

**The Report of the Conference:**  
**The Socio-Economic Profiles of the Municipalities of the**  
**Prizren Region**  
**Prizren, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

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## INTRODUCTION

On January 21st, 2020, in Prizren took place the Regional Conference on the topic “The Socio-Economic Profiles of the Municipalities of the Prizren Region,” organized by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development (KIPRED), in which participated members of the Kosovo Police, and the municipal, and municipal assemblies’ leaders of the municipalities of this region. In this Conference, the findings of the work of KIPRED “The Socio-Economic Profiles of the Municipalities of the Prizren Region”<sup>1</sup> were presented and discussed, and this discussion did have the objective to be used as an incentive for opening the public debate, as well as to support the municipal and national decision-makers in formulating and implementing the policies which will address the needs of the young population, namely, of the age-group 15–29 years. The findings of the work and the discussions in the Conference identified the following issues that require urgent treatment by the municipal and national authorities:

- A. Both, the municipal and central authorities should work on the reform of the educational system, in order to achieve harmony between the supply of the educational profiles provided by the medium and high educational system, and the demand of the business labor market. In doing this, the central and municipal authorities should coordinate themselves for solving the problem of the teaching personnel which might loose their jobs in this educational reform.
- B. Municipalities should develop and advance the practice in which the youth issues will be topics, not only of the Municipal Directorates on Culture, Youth

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<sup>1</sup> *The Socio-Economic Profiles of the Municipalities of the Prizren Region*, KIPRED, February 2020.

and Sports, but also of the other directorates. While treating their problems, these other directorates should always make efforts to solve those problems, among others, in accordance with the needs of the younger population.

- C. Central authorities should design and approve efficient laws on the protection of the workers in the private sector, similar with those which exist for protecting the rights of the workers employed in the state and public sector, by keeping constantly in mind the singularities of the private sector.
- D. The Reports on the workings of the Council for Security in Community of the Prizren Municipality should be prepared in a complete and transparent manner.
- E. The Local Youth Council and the Youth Center of Prizren should be re-opened and should be functional, and their work should be supported by the budget of the Municipality of Prizren.
- F. In cooperation with central authorities, the municipal authorities should design and create functional and efficient tools for analyzing and evaluating their previous projects, which include both, their own projects, as well as those that were implemented in cooperation with other organizations.
- G. Within the efforts to advance the condition of youth, the municipalities should develop as much as possible the practice of cooperation with organizations of civil society, and for achieving this they should make the respective budget allocations.
- H. In the regions which contain two or more municipalities that are focused on similar or identical activities (such as, for instance, the activity of tourism, in which are focused several of the municipalities of the Prizren region), these

municipalities should develop and advance as much as possible the practice of cooperation and joint action in these activities.

- I. There is a need for organization and coordination between central and local authorities, as well as among different local authorities, with the goal of confronting the problem of the consumption of narcotics by the youth.
- J. The population census at the central level involves only the registration of the inhabitants resident in Kosovo, meanwhile, in several from the municipalities which have larger numbers of their citizens living abroad, on some occasions, the population is taken to include those of their citizens living abroad. Given that this causes different numbers for the municipal populations at the central and local level, and, on the other hand, given that the municipal budget planning is conducted in accordance with the populations of the municipalities, the central and municipal authorities should jointly address and solve the problem of this discrepancy in the numbers of the inhabitants of the municipalities.

For preserving the best possible connection between the work that was presented and the discussions delivered in the Conference, we will summarize them in the order of the respective municipalities of the Prizren region.

## THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRIZREN

After the introductory statements of the Conference, in which the organizer presented the work 'Socio-Economic Profiles of the Municipalities of the Prizren Region,' the stage was given to the Mayor of the Prizren Municipality, Mr. Mytahir Haskuka. Initially, he commended the Profile presented, by stressing that this descriptive work will be very useful with all the data it contains.

After this, he focused on the major factors which, according to him, increase the danger of religious radicalization of the youth, not only in the municipalities of the Prizren region, but in all of Kosovo. In his opinion, these factors are three: 1) The level of education of youth; 2) The inclusion of youth in extra-curricular activities – in culture, sports, etc., and; 3) The professional preparation of the youth for their lives, that is, their professional training for work. Mayor Haskuka stressed that when young people have good perspectives in these three fields, then the danger, not only from the radicalization and terrorism, but, also from other deviations (such as crime, narcotics, etc.), will be considerably reduced.

