+ individuals living in Kosovo.

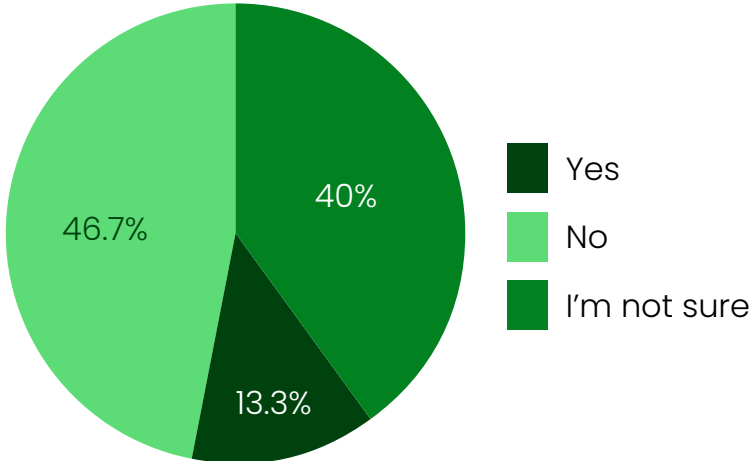


Chart 13: Suitability of Training Programs for the Needs of LGBTI+ Individuals

The majority of LGBTI+ individuals involved in this survey are not confident that there are sufficient opportunities to benefit from educational programs and training that specifically target LGBTI+ individuals

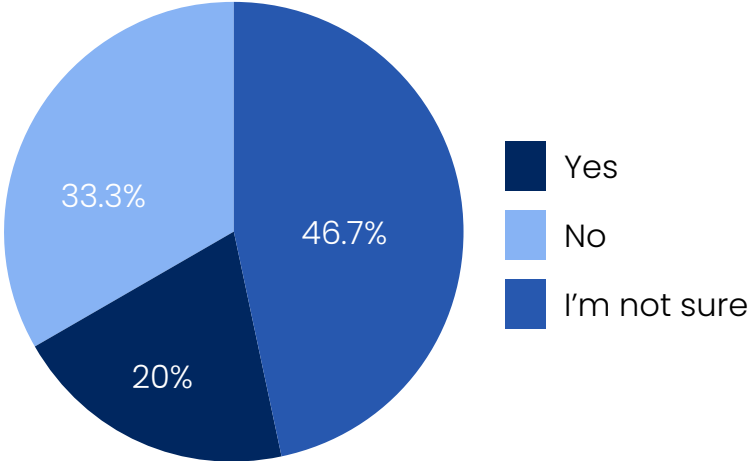


Chart 14: Sufficient opportunities to benefit from educational programs and training specifically targeting LGBTI+ individuals

Further, LGBTI+ individuals were asked which areas they believe professional training programs should be offered to improve their access to the labor market. The proposed fields include:

- Information Technology;
- Programming;

- Mass Communication;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Social Services;
- Engineering;
- Political Science;
- Activism;
- Journalism;
- Arts;
- Finance and Management;
- Marketing and Social Media Management;
- Tourism;
- Gastronomy;
- Professional development (CV preparation, job application, cover letter writing, etc.);
- Personal development (application preparation for scholarships offered by different institutions);
- Graphic Design;
- Photography;
- Soft Skills.

As part of the research, we also included questions to understand the approach to the labor market by LGBTI+ individuals. Participants in the survey were asked if they had faced difficulties during the job application process due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. 53.3% of them responded that their sexual orientation or gender identity did not affect the job application process.

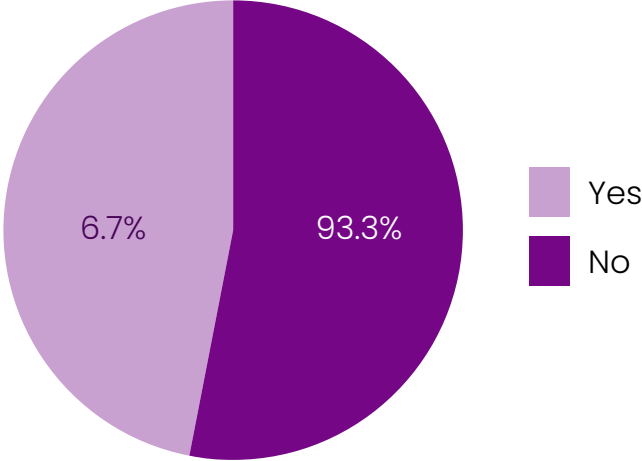


Chart 15: Difficulties during the job application process due to sexual orientation or gender identity

Although more than 50% of the survey participants responded that they did not face difficulties during the job application process due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, more than 70% of them believe that they do not have equal opportunities for employment.

