

# Population migration - an unused opportunity for local development in Kosovo



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This paper deals in particular with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 on the reduction of inequalities.

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## Introduction

There is a wide range of factors that affect the progress in the 2030 Agenda, starting from those of economic, social and environmental domains. For many years now, migration is one of the realities in Kosovo from which many benefits for the Kosovar society can be obtained. The latter can be considered as one of the main drivers of sustainable development, where emigrants are given the opportunity to develop their capacities and skills in certain fields and promote country's culture by engaging in various professions and communities.

Despite the fact that efforts have been made to compile guidelines in order to set up institutional mechanisms to increase and deepen the cooperation between the local government and diaspora, the potential of the latter in Kosovo is not being used properly both either local or central levels, hence penalizing Kosovo's development and promotion at these two levels. Accordingly, the main purpose of this paper is to analyze the situation and the role and importance of migrations in Kosovo's sustainable development, with a special emphasis on the advancement of Agenda 2030.

This paper deals with sub-topics such as: emigration and local development, the connection between them, the role of the local level in the empowerment of emigrants, the role of local authorities in integration and increase of contribution from diaspora, possibilities of cooperation with diaspora and use of potential for local development, institutional mechanisms for cooperation of local self-government units with diaspora, main challenges for bringing diaspora's potential at the service of development, migration trends and birth rates in sample municipalities, etc. Also, the necessary recommendations to improve the situation in Kosovo's municipalities are given in the end.

Empowering migrants for local development means providing conditions whereby migrants become effective drivers of sustainable development in their countries of origin and destination. When they live in decent conditions, enjoy their rights and are included in the community, migrants are able to use their potential for the development of society.

Also, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Organization (UNO), migrations play an important role in achieving most of the goals, so adequate migration policies are required to maximize the positive effects of migration. Even the 2013 eight-point agenda for the protection of the rights of immigrants *requires the integration of migration into development agendas for the purpose of sustainable development*.<sup>1</sup>

The specific objectives of this paper are to bring the topic of migration closer to local development in order to: 1) create a connection between emigration and local development; 2) deepen the modes of cooperation with diaspora and use diaspora's potential for local development; 3) engage local authorities in empowering migrants; 4) integrate and facilitate the return of qualified professionals or reintegrate returnees; 5) include diaspora's potential in municipal strategic documents, etc.

This paper lists concrete recommendations for the local level in order to deepen the cooperation between local self-government units with diaspora and create local mechanisms that contribute to increasing diaspora's benefits towards a sustainable development in the country of origin. In the analysis of diaspora's inclusion in local development in Kosovo, 5 municipalities of Kosovo were taken as samples, respectively: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Skenderaj/Srbica, Drenas/Glogovac and Obiliq/Obilić (selected randomly), which can serve as an overview for the assessment of the situation in other municipalities.

The most important result of this paper is that it may serve as a guide and be useful for the local government in Kosovo as a source of information on ways and solutions to establish and deepen cooperation with diaspora and use its potential for the benefit of economic development of municipalities.

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<sup>1</sup> UN. (2013). "Making migration work: an eight-point agenda for action". Accessible in English at: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration\\_8points\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration_8points_en.pdf) (accessed in July 2022)

## 1. Population migrations and SDGs of the Agenda 2030

Population shifts have characterized societies throughout the world for a long time now. Throughout the history of development, migratory movements were driven by an array of economic, social and political factors, which were conditioned and linked to certain times and places. Positive links between the rate of economic development (e.g. poverty, economic problems, unemployment, etc.), on the one hand, and population migratory movements, on the other, indicate that economic factors are the main but not the only ones contributing to migratory movements, making migration a complex process.

Migrations can be divided based on several criteria, such as:

1. Space, which includes: internal (inside the state) and external (between the states) ones;
2. Time of inclusion: daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, temporary and permanent;
3. Motive or causes: economic and non-economic;
4. Voluntary: voluntary or forced;
5. Organization: organized and unorganized (spontaneous).