Mayor Haskuka also commented on the manner in which the budget and the budgetary expenses for the youth were analyzed in the Profile. He stressed that, regarding the above mentioned three factors that impact the danger of radicalization, there was a need for the Profile to take into the consideration not only the investments made by municipalities in youth which were mentioned in it (the investments made through the Directorate on Culture, Youth and Sports), but also the investments in youth made by the other municipal directorates. As an illustration of this, he mentioned the investments that the Municipality of Prizren made on youth through its Directorate on

Economic Development and Tourism. This Directorate, he said, has had, as an example, a joint project with the Organization Help, in which 42 entrepreneurs were supported for their businesses, and which provided different means, computers, working devices, trainings on the book-keeping, etc., and all these were delivered by the Municipality of Prizren and of Help. In total, he added, there were 80 people who were employed, and this enterprise, regardless of the fact that it was made in the framework of efforts for economic development, in essence benefited mostly the youth.

Mr. Haskuka also mentioned the example of the investments made in the field of tourism. The goal here was to develop the new touristic products, which help the elimination of the danger of radicalization and of other negative phenomena. In these new products, he said, the new ideas, organization, innovation, come predominantly from the age group 18–29 years. Thus, during the previous year, the new projects of paragliding, of kayak, of mountain biking, and mountaineering were launched. The number of young people who engage in these sports, according to Mayor Haskuka, has more than doubled recently in the region, and is continuing to grow. This enables both, recreation, and incomes. There are around 10 different organizations in Prizren which are involved in these forms of individual tourism, of mountaineering, and other similar sports.

After this, Mayor Haskuka mentioned also the investments of different ministries in sports, recreation and culture, such as, for instance, investments in a pool, in different sport fields, investments in the culture house, and in other facilities that are used by the youth.

A problematic issue, he continued, for both, the municipality of Prizren, and for the central level, is a large discrepancy between the fields of education and economy, namely, between the demand of the businesses for labor, on the one hand, and the

supply of educational profiles of the medium and high education. He mentioned that in numerous meetings that the Municipality of Prizren has had with business representatives, they continuously complain that they cannot find technologists, engineers of particular fields, professional welders, textile workers, etc – at the same time when the education is predominantly oriented towards social sciences, and in the training of economists, jurists, and similar other profiles. Thus, Mayor Haskuka stressed, there are cases when the Municipality announces a competition for the employment of one jurist, in which apply more than 300 individuals, at the same time when businesses are confronting with large troubles in finding particular types of workers for certain profiles. Consequently, this is an extremely problematic issue linked to the employment, which requires a reform of educational system.

As an example for all this, Mayor Haskuka mentioned the last Labor Fair in Prizren, where the businesses had offered more than 600 employments at the very outset of the Fair, but the number of applications was considerably lower, regardless of the large unemployment in the region. As another example, Mayor Haskuka stressed that this facet of the problem can be noticed in the field of hotels business as well. Recently, according to him, there were a large number of hotels that were opened in Prizren, and they all have problems with finding and employing the staff that is educated and graduated for their working positions.

At the end of his word, when discussing the discrepancy between the demand of the labor market and the supply of the educational system, Mayor Haskuka stressed that there is a need for a profound and genuine analysis of this problem, by adding that the Municipality of Prizren, through its Directorate of Education, conducts a basic form of such an analysis for those who finish elementary and secondary education. The goal of such an analysis should be the strengthening of professional schools, of centers of

competence, of technical schools, of practical aspects of economics schools, for reducing as much as possible this discrepancy between the demand and supply in the labor market.

On the problems discussed by Mayor Haskuka, the organizers of the Conference in KIPRED stressed that the same problems were mentioned in the previous conferences in other regions as well, during the presentations of the previous Profiles. This was exemplified by the case of the Kamenica Municipality, where this problem was stressed in the field of agriculture, in which case it was mentioned that given the lack of labor in Kamenica, farmers there rely on labor that comes in Kosovo from the cities of Kukës and Tropoja in Albania.

Regarding the opinions given by Mayor Haskuka, comments were given by the Mayor of the Municipality of Dragash, Mr. Shaban Shabani, who in the beginning expressed his principled agreement with the need mentioned for educating of new profiles for which there is a demand in the labor market. However, he stressed a problem with which the municipalities will be confronted once when the previous educational programs are closed, when the personnel of these programs will remain without their jobs. The Ministry, as he mentioned, requires the municipalities to take care for that personnel, and, thus, these people will eventually remain burden for the municipalities. Therefore, Mr. Shabani said, when talking on educational reform, we should proceed very carefully regarding the problems of the implementation and of finding of solutions for the personnel that will remain without jobs. The idea, added Mayor Shabani, is a very good one, but its implementation, according to him, can confront very grave difficulties for the municipalities.

After this, Laureta Tafaj, a deputy at the Municipal Council of Suhareka from the Vetëvendosje Movement, asked Mayor Haskuka on how much did the Municipality of

Prizren help the young without the support of the Organization Help. She was also interested on what did the Municipality of Prizren do during his mandate regarding the sport fields in Prizren.

On the issue of the support of Help, Mayor Haskuka answered that in the year 2018 there were 40 beneficiaries, without any support by Help, meanwhile this organization was involved in this activity during 2019, for facilitating cooperation, support and supervision. He stressed that majority of the projects in the Directorate of Tourism were implemented without the support of Help, but that there were cooperation's with other organizations as well.