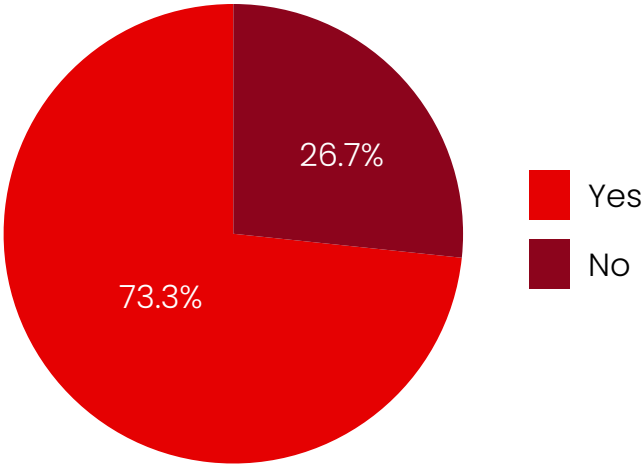


Chart 16: Equal rights in employment

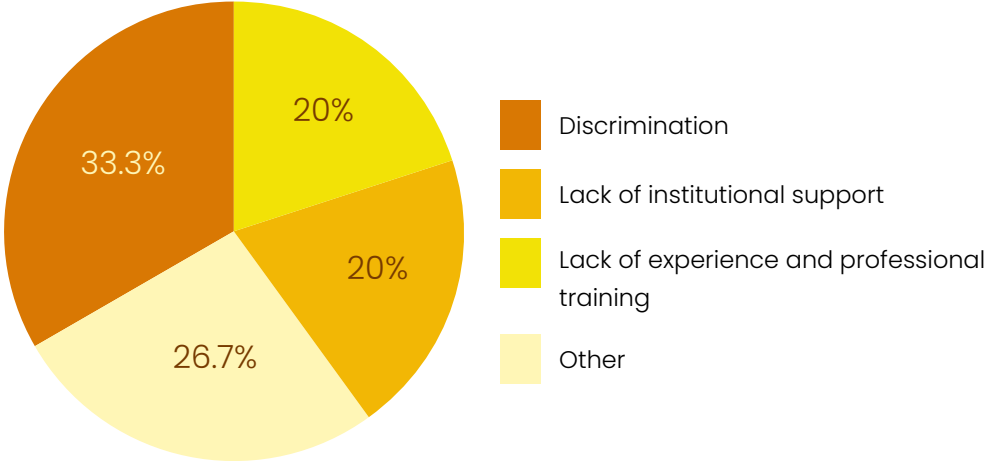


Chart 17: The main challenges during the employment process in the private sector

The participants in this survey expressed that the main challenges they have encountered during the employment process in the private sector are related to discrimination, lack of institutional support, lack of experience and professional training, fear of stigmatization, low wages, lack of opportunities for advancement, and others.

In response to the question about the main challenges faced by respondents regarding access to employment in the public sector, they answered as follows:

- Discrimination
- Lack of institutional support
- Lack of experience or professional training for LGBTI+ individuals.

Furthermore, the lack of specific inclusion policies, fear of stigmatization, lack of support measures, cultural and social barriers in public institutions, and the lack of implementation of existing legislation have been identified as other major challenges faced by LGBTI+ individuals in accessing employment in the public sector. These factors contribute to the persistent discrimination and unequal opportunities that hinder their full participation in the workforce.