Population movement includes the country of origin (previous place of residence) and the country of arrival, which is why migrants are divided into emigrants (outgoing) and immigrants (incoming). All types of migration have double effects, firstly in the country of origin and secondly in the country of arrival, with an impact on the change of general population, population breakdown, economic development, etc.

As a social phenomenon, population migration, due to their magnitude nowadays, may be considered as global processes based on evidence and statistics. According to UN statistics for 2019, this process involves, in various forms, more than 1 billion inhabitants (every 6 inhabitants), of which 272 million (or 3.5% of the total population of the planet) belong to group of international migrations. Of these numbers, approximately half are women, one in ten immigrants is under the age of 15, 4 out of 10 immigrants live in developing countries, and about 62% are economic migrants.<sup>2</sup>

Lack of political stability and differences in economic growth rate between countries are important factors that contribute to the flow of political and economic migrations. So, in 1990 – 2000, the number of international emigrations increased by about 21 million, with a growing trend in 2001 – 2010, about 46.2 million, and the number increased to 51.5 million immigrants in 2011 in 2011 – 2019<sup>3</sup>. Over 60% of the total number of international emigrations come from developing countries.

Population emigration from Kosovo to European countries is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kosovo was and remained a typical emigrant territory. The main causes that forced the population to emigrate were and remain: low economic growth rate, destructions caused by wars, unfavorable political situation, building of a system based on party criteria and nepotism, avoiding meritocracy and values in building the system, etc.

However, the main reason for emigration remains the dissatisfaction of Kosovo citizens with the prospects for a socio-economic future and the overall level of well-being, which is manifested in a high rate of unemployment (especially among young people) and a high percentage of people living in poverty. Therefore, economic issues related to unemployment and poverty are the main concerns of Kosovo citizens. Recent opinion polls show that these two economic parameters also constitute national security threats for Kosovo. According to these data, about 70% of the respondents believed that the high rate of unemployment is the biggest threat to Kosovo<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> "International Migration 2019- Report", Department of Economic and Social Affairs-Population Division, United Nations, New York, 2019, pp. 3-10.  
[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019\\_Report.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> "International Migration 2019- Report", Department of Economic and Social Affairs-Population Division, United Nations, New York, 2019, pp. 4-10.  
[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019\\_Report.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/InternationalMigration2019_Report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Behrami S. (2019). "Emigrations! Is Kosovo endangered by the phenomenon?". Kosovo Today. Accessible at: <https://www.kosova-sot.info/opinione/431875/emigrimet-a-po-rzikohe-kosova-nga-ky-fenomen/> (accessed August 2022)

Considering the high rate of unemployment and the large number of people living below the poverty line, Kosovo citizens see emigration as an opportunity to find better social and economic prospects abroad, turning emigration into a danger for demographic, socio-economic and security developments in the country.

Though people used to believe that Kosovo's freedom and independence would reduce the flows of migrants, figures unfortunately remained alarmingly high even after the 1999 war period. According to the statistics of the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, only in 2000 - 2020, 380,033 inhabitants, with an average of more than 19,000 inhabitants per year, have fled from Kosovo. However, the contingent of emigrants is undoubtedly even higher than these figures, owing to the known Kosovars' illegal emigration and emigration with passports of other countries.

Even more worrying is the fact that, based on various surveys carried out in the country, more than 50% of the respondents have expressed the desire to flee from Kosovo, of which mainly the young generation (20 to 40 years old), who make up the main demographic and fertility contingent, the labor contingent, the security contingent, etc., causing a decline in *human capital*, as the main carrier of socio-economic development.