As an example, Mayor Haskuka mentioned subsidies for agriculture, and the donation of milking cows for the farmers. During the year 2016 there was a donation of 40 such cows, meanwhile, until the year 2019 this number increased to 99 cows, in a situation in which there were more than 350 applications. The goal of this project was self-employment. Now, he added, we are working to find and analyze the profile of the beneficiaries, but for this, according to him, there is a need for a longer time period, in order to see the long-term trends, to analyze the beneficiaries, their age, gender, the effects of the project, the employment, the increase in the production of milk, etc.

On the other hand, regarding the question on sport fields in Prizren, Mayor Haskuka stressed that during the year 2018, without any budget, there were five sport fields that were build in the schools of Prizren. In the sport centers the tribunes were fixed, but also the fields for handball, basketball, tennis, where, in the school '11 Marsi' there were two tennis fields fixed, as well as the field for football, basketball and volleyball. Also, the support was provided for building the fitness gyms. Mayor Haskuka also mentioned the support of the Ministry of Culture for building of the stadium in Serbica, in Lubizhda, and he added that in this project the Municipality of Prizren is carrying

out the portion of the stadium for athletics, in accordance with international standards. At the end he mentioned the beginning of the building of the stadium in Zhur, in accordance with the standards of UEFA, and he expressed his belief that during this year the work on the stadium “Përparim Thaqi” will be finalized, despite of some problems that have emerged with the operator.

After this the word was given to Mr. Xhavit Shala, deputy at the Assembly of Prizren from AAK. In his word, for solving the mentioned problems, he proposed the building of a large number of small police stations in the districts, as they have required for Has, in the districts 11 March and 2 July, for achieving the objective to have the Police in the closest possible service to citizens.

When talking on the problem of employment of youngsters, the assembly member Shala focused, among others, on what Mayor Haskuka mentioned, that in one competition of the Municipality there are more than 300 applicants, at the same time when private sector is struggling to find workers. For solving this problem, Mr. Shala said, there is a need to adopt laws that protect workers in the private sector. There is a Law on state and public workers, stressed Shala, it is not the best possible law, but it exists. And such laws should exist for the employees in the public sector as well, he added.

The assembly member Shala also remarked on the workings of the Municipal Council on Security in Community. In the Municipality of Prizren, the Council on Security in Community exists, he said, but there is very little data in the reports on what is being discussed there and on what its decisions are. For a successful working of this Council, it is necessary to have broader information of the public opinion.

At the beginning of his word, Visar Haxhifazliu, representative of the Youth Organization THY from Prizren stressed that his Organization has already required to change the law on youth which classifies them as an age-group from 15 up to 24 years, and that this range of age of the young should be changed into 15 up to 29 years of age. He emphasized his pleasure that the Profile of the Municipalities of the Prizren Region of KIPRED takes the young as an age-grup 15–29 years, as it was proposed by his organization.

Then he continued by discussing the requirement of his organization THY to create a particular budgetary code for youth only, without including the culture and sports on it, given that the largest part of joint funds go for culture and sports, in which case the amount for the youth as such remains very small. The youth, as he mentioned, does not deal with culture and sports only, and in the Municipality of Prizren the budget allocated for all three of them for the given number of the young does not reach even the value of 50 cents per young person.

He also made a request for re-opening of the Council for Youth Local Action, as well as of the Youth Center in Prizren, in a way which will make them functional, given that the actual Youth Center in Prizren was not functional for 5 up to 7 years.

At the end, the word was given again to the Mayor of the Prizren Municipality, Mytahir Haskuka, who discussed several other issues, and commented and provided answers on several issues raised and questions posed during the Conference. At the beginning he focused in a major problem, according to him, of the participation of women in labor market. This problem is in the lack of kindergartens with the cost that is affordable for women who work. When they pay the cost of the kindergarten for, let us say, two children, there is very little from their pay that remains to them, and this is a major

demotivating factor for making those women to decide to don't get employed. This major factor drives them to remain at home in order to take care for their children.

Then, Mayor Haskuka expressed his disagreement with Visar Haxhifazliu from the Youth Organization THY, regarding the idea he expressed to treat the youth separately, rather than together with culture and sports. On the contrary, he expressed his opinion that there is a need to add education to culture and sports. He mentioned as an illustration for this the occasion of organization of theatre plays for children, organized by the Municipality: Here, at a very low price, 50 cents per child, the theatre play of Pinokio was performed for children, and it was followed by them and their parents, who paid the performance for themselves separately. This play was followed by more than 6,000 children, and it was the most followed show of the theatre in the Municipality of Prizren ever, and about 80–90% of these children declared that they had never been at the theatre before. This organization, added Mayor Haskuka, was a very small issue for the municipality, but it achieved many different goals, it achieved the children to spend time together, to make them enjoy, and it also achieved profits for the Theatre. Thus, added Mayor Haskuka, the things should be looked at from the general point of view, not the particular one.