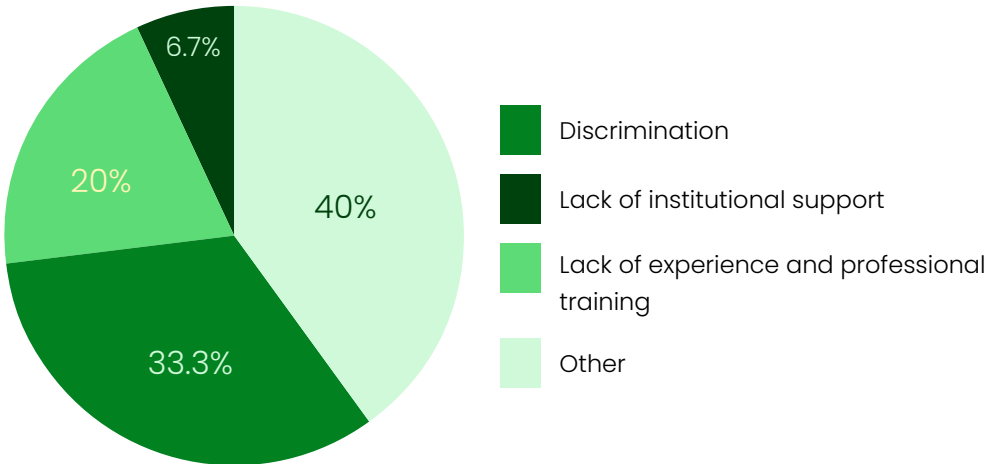


Chart 18: The main challenges during the employment process in the public sector

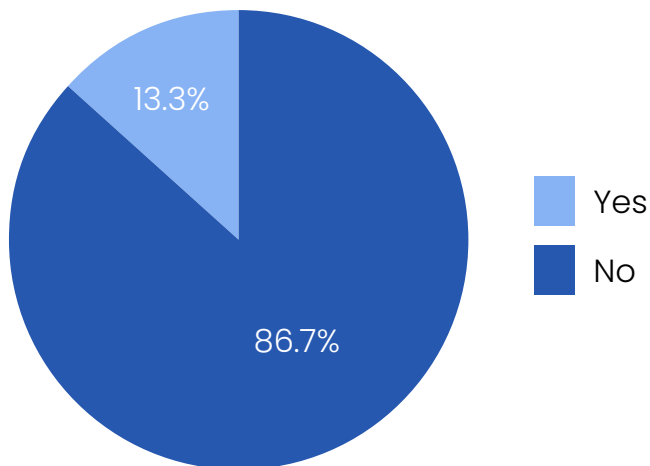


Chart 19: Investment of the private sector in its internal policies to provide equal employment opportunities for all without discrimination

According to the respondents, the private sector does not invest enough in its internal policies to provide equal employment opportunities for all, without discrimination.

When asked whether the public sector offers equal employment opportunities for everyone without discrimination, 100% of respondents answered no. According to the respondents, despite legal provisions that prohibit discrimination of any form, sexual orientation and gender identity remain factors that influence access and equality in employment within the public sector.

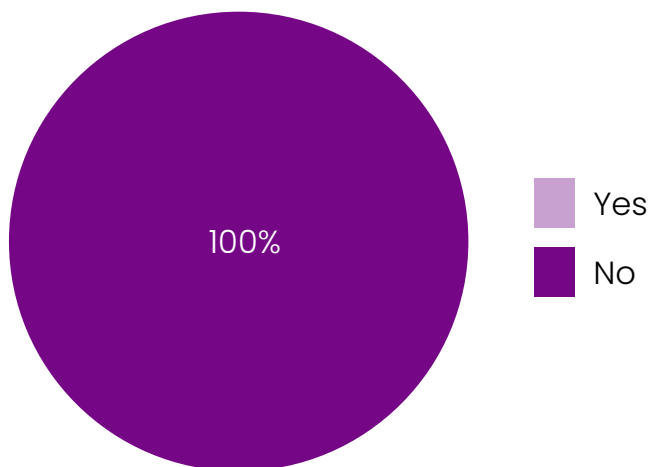


Chart 20: Equal employment opportunities in the public sector

Furthermore, considering the challenges faced by LGBTI+ individuals in Kosovo across all spheres, particularly the stereotypes and prejudices in the public and private sectors, it can be said that discrimination based on sexual orientation is highly pronounced and creates invisible barriers for LGBTI+ individuals, especially in terms of accessing employment. According to 80% of respondents, employers often prefer to hire individuals who conform to traditional gender norms due to prejudices or social pressure. Additionally, subtle discrimination is observed, related to withholding important tasks or excluding individuals from training opportunities once they are employed.

