

Employed, Empowered: working towards the reintegration of refugees and IDPs into a participative and fulfilling civil society by focusing on the human potential, rather than the liabilities

Successful first Roundtable in Belgrade

“Identifying the Employment gap: vulnerable groups in the labour market”



L-R: Dr Goran Opacic, Professor Slobodan Cvejic and Corinna Noack-Aetopoulos in the opening session.

Characterised by high levels of energy, commitment and participation (49 participants), the first roundtable of ‘Employed, Empowered’ kicked off the strategic planning strand of the project in Belgrade on September 14-15.

The two research directors of the project, Prof. Mihail Arandarenko and Dr Goran Opacic presented the findings of their surveys.

Attended by a wide range of stakeholders and experts, including help desk officers and project managers from the partner organisations, international NGOs, national NGOs, government representatives including the Deputy Commissioner for Refugees, Nikola Vukojevic and the State Secretary in the Ministry for Economy and Regional Development, Vladimir Ilic as well as the representative of the EU Delegation to Serbia, Jelica Stojanovic, the event laid a solid and creative groundwork for the rest of the project to build on.

Main observations drawn from the roundtable:

- refugees and IDPs tend to rely on personal contacts and the informal economy for survival
- the target group (refugees and IDPs) is very active
- support activities by the state are available, but information does not reach out to the most marginalised
- refugees and IDPs can not be regarded or treated as a homogenous disadvantaged group. Thorough segmentation and targeted measures are required for effective assistance.
- the most pressing issues are housing and employment opportunities
- property rights are far from being sorted out, which leads to a lack of capital available to the target group
- most refugees want to integrate, but emigration to third countries is viewed as especially attractive among target group respondents in South Serbia



Working group 1 in session

Main observations of the 3 working groups:

- a clear change in attitude towards a culture of performance would be needed to improve employability among the target groups
- a better knowledge of modern skills is essential
- positive discrimination for refugees and IDPs was discussed as a possible support mechanism
- education needs to be better matched to labour market requirements.



L-R: CDRSEE Development Officer, Ruth Sutton, Danijela Korac-Mandic, Project Director at the Novi Sad Humanitarian Center (project partner) and CDRSEE Director of Programmes, Corinna Noack-Aetopulos at the Roundtable event.

The results of the Labour Market Survey and the Target Group Survey

The results of these two surveys were combined into a gap analysis, which formed the basis of discussion at the first Employed Empowered roundtable of experts and will be widely disseminated along with the model solutions at the end of the 3rd roundtable. For details about dates for the upcoming 2 roundtables, please see the calendar on page 11.

Employed, Empowered is a cooperation of:



For any information about Employed, Empowered, please contact [Director of Programmes Corinna Noack-Aetopulos](#) at corinna@cdsee.org.



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