Regarding several remarks that were made during the discussion on the manner in which the subsidies were provided, Mayor Haskuka emphasized again that there is a need for analyzing the projects that were implemented. Indeed, he added, there is a need for the best possible implementation, as well as for proper evaluation of each and all of the projects implemented, which is something that he personally and the Municipality have urged continuously.

After this, returning to the issue of education, Mayor Haskuka added that a large problem that is being caused by the recent condition in education is that the young

people, pushed by their difficult predicament, decide to run away from their education altogether, in order for being able to find jobs or for starting their business endeavors. The solutions that were tried by the Municipality of Prizren for this problem were several: 1) Awarding scholarships for students, where their initial number was 40, and during the last year it grew to 80, and these were awarded for the fields for which there is large demand in the market – the biggest number of these scholarships were given to students studying engineering, medicine, etc., and their number was reduced for those studying economics and law; Mayor Haskuka also added that there was also an increase in the number of scholarships for students studying abroad. 2) Together with the Office for Employment of the University of Prizren, several projects were developed and implemented for internships during studies. 3) Together with civil society organizations there were several projects that were developed and implemented aiming at professional training; he mentioned as an example the filigree courses, a craft that was previously very developed in Prizren, but which was recently diminishing and is on the verge of disappearing. Here, there were thirty individuals who have followed these courses, and five from them did continue to exercise this craft after they finished the courses, and they were supported by buying them the necessary working tools. These examples, Mr. Haskuka said, show how the things should go together, rather than separately: economy with education, education with culture and sports, and so on.

At the end, Mr. Zaim Hajredini, assembly member from the party AKR at the Municipal Assembly of Dragash, got involved in the discussion, and he asked Mayor Haskuka, together with the Mayor of Municipality of Dragash, Mr. Shaban Shabani, if they were planning to design joint programs on highland tourism, and particularly on its infrastructure, given that these would create good prospects for both, the employment of youth, and the recreation of the population and guests. Mr. Haskuka answered this

question by mentioning that recently the Strategy for the Development of Tourism in the Municipality of Prizren was adopted, and one from its major points is the development of highland tourism. In this framework, he added that there were discussions on the possibility to turn two or three villages, which are completely or partially abandoned and empty from their populations, into touristic villages. The plans are to do this with private investors, given that these villages have good touristic prospects, and given that they are located in the area in the direction of Dragash, or within its territory, in this activity there will certainly be cooperation.

## **The Municipality of Suhareka**

After the discussion on the Municipality of Prizren in the initial part of the Conference, the word was given to Mrs. Mihrije Suka, the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Suhareka. She expressed her commendations for the Profile prepared and presented by KIPRED, but she also expressed several reserves regarding some from the data presented there. Thus, she expressed her reserve on the figure of the level of illiteracy in Suhareka, which, according to the Profile was 41 illiterates in 1,000 inhabitants, which, as she said, seemed to her to be a large number given that Suhareka has 33 schools, and 3 high schools. Deputy Mayor Suka also expressed her reserves on the figure of 93 people per 1,000 inhabitants who remain without finishing elementary education, given that elementary education is mandatory. Regarding education Mrs. Suka stressed that a major problem in Suhareka is the fall of number of pupils in elementary education, caused by the decline in births and migration. She mentioned that during the year 2019 there were 96 pupils in Suhareka who abandoned the school for joining their families abroad.

After this Deputy Mayor Suka focused on the issue of the very low level of extremism in the Municipality of Suhareka. She mentioned that there were only 5 cases, and that the Municipality of Suhareka, the Police, and the Directorate of Health are engaged in their supervision and the integration of their children. Children under supervision are of age 5–6 years, the supervision is carried out by the Police and the Directorate of Education, and the major problem is that their families did not accept for their children to be integrated in the pre-school education.

In discussing the social issues that are linked to these cases, as well as in general, Mrs. Suka stressed that the Municipality of Suhareka works to support these and other families and their children. Here she mentioned the support of the Organization “The Balkans Orphans,” which build 27 houses during the year 2019, and she stressed that the building of these houses will continue as well during the year 2020.

At the end, when discussing the field of culture and sports, Deputy Mayor Suka stressed that this is an activity to which the Municipality of Suhareka pays large attention, by adding that there were 70,000€ allocated which go for culture, youth, and sports, as well as for a number of traditional celebrations, such as the Treasury Celebration, the Immigrants Celebration, the Celebration of Liberation, etc.