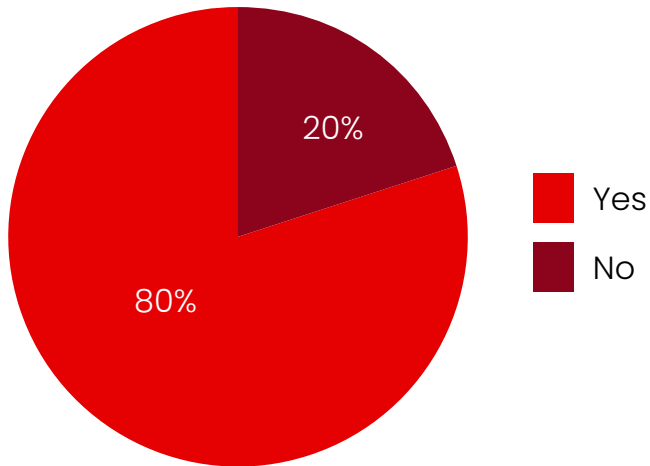


Chart 21: Witnessing discrimination in the workplace against LGBTI+ individuals

The majority of respondents believe that the level of discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals regarding education and employment in Kosovo is high and very high, at 46.7% and 40%, respectively.

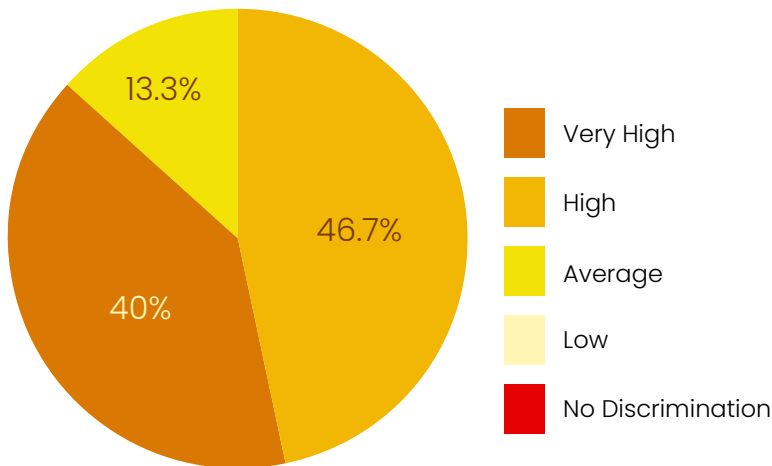


Chart 22: The level of discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals concerning education and employment in Kosovo

In general, institutions and employers in Kosovo still do not adequately address discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals. Even though the legal framework is among the most advanced in the region, its implementation remains a challenge.

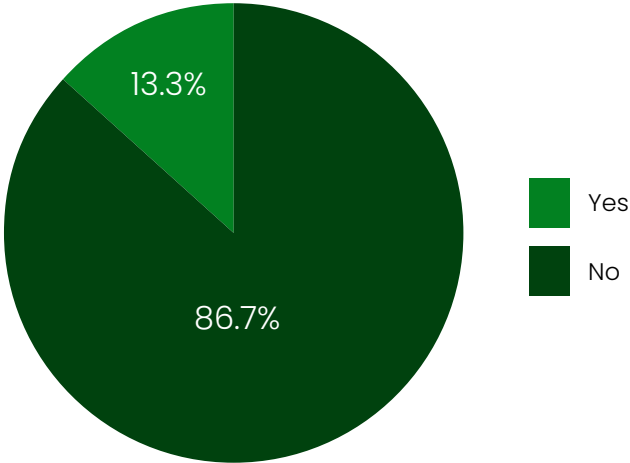


Chart 23: Addressing Discrimination Against LGBTI+ Individuals by Institutions and Employers

Reporting cases of discrimination in the workplace is a sensitive and often challenging process for individuals, particularly for LGBTI+ individuals. When asked whether they have ever reported any instance of discrimination at the workplace, 46.7% of the respondents said yes, while 53.3% said no.