Population migration will be the defining feature of the demographic developments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which contribute significantly to all aspects of economic and social development and will, as such, be essential to achieving the sustainable development goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development specifically emphasizes the contribution of migration to the economy and sustainable development. The link between sustainable development and the role of migration is important for all the dimensions of sustainable development. The fact that migration is important for 10 out of 17 SDGs<sup>5</sup> and most of the 169 goals indicate the role and importance of migration in accomplishing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Agenda 2030, specifically SDG 10, target 10.7, requires: "facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies"<sup>6</sup>. The fact that migration is important to achieve most SDGs makes migration not only a need, but also a necessary subject of treatment and inclusion in order to implement the Agenda 2030.

Another confirmation of this close relation between SDGs and migration is the fact that migrants, refugees and displaced persons are groups of people in need whose needs must be addressed so that "no one is left behind", which is one of the main principles of the UN Agenda 2030. In order to protect the rights of immigrants, an eight-point agenda was drafted in 2013, which calls on the international community to improve the level of protection of rights for all migrants, reduce migration costs, put an end to the exploitation of migrants, address the situation of migrants in difficulty, improve public perception of migrants, integrate migration into development agendas for the purpose of sustainable development, strengthen the evidence base of migration and deepen partnerships and collaborations around migration.

The 2030 Agenda treats population migrations, especially international ones, as a great opportunity for the overall development of countries of origin and transit and destination countries towards sustainable development. But, only if they are well managed and followed by genuine measures and policies, which are unfortunately lacking in Kosovo and have contributed to minimal positive effects of migration in the development in Kosovo, with the exception of remittances, while negative effects are higher, starting with demographic, socio-economic and security developments in the country<sup>7</sup>. In order to transform emigration into a potential for development, continuous efforts were made to illustrate the paths that the local government should follow in order to empower them for local development.

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<sup>5</sup> SDGs (17) which are affected by migration are: Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17.

<sup>6</sup> UN. SDG 10. Accessible in English: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10> (Accessed July 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Behrami S., Bajraktar F. (2021). "The Demographic Dimension of Agenda 2030 - Kosovo's Perspectives and Challenges". Pages 32-33. Institute for Development Policies - INDEP. Pristina. Accessible at: [https://indep.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/INDEP\\_Dimensioni-i-Demografikes-se-Agjiendes-2030\\_14072021.pdf](https://indep.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/INDEP_Dimensioni-i-Demografikes-se-Agjiendes-2030_14072021.pdf) (accessed in August 2022).

## 2. Interrelation between migration and local development

The close relation between economic growth and migration has long been evident, but more weight has been attached to this relation over the last two decades, with policymakers and donor community (especially international ones) recognizing the contribution of migration to the development of migrants themselves - their knowledge and skills, the development of communities they go to but also the development of the families and communities that they leave.

Having ascertained the weight of this relation between migration and economic development, the UN General Assembly has in 2006 and 2013, in order to protect the rights of migrants, drafted an eight-point agenda which calls on international community to *integrate migration into development agendas for the purpose of sustainable development*<sup>8</sup> and deepen partnerships and cooperation around migration. The inclusion of migration in development policies was also a recommendation of the Global Commission on International Migration<sup>9</sup>.