After the discussion of the Deputy Mayor Suka, the organizer of the Conference stressed that the data presented in the Profile on the level of illiteracy, as well as on the level of education of the population in the Municipality of Suhareka, are taken from the Kosovo’s Agency of Statistics, and it was added that the sources of all the data presented in the Profile are provided in the work. KIPRED also stressed that within the framework of this project, earlier was conducted a comparative study of the radicalization in the municipalities of Suhareka and Podujeva, which had the low level of radicalization, with that in the municipalities of Kaçanik and Han i Elezit, which had higher level of radicalization. During that study the Kosovo Police had initially provided the number of zero cases in Suhareka, and that figure has increased in the meantime to 5. In a broad analysis of the impact of different factors, there were two major factors identified as responsible for the prevention of some pronounced radicalization in Suhareka and Podujeva. The first one was the role played by the Local Islamic Communities in these two municipalities, which did not allow the building of new mosques from the sources that appeared to be suspicious, nor the imposition of

imams which did follow the building of those mosques from such foreign donations. And, the second major factor was the broad cooperation of the municipal Islamic Communities in Suhareka and Podujava with the Municipalities, with Police, with high schools, etc., with the goal of prevention of influence of religious elements with radical features. This, as it was mentioned, was the conclusion of the study and analysis of KIPRED. Also, regarding these issues, it was stressed that when the socio-economic data of Suhareka are compared with those of Kaqanik and Hani i Elezit, it can be seen that these are very similar, but the municipalities of Suhareka and Podujeva, nevertheless, have considerably higher developmental potentials than those of the municipalities of Kaqanik and Hani i Elezit.

After this, the word was given to the assembly member at the Municipality of Suhareka from the Vetëvendosje Movement, Laureata Tafaj, who (as was mentioned in the section on the Municipality of Prizren) asked the Mayor of the Municipality of Prizren, Mr. Mytahir Haskuka on the support that the Municipality of Prizren has provided to young of Prizren without the support of the Organization Help, as well as on what the Municipality of Prizren has done regarding the sport fields of Prizren. As mentioned in the previous section, regarding the support of the Organization Help, Mayor Haskuka answered that during the year 2018 there were 40 beneficiaries, and they benefited without the support by Help. Meanwhile, Help was involved during the year 2019, in order to increase cooperation, support, and supervision. He stressed that in the Directorate of Tourism and Economic Development, majority of the projects were implemented without being supported by Help, but he also added that there was cooperation with other organizations as well. As an example, Mayor Haskuka mentioned subsidies in agriculture, and the donation of milking cows to a number of farmers in the municipality. In the year 2016, 40 cows were donated, meanwhile, until

the year 2019 the number of donated cows had increased to 99, in a situation in which there were more than 350 applications. The goal of the project was self-employment. Now, he said, the profile of the beneficiaries is being found and analyzed, but, according to him, this requires a longer period of time, for having the possibility to see the long term tendencies: the analysis of beneficiaries, their age, gender, the effects of the project, employment, the increase of the production of milk, etc. Meanwhile, regarding the question on the sport fields of Prizren, Mayor Haskuka stressed that, without any budget, there were five fields fixed in the schools of Prizren during the year 2018. Regarding the sport centers, there were fixings of the tribunes, but also of the fields for handball, basketball, tennis, etc., where, in the school '11 March' there were two tennis fields, and the field for football, basketball, and volleyball. Also, the building of the fitness gyms was supported. Mayor Haskuka also mentioned the support of the Ministry of Culture for the construction of the stadium in Serbica, in Lubizhda, and he added that here the Municipality of Prizren participated in the portion of the stadium for athletics, in accordance with international standards. At the end, he mentioned the construction of the stadium in Zhur, in accordance with the UEFA standards, and he expressed his belief that during this year the work in the stadium 'Përparim Thaqi' will be finalized, regardless of some problems that have emerged with its operator.

After this, Mr. Leonard Shala, assembly member of the Municipal Council of Suhareka took the word, and, initially, he focused on the genuine needs and problems of the age-group 15–29 years. He said that the major genuine problem of the young is how to create for them equal conditions when they apply in the competitions of the municipalities, rather than sacrificing them for the need of the employment of the militants of political parties. This creates huge inequalities, he said, and it destroys the hopes of the members of this age-group for continuing to live in Kosovo.