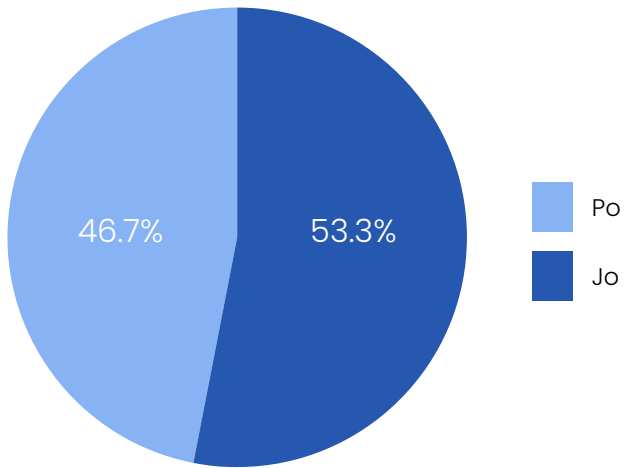


Chart 24: Reporting Discrimination in the Workplace

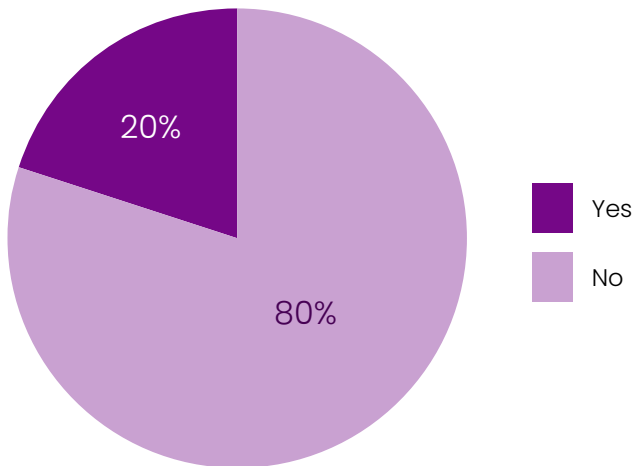


Chart 25: Submitted Complaints Processed Further

Among the reported cases, 80% of them were not addressed by the institution where the complaint was filed, and were not treated as cases. This indicates a lack of efficiency in the mechanisms for handling complaints, contributing to increased distrust in the system and promoting silence around similar cases. On the other hand, 20% of respondents reported that their complaint was addressed. These cases can be highlighted as positive practices for the enforcement of laws and the improvement of organizational culture.

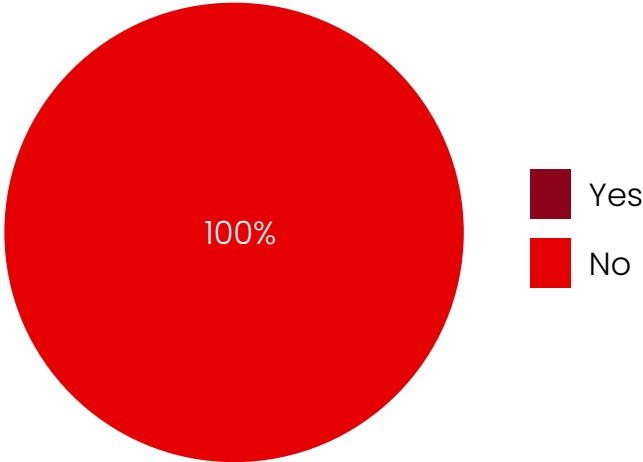


Chart 26: Kosovo Institutions' Commitment to Providing Equal Employment Opportunities for LGBTI+ Individuals

According to the survey, 100% of respondents believe that institutions in Kosovo do not do enough to provide equal employment opportunities for LGBTI+ individuals. This reflects a broader issue where the general climate of stigmatization negatively impacts the engagement of institutions. The lack of sufficient institutional action may be attributed to these prevailing societal attitudes, which further perpetuate inequality and hinder the progress of LGBTI+ individuals in accessing fair employment opportunities. Addressing this issue requires stronger commitment from institutions, as well as a shift in the societal mindset to eliminate stigma and promote inclusivity.

According to more than 90% of the survey respondents, the private sector in Kosovo does not invest in internal policies that provide equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of differences, nor does it adequately address discrimination cases. This reflects a significant gap in fostering inclusive workplaces where individuals, including those from the LGBTI+ community, are treated fairly and with dignity. Strengthening internal policies to ensure non-discriminatory practices and promoting diversity in the workforce could be essential steps for improving inclusivity and equality in the private sector.

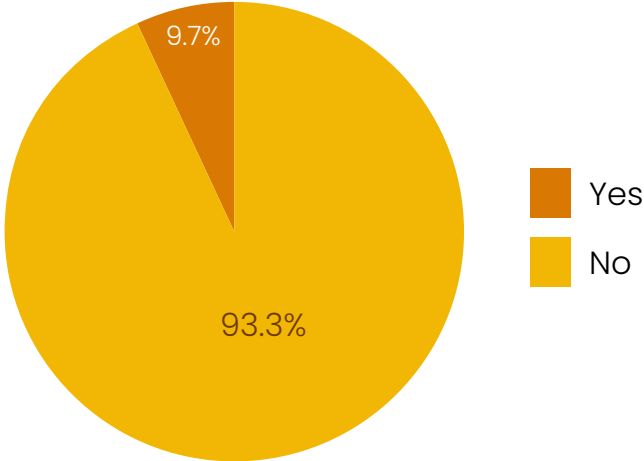


Chart 27: Public Sector Investment in Creating or Advancing Internal Policies for Equal Opportunities

According to the survey participants, the policies or practices that need to be improved to support the inclusion of LGBTI+ individuals in the labor market are as follows:

- Implementation of existing legislation that guarantees equal rights for all.
- Creation of professional programs and organization of activities that impact the capacity building and awareness of employers on diversity.