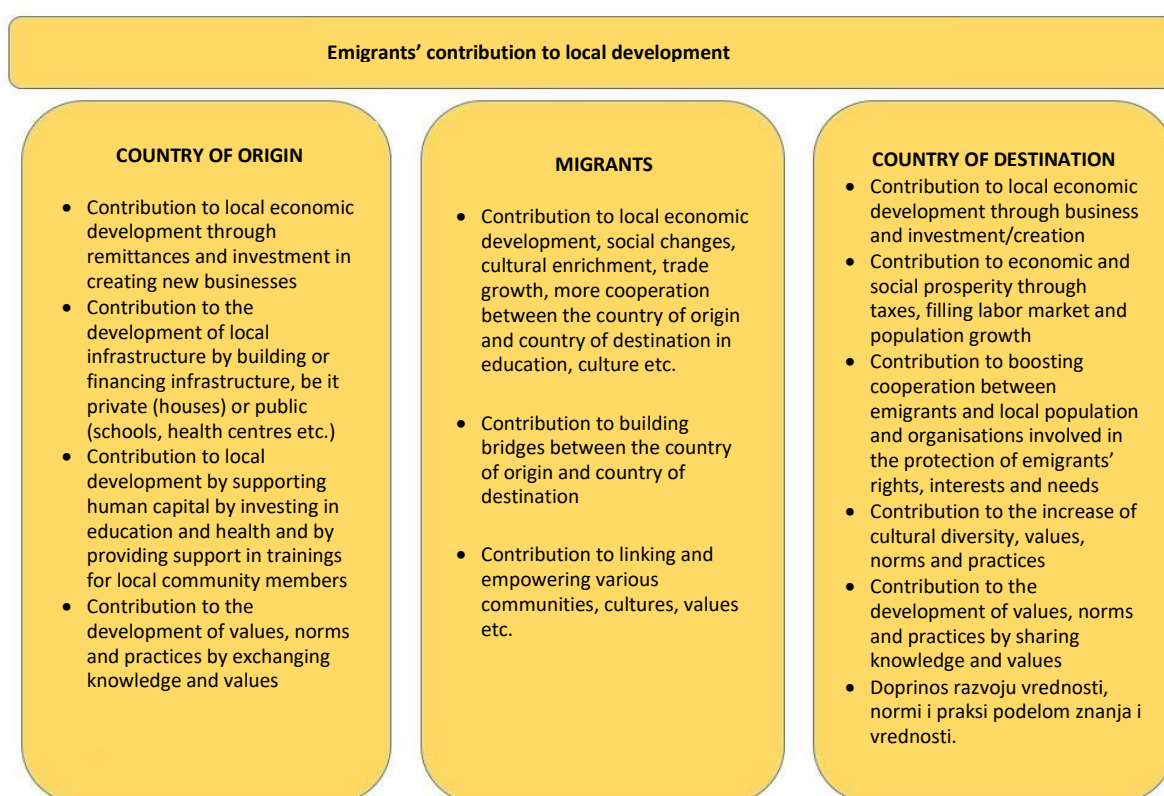


Chart 1. Emigrants' contributions to local development

The chart above clearly shows the potential contributions of migrants to local development and it can be seen that migrants are an important potential for change and development of society. However, numerous international practices have shown that local government stakeholders play a key role in the initiatives and sustainability of the migration-development link, as also emphasized Joint Migration and Development Initiative (engl: Joint Migration and Development Initiative - JMDI). This owing to the fact that the impact and consequences of migration are initially felt at the local level, be it when it comes to integration, labor market conditions or provision of opportunities for the creation of businesses by emigrants. Accordingly, the link between migration and development is best planned and resolved by local government, owing to the fact that local authorities are closer and in a better position to respond to the impacts and challenges of migration, be it when it comes to the negative sides of the phenomenon or the benefits that emigration brings to the local level.

<sup>8</sup> UN. (2013). "Making migration work: an eight-point agenda for action". Accessible in English at: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration\\_8points\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/pdf/migration_8points_en.pdf) (Accessed August 2022)

<sup>9</sup> Global Migration Group. (2010). Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning- A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners.

In order to include diaspora in local developments, local governments need to take some concrete steps, such as:

- Lobbying and advocacy in institutions and local community to create all the technical preconditions and ensure:
  - Easiest ways to get all the permits,
  - Creation of communication channels and channels and
  - Appointment of professional employees that will be directly involved in this field.
- Comprehensive campaign at national level which would target different groups: media, diaspora, citizens, local community, etc. This would be very important in order to create a positive image for investment opportunities in the homeland by representatives of the diaspora.
- Institutions at local level and central levels must change their attitude towards diaspora, because strategic documents consulted at both levels indicate that little attention is paid to diaspora's role in economic development.
- Promoting successful projects implemented by diaspora representatives in their homeland and encouraging other investments.
- Involvement of diaspora in local development planning from starting with the preparatory phase, preparation of strategic development documents, consultations and up to presentation and setting of development measures and priorities.
- When planning and preparing strategic development documents, diaspora should be included by identifying, appointing and involving the person/persons responsible for diaspora from the local self-government in the formation and preparation of the development teams.<sup>10</sup>