Mr. Shala also stressed the problem of large discrepancy between statistical data and the real condition. For instance, he continued, the Profile says that Suhareka has 21 sport clubs, 1 library, 3 culture houses, 4 cultural associations, and 1 sports center. He added that he, as a citizen and a member of the municipal assembly of Suhareka does not know where the 3 culture houses in Suhareka are, given that he knows only for one such house, which, furthermore, is in the process of renovation. Suhareka, for the moment, does not have a functional culture house, he concluded. He also added that he doesn't know anything on 4 cultural associations, which, according to him, can be registered, but they are not functional: there is, he acknowledged, only one cultural association, registered as an NGO, that is Cultural-Artistic Association 'Jehona,' which about two weeks before festive events in the municipality starts to work, it engages several young people, they present in the festivity a certain program, and through tender it receives from the municipality 7 up to 10 thousand Euros. He also added that there is only a single youth center which functions in continuity, and there is no cultural association which works continuously throughout the year. He expressed his strong conviction that there are no 21 sport clubs in Suhareka, but there is a problem on how a sport club is defined. There is a sport event and respective sport activity, he said, several people gather together to carry it out, they apply for subsidies in the Municipality of Suhareka, which provides such subsidies, they have 70 up to 100 thousand Euros for that, but genuine sport clubs are the team 'Ballkani,' which, according to Mr. Shala was privatized completely, then, the team Ylli Golden Eagle, which is generally sponsored by private sponsors, and the volleyball team. There might be some other sport teams, but there are no 21 genuine teams.

After this, the assembly member Shala mentioned that 20% of the budget of the Municipality of Suhareka goes to the Directorate of Agriculture. There were projects

that have subsidized this category, farms and different agricultural mini-businesses, so that the farmers employ themselves, and possibly, the others, and this initiative, Shala stressed, was a good one. But when one sees how these investments ended, one can observe that in the majority of cases they have gone in vain – five years ago, someone got 30 thousand Euros to build a stables, the stables was build, and if we go now to see how it is working, we see that the stables does not exist at all anymore. Therefore, Mr. Shala concludes, there is not a need only for subsidies, but also a need to supervise them.

He also mentioned as a huge handicap the absence of local civil society. We might have some registered associations, said assembly member Shala, but there is no civil society. There is no local TV station in Suhareka, he added; there are two in the neighborhood, TV Prizren, and Opinion, but when one has a need or any requirement from them, they ask to be payed for fulfilling them. There are no portals as well, he added.

At the end, the assembly member Shala mentioned another grave problem of young people, which is the use of narcotic substances, the so-called soft drugs. According to him, all the people recognize, see and talk about this problem, and particularly the young people belonging to this age-group. This, ended his word the assembly member Leonard Shala, presents a large and grave problem that necessarily has to be discussed and treated.

After the word of Mr. Shala, the organizer of the Conference pointed out that KIPRED's source of the data that he mentioned was the Municipal Directorate for Culture, Youth, Sports and Immigration of the Municipality of Suhareka, during an official communication of KIPRED with the Municipality of Suhareka. Meanwhile, regarding the analysis of the issue of drug use, the organizer of the Conference added that the major problem here is how to come to data which cannot be contested. For instance, it

was mentioned that the data can be collected by the Kosovo Police, for instance, on the profile of penal deeds, but these cannot help the analysis of the spread of the phenomenon. There are a lot of other organizations which can come out with opposing data. KIPRED stressed that it has connections with organizations and people involved in studying this problematics, but the issue of data nevertheless remains a very problematic one, which renders the analysis of this problem extremely difficult.

After these comments and remarks by the organizer, the word was given to Mr. Dukagjin Palushi, an assembly member of the Municipal Council of Suhareka from AAK. He also stressed as a problem that what was mentioned by the previous debaters, namely, the employment of people in the public sector according to the criteria of their affiliation with political power, but he also stressed his own reserves with the support provided to the private sector. He mentioned as one from the mayor problems the discrimination of the workers in the private sector. The workers work in this sector sometimes for 16 hours a day for miserable payments. He stressed, as an example for this, that the Municipality of Suhareka does not have any Labor Inspectorate. This problem, according to him, should be treated urgently and seriously, given that one from the major reasons why the youth is abandoning the country is not the impossibility to find a job, but impossibility to find a job which could create welfare for the laborer. The youth does not see any hope here, said assembly member Palushi, the only ones who have hope are those who are close to the political power.

On this issue the organizer of the Conference remarked that the issue of the Labor Inspectorate is not very promising here, given that the activity of this Inspectorate is reactive, rather than proactive, namely, this Inspectorate does not control the businesses, but only reacts when there are any complaints, Mr. Palushi reacted by saying that it is very hard, if not impossible, for the workers, in despite of their difficult

predicament, to complain, given that if they do that they will remain without their jobs altogether. Therefore, he added, we should go here with the recommendation that the activity of the Labor Inspectorate should become proactive, with anonymous interviews. He mentioned as an example a very problematic behavior of businesses with their female employees in the cases when these female workers remain pregnant: In those circumstances, he said, the employer transfers them their monthly salaries into their bank accounts, and the business also pays their taxes and retirements. But, in those businesses, there are employees who hold the credit cards of those female workers, and they also have information on the PIN numbers of those women who have remained pregnant, and, immediately after the salaries are transferred into their bank accounts, they transfer those amounts back into the bank accounts of the business. Therefore, the transfers of those salaries of the pregnant female employees are fake ones, they aim only at preserving good relations of those businesses with the state and with the state institutions. Meanwhile, the pregnant female employee in whose bank account the salary has been transferred does neither take that salary, nor does it see it at all.