- Development of training programs and organizing training for Human Resources departments on the rights of LGBTI+ individuals.
- Advancement of mechanisms for reporting discrimination and handling cases appropriately.
- Supportive policies for LGBTI+ individuals in both the public and private sectors.
- Organization of awareness-raising and inclusive campaigns.
- Creation of opportunities for paid internships for LGBTI+ individuals.
- Creation of a collaboration mechanism with the private sector regarding the protection and promotion of LGBTI+ rights and offering equal job opportunities.
- Ensuring that personal data of LGBTI+ employees is treated with special care, respecting their right to privacy.

These measures aim to foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment for LGBTI+ individuals, helping to break down barriers to employment and career advancement.

The survey participants provided the following suggestions regarding inclusive education and training for LGBTI+ individuals:

- Inclusion of topics on diversity and LGBTI+ rights in curricula.
- Training of teachers and trainers on LGBTI+ issues and rights.

- Development of mentoring and support programs to help LGBTI+ individuals in their personal and professional growth.
- Adapting training programs to meet the needs of the community.
- Promotion of awareness campaigns to enhance understanding and acceptance of LGBTI+ individuals.
- Support from Career Centers and Educational Institutions to guide LGBTI+ individuals in their career development.
- Improvement in the quality of training programs to ensure they are effective and relevant.
- Changing societal attitudes and eliminating stigmas that prevent LGBTI+ individuals from accessing equal opportunities.

By following these steps, training and education can become more inclusive, contributing to the creation of a society where everyone, regardless of their identity, has equal opportunities for education and personal development.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Government Institutions

Implementation of Laws in Force

Strengthening monitoring and reporting on the enforcement of existing laws protecting against discrimination.

Diversity and Inclusion Policies

Developing and implementing clear strategies for integrating LGBTI+ individuals into the workforce in both the public and private sectors.

Increasing the Budget for Social Support

Ensuring funding for programs that support marginalized groups, including scholarships and subsidies for entrepreneurship.

Awareness Campaigns

Organizing national campaigns to promote the rights of LGBTI+ individuals and combat stigma and stereotypes.

Inclusion in Educational Curricula

Integrating topics on diversity and human rights into the educational system.

Recommendations for Public and Private Sector

Staff Training

Offering training on diversity, inclusion, and the management of discrimination situations.

Equal Employment Policies

Developing internal policies that ensure equal recruitment and treatment for all, avoiding any form of discrimination.

Discrimination Reporting Mechanisms

Creating secure and confidential processes for reporting discrimination and harassment cases.

Encouraging Participation in Trainings

Organizing mentoring and support programs for LGBTI+ employees.

Inclusion in Social Dialogue

Collaborating with civil society organizations to build inclusive policies.

Recommendations for the NGOs and International Organizations

Empowering the LGBTI+ Community

Organizing training programs and initiatives aimed at professional development and entrepreneurship.

Creating Platforms for Dialogue

Offering spaces for open discussions between LGBTI+ individuals, institutions, and businesses.

Monitoring and Advocacy

Engaging in the monitoring of legal implementation and advocating for improvements in the legislation.

Awareness Campaigns

Promoting tolerance and respect for diversity through media campaigns and public events.

Policy Consultation

Collaborating with institutions to ensure that policies and strategies address the needs of LGBTI+ individuals.

Recommendations of LGBTI+ Individuals

Participation in Training and Campaigns

Engaging in programs that enhance professional skills and build self-confidence.

Advocacy for Rights

Using platforms and networks to share experiences and advocate for change.

Community Engagement

Getting involved in organizations and supportive networks to help build a strong, united community.

Reporting Discrimination Cases

Informing relevant institutions about discrimination cases to help set precedents and address challenges.

Building Professional Networks

Establishing connections with employers and organizations that support inclusion and diversity.