These steps can be implemented if we have the diaspora database available, which can be achieved through proactive communication and invitations to diaspora members to participate through other channels (on the official website of the municipality and in the media through social networks, etc. ). In the case of inclusion of diaspora in local development teams, the three main elements that should be given importance are:

- a) they must be professionals of strategic development fields - economic, social, environmental, public, services and infrastructure,
- b) they must represent various sectors - public, private, civil and academia (if they are active in these sectors outside and/or in the community), and
- c) within the possibilities, they should be adequately be represented by gender and age.

In the concrete situation in which Kosovo local and central institutions are (also based also on development documents), development documents must be reviewed in order to include diaspora representatives as members of local development teams and treat diaspora as a potential for development according to its capacity and possibilities.

## 2.1. Local development and migration

Even in Kosovo, like in many other countries, the approach to migration and development is usually a duty and obligation addressed at the national level, where policies in the fields of migration and development are conceived and implemented. This is consistent with the perception that migration is subject to national sovereignty, including agreements between countries and compliance with international conventions.

However, the approach at national level does not represent the reality that exists in the diversity of development and migratory contexts that exist within the countries, driven by inequalities that exist not only between countries, but also within them, hence creating a local context of emigration within the country too. This is the reason why the links between migration and development require an integral bottom-up approach i.e. from the local level, which is unfortunately often overlooked, as is the case in Kosovo, transforming emigration from a *very big development opportunity to a very small benefit* at both central and local levels. Harnessing the

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<sup>10</sup> Civil Service Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Involvement of Diaspora in Local Development". Accessible in Bosnian at: <http://www.obuke.adsfbih.gov.ba/index.php/kljucni-dokumenti/kljucni-dokumenti/najcesce-postavla-pitanja-na-edukacijama/ukljucivanje-dijaspora-u-lokalni-development> (Accessed August 2022)



benefits of migration for local development also requires political, economic, social and cultural support. In recent decades, given the local dimension of migration and successes shown in practice, local and regional authorities in many countries are turning into decisive stakeholders in migration governance.

*How can this impact be optimized?*

Now more cases show that the contribution of diaspora to the local development depends largely on relations that they establish between the local stakeholders and emigrants and on the governance system existing at the local level. For this reason, local institutional deficiencies can impede immigrants' potential for development. It is therefore essential that local government institutions create an enabling and inclusive environment by providing space for emigrants for their thoughts and ideas to be heard, by establishing transparent frameworks that boost the trust between the local stakeholders and migrant associations.

It is clear that local authorities will have more room to operate in a decentralized country than in a country where all the decisions are made at the central level.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2. The role of emigrants in local development and types of capital

Immigrants are bridges between the country of origin and country of destination who can promote dialog between these two countries as a result of the ties that they maintain with the country of origin, transferring their experience and knowledge and financial resources that can improve the situation in the country. In this way, they support and encourage cooperation with development ideas in the country of origin.

International migration contributes to local development through the approach known as 3T, which entails three types of transfer:

1. Transfer of social capital - emigrant networks,
2. Transfer of knowledge - expertise,
3. transfer of financial resources - remittances which have a developmental dimension, turning migrants into a very important element of change, namely a development potential for a society, including the local government level in the first place.