At the end, the word was again given to the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Suhareka, Mrs. Mihrije Suka, who focused again on demographic shifts. She stressed that these shifts are twofold, from Kosovo abroad, and from the village into the city. As she stressed, there was a large work done in the infrastructure of the villages; however, all the people there want to live in the city, and, therefore, a large portion of them abandons the village for going into the cities of Kosovo, not only abroad. Nevertheless, she added, the largest problem is the immigration abroad. She provided an example for this by mentioning that during the year 2018 there were 140 people in Suhareka, who have ceded from their citizenship, meanwhile, during the year 2019 this number

increased into 146. This, according to Deputy Mayor Suka, is a grave problem, not only for Suhareka, but for the entire Kosovo, and it should be necessarily analyzed.

## **The Municipality of Dragash**

In the discussion on the Municipality of Dragash, the word was first given to Mr. Shaban Shabani, the Mayor of the Municipality of Dragash. In his word, he discussed the issues in the same order as they were given in the Profile.

While discussing the issue of the structure of the population, Mr. Shabani stressed that the Agency of Statistics, from which were taken many from the data presented, should have taken into the consideration that its figures were presenting only the citizens that were resident in the municipalities of Kosovo. During the census, stressed Mr. Shabani, only the inhabitants that are present here are registered, without counting those from our co-nationals who are abroad. Consequently, at the local level, the structure of the population differs from that given at the central level, given that the members of the families of our citizens who are abroad have registered them here at the local level. And this fact, according to Mayor Shabani, engenders a discrepancy in numbers of inhabitants which causes serious problems during the budget planning, given that the budget is planned based on the population, and the figures on the population at the central and local level differ.

Regarding education, Mayor Shabani expressed his principled agreement with the need mentioned for the education and training of new profiles for which there is a need in the market. However, he stressed a problem with which the municipalities will be confronted when the existing programs will be closed, and when the personnel of those programs will remain without their jobs. The Ministry, as he stressed, requires the municipalities to take care for that staff, and, therefore, they will remain a burden for their municipalities. Thus, said Mr. Shabani, during the reform of the educational

system there is a need to proceed very cautiously regarding the problems of implementation of the reforms that will be adopted, and of placing the personnel which will remain without jobs. The idea of reform, Mayor Shabani added, is a very good one, but its implementation will confront huge difficulties.

On the issue of violent extremism Mr. Shabani stressed that the Dragash municipality has had 6 of its citizens as participants in foreign wars, and that the security institutions did intervene on time. Initially, he said, there was a quiescence, people did not know what was happening, some were even saying 'just war,' and therefore the society did not achieve to carry out a prevention at the very early stages. Nevertheless, latter everything went well. He emphasized that the municipal Islamic Community in Dragash has provided a considerable contribution in the joint efforts. He mentioned several of its meetings with the youth and the pupils of secondary schools, which were organized with the support of different foreign organizations. He also added that it is truth that there was not any session organized completely on this topic, but the issue of radicalization was treated partially in numerous other sessions and meetings, such as, for instance, in those of the Committee on Policies and Finances, and, also, there was a particular training organized in the Council for the Security in the Community. He also stressed that foreign organizations have provided a considerable support at the level of secondary schools.

Regarding the level of criminality at the Municipality of Dragash, Mayor Shabani stressed that the merits for the good situation belong to both, the population, and the security institutions.

Meanwhile, when discussing the issue of the structure of the population related to economic activity, Mr. Shabani pointed out that the municipality of Dragash cannot be compared with that of Prizren, simply, given the fact that in Dragash only 3.2% of its

inhabitants live in the urban area, meanwhile, more than 96% of them live in rural areas. As a consequence, the municipality of Dragash cannot provide employment for all of its youth, and this is a reason why there is a lot of migration in the direction of Prizren and Prishtina. This movement, according to him, can be noticed particularly among the people with higher levels of education.

Regarding the issues related to the fields of culture, youth and sports, Mayor Shabani stressed that the possibilities here are small and modest. Those small possibilities that exist are fully used to support some different organizations, either cultural, or youth and sports ones, and this is carried out through public calls. There were some modest investments for general activities in the culture house. In Dragash, according to Mayor Shabani, there are two active youth organizations, four clubs and cultural-artistic associations. However, outside of public calls, he stressed, there are no other possibilities to support them.

After this, the assembly member of the Council of the Municipality of Dragash from the AKR, Mr. Zaim Hajredini took the word, and he asked two questions. Firstly, he stressed that the Mayor Shabani has had a very good cooperation with the Municipal Assembly, and that he has made budget allocations for supporting civil society within the municipal Directorate for Culture, Youth, and Sports. And his question was if this cooperation with civil society will continue in the future, given that it has had a positive effect in the Municipality of Dragash. On the other hand, the second question of Mr. Hajredini was directed to both, the Mayor of Dragash, Mr. Shabani, and to the Mayor of Prizren, Mr. Mytahir Haskuka, whom he asked if they were planning to prepare particular programs on mountain tourism, and particularly on its infrastructure, given that this would create good perspectives for both municipalities, in terms of

employment of the youth, as well as in terms of creation of recreational opportunities for the population.