### *Types of emigrant capital*

Emigrants, like other categories of society, possess human, social, financial and cultural skills, which are developed, improved and enriched during their immigration experience. Their ability and motivation to integrate into the host community on the one hand and their commitment to maintaining ties with their country of origin on the other transform emigrants into actors who influence and contribute to the local development of both communities. Precisely, this dual nature is also the reason why immigrants are called bridges that connect societies, economies and cultures of the countries of origin and destination, which are deepened through their physical connections, stories, experiences and practices.

All these important elements impart upon immigrants a legitimacy to be recognized, accepted, treated and supported as important factors of local development and to be, as such, included in all strategic development documents at the local level (and not only).

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<sup>11</sup> Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI). "Introductory module on migration and local development". Pages 8-9. Accessible in English at: <https://returnandreintegration.iom.int/en/learning/e-courses/my-jm-di-e-toolbox-migration-and-local-development> (accessed in August 2022).

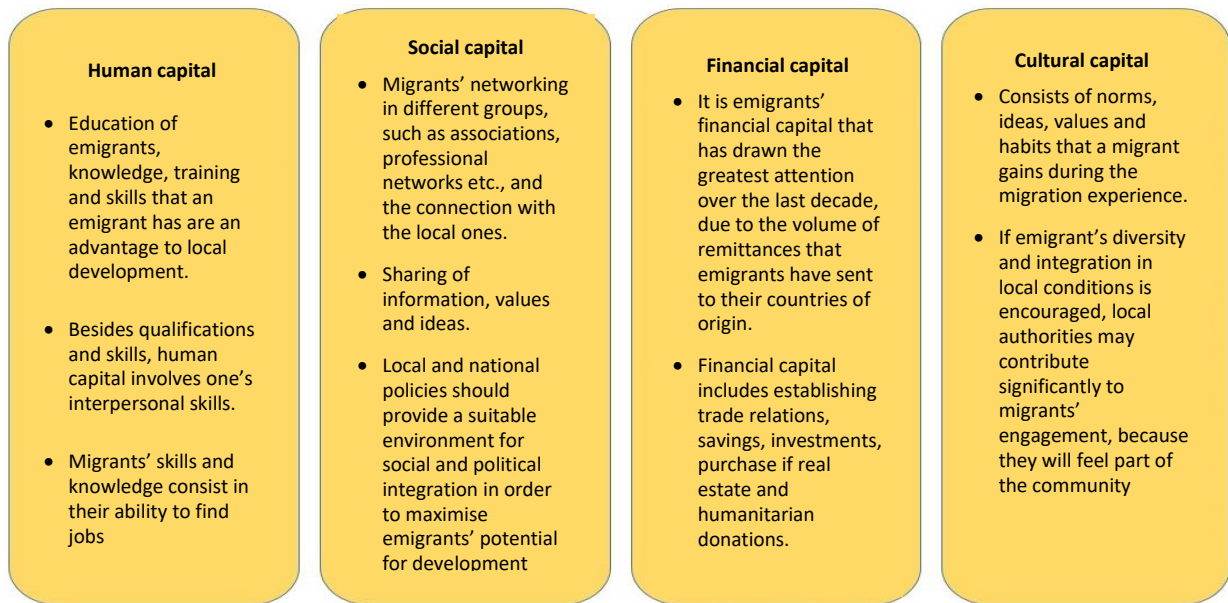


Chart 2. Types of emigrant capital

At the local level, there are other two types of emigrant capital, which relate more to the territorial aspect and social and cultural capitals, including:

- spiritual capital, which represents emigrant's emotional attachment and determines emigrant's readiness to keep the ties with the homeland while also considering opportunities for an eventual return, and
- local capital involves emigrant' knowledge of local development needs and which is intensified when emigrants have strong ties to their homeland.

However, the main challenge of involving immigrants in local development depends on their desire and willingness to promote local development and the opportunities and capacities that their homeland offers to them, and this is where the role of local governments in facilitating or even avoiding these challenges can be seen.

### 2.3. The role of emigration in local developments

The local level is the first segment in the administrative-territorial hierarchy that feels the effects of emigration, whether positive or negative, including local administrative units, demographic developments, impacts on labor market, education system, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to pay enough attention to the analysis and the role that the government levels can play in creating the positive impacts of migration in development.

The role of emigration in economic development, be it at local or national level, represents a challenge, but also an opportunity for the local government to turn immigration into a development opportunity' through development programs and strategies. In other words, local policies that include immigration as a component of development in their strategic documents, creating a favorable environment for migratory capital, will be characterized by a more intensive development of units.

Unfortunately, Kosovo lacks genuine policies, at both national and local levels, on rational use and inclusion of emigration and development strategies, which minimizes the role and importance of emigration in the development of the country and its constituent units.

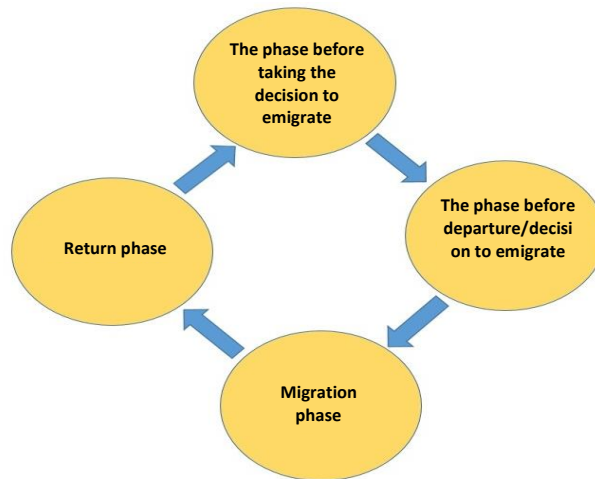


Chart 3. Development stages of emigration

During each of the four stages presented above, local authorities' task is to undertake specific activities in response to emigration challenges to community development with information campaigns in order to apprise immigrants of modes of provision of services, information services and information and counseling centers, provision of electronic services, informational phone lines, field meetings, etc.

Migration is a cross-sectoral issue that affects and is influenced by policies in many government sectors, including health, education and access to justice, so the approach in each stage of development of emigration must be cross-sectoral.

### 3. Migration and birth trends in sample municipalities - Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Skenderaj/Srbica, Drenas/Glogovac and Obiliq/Obilić

Despite the weight and importance of the growth of emigration, the population movement statistics are limited and deficient compared to other population statistics, specifically vital statistics, despite the fact that significant progress has been made in this regard in the last decade. Limitations and deficiencies of emigration statistics are especially expressed in the case of external emigration.

The main source of migration statistics (also external emigration) is the population census and KAS population estimates. The total population size reflects the changes occurring in the dynamics and structures of the population of a territory at a given time and under the influence of various factors, such as birth rate, mortality, emigration, immigration, wars, epidemics, etc., contributing evidently to the figures thereof.

Based on birth, death, emigration and immigration trends, it can be concluded that the municipalities analyzed are characterized by population stagnation. However, while population of municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn and Obiliq/Obilić are characterized by a decreasing trend in the last decade, the municipalities of Skenderaj/Srbica and Drenas/Glogovac are characterized by a very low growth trend.