In his first question Mayor Shabani answered by stressing that the budget planning is already made for continuation of the support of civil society. It is difficult to expect that it will be done as much as the needs are, given modest potentials, but, he added, the municipality will certainly do as much as its possibilities are. He also added that there are plans for students' scholarships. Regarding the activities related to culture, youth, and sports, he said that there were agreements signed among the municipalities and their mayors with the Coordinator on Culture, Youth, and Sports, and that there were activities developed within the Directorate of Education. He added that within this framework there were sport competitions which were of local and state level. Meanwhile, in the second question related to joint activities with the Municipality of Prizren in the field of mountain tourism, the focus of Mayor Shabani was on the point called Guri i Zi, in the villages of the cadastral zones of Prizren and Dragash, by stressing that this is a good opportunity for inter-municipal investment and cooperation.

At the end, the answer on the second question of the assembly member Hajredini was provided as well by the Mayor of Prizren, Mr. Haskuka, who, as mentioned in the section on the Municipality of Prizren, said that recently the Strategy on the Development of Tourism in the Municipality of Prizren was developed, and one from the major points of that strategy is the development of mountain tourism. There were discussions here, he said, on the opportunity to transform two or three villages which are actually partially or totally abandoned, into touristical villages. This is planned to be implemented with private investors, given that these are villages with good touristic prospects, and given that these are in the area between Prizren and Dragash, this will be an activity which will be organized jointly.

## **The Municipality of Mamusha**

The discussion on the Municipality of Mamusha was lead mainly by the Mayor of this Municipality, Mr. Abdulhadi Krasniq, who first talked on the topic of education, by stressing that initially Mamusha was a village in the municipality of Prizren, and now it is a full municipality. Before the year 1999, he stressed, the condition of the education in Mamusha was bad, meanwhile, after the war it reached a better condition. At the level of elementary education Mamusha stands very well, meanwhile, at the higher levels it is a little bit weaker. However, even at the level of high education the situation is improving, and now Mamusha, according to Mayor Krasniq, has around 200 students studying in Turkey, and it also has a lot of them in Kosovo as well. Regarding the gender ratio of students he said that all 5 or 6 students from Mamusha studying medicine in Turkey are female. The percentage of female, according to him, is noticeably higher in the high schools of Mamusha as well. Mayor Krasniq stressed that illiteracy in Mamusha might be a little bit higher, but he added that this might be caused by the fact that there are a lot of older people who have remained illiterate.

Regarding the issue of religion in Mamusha, Mayor Krasniq said that Mamusha has two mosques, and that it had no participants in foreign wars. The fact that all the citizens of Mamusha are Muslims, he said, did not allow any possibilities for the emergence of religious conflicts.

On the issue of economic condition in Mamusha he stressed that this economic activity is predominantly agricultural, and that this condition is very good. 97% of the citizens are employed. He praised agricultural production of Mamusha as a very developed and

advanced one, and he said that Mamusha can supply all of Kosovo with agricultural products, given that its citizens, as he said, are hardworking people.

Meanwhile, when talking on social support and investments on youth in Mamusha, Mayor Krasniq stressed that social condition is good, given that Mamusha is small and all of its people know each-other, and, therefore, they help one-another, and, thus, there is no need for social support. On the investments in youth he said that these are almost non-existent, given that there is no budget for them. There is also no infrastructure – he stressed that Mamusha is almost the only municipality in Kosovo which doesn't have a culture house, nor any library. During the last year Mamusha made its first attempts to collect some funds for investments for social support, in education, youth, culture, etc., and there were some 20,000 € gathered. At the end of the year there were some supports provided to associations, but these funds were small, and the number of applicants was small as well.

At the end, Mayor of Mamusha, Mr. Abdulhadi Krasniq made also some comments on the things discussed by other participants of the Conference. He said that what the Mayor of Prizren, Mr. Haskuka has stressed, namely, the fact that in one competition for a single employment at the Municipality of Prizren apply more than 300 applicants, applies to all the municipalities, to Mamusha, Suhareka, etc. The motivation of young people to work in the public and state sector, he added, is very much larger than the one to work on the private sector. As Mayor of Mamusha, he said, I receive requests on each and every day from people to employ someone, at the time when the private sector is confronted with serious difficulties in finding workers. Therefore, he stressed that he agrees with the requests for reforming the educational system, for training the largest number of people possible to meet the requirements of jobs in the private sector, but he

also added that he agrees as well with the need for a better control of businesses on their treatment of their workers.

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