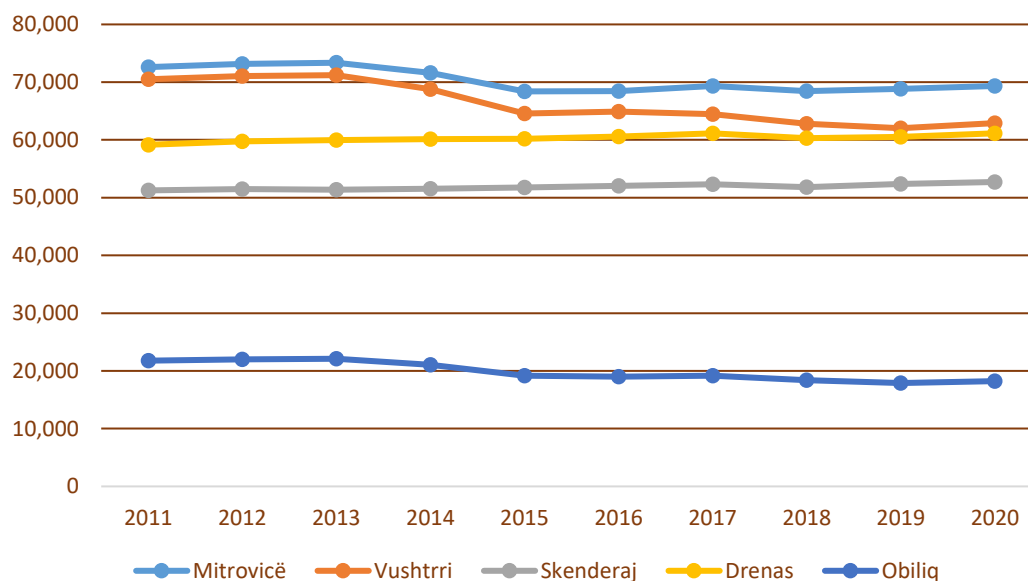


Chart 4. Changes in the total population size in the municipalities: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Skenderaj/Srbica, Drenas/Glogovac and Obiliq/Obilić 2011-2020<sup>12</sup>

Based on the 2011 population census and KAS estimates, it can be concluded that on 31 December 2020, the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić had a population decrease of -16.3%, the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn -10.7% and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica -4.5%, while the municipality of Drenas/Glogovac had an increase of 3.4% and Skenderaj/Srbica 2.8%<sup>13</sup>.

### 3.1. Trends in natural growth and migrations

In 2011 - 2020, most Kosovo municipalities were characterized by a positive natural growth (the number of births is higher than the number of deaths, though the birth rate is characterized by a rapid decline), but it is obvious that population shifts have contributed to a decrease and stagnation in the total population growth.

#### Birth rate trends

The lowest number of births since 1920, i.e. 1939 in Kosovo was recorded in 2020. The number of births in Kosovo in 2011 - 2020 has decreased from 27,626 (in 2011) to 21,925 (in 2020)<sup>14</sup>, which entails a decrease of 5,701 births or -20.6% or a reduction of 1/5 of the number of births for the 10-year period.

In 2011 - 2020, the number of births showed a decrease of -25.8% in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, -10.1% in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, -19.3% in Skenderaj/Srbica and -22.4% in Drenas/Glogovac. Only the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić, compared to 2011, is characterized by a positive growth of 6.8%, although this may be a consequence of accumulation of births (from the previous year as a result of the pandemic), because compared with 2019 this municipality also had a decrease in the number of births by -33.4%.

In the same period, the number of deaths in all municipalities showed rapid growth trends, respectively by 97.3% in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 82.5% in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, 99.4% in Skenderaj/Srbica, 35.6% in Drenas/Glogovac and 106.4% in Obiliq/Obilić. The data presented indicate that, with the exception of Drenas/Glogovac, the number of deaths in 2020 compared to 2011 has almost doubled in all other municipalities.

In 2019, compared to 2011, the death rate had shown a growing trend by 21.3% in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 43.8% in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, 44.1% in Skenderaj/Srbica, 9.9% in

<sup>12</sup> "Assessment: Kosovo Population for 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years.

Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

<sup>13</sup> "Assessment: Kosovo Population for 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Clarification: Compared to 2011, in 2020, about 40% of Kosovo municipalities had a decrease in the total population size.

<sup>14</sup> "Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Kosovo, 2021", Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), Pristina 2021, pg. 57. Accessible at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/6800/vjetari-statistikor-2021f.pdf>

Drenas/Glogovac and 5.5% in Obiliq/Obilić. If one compares the ratio of deaths in 2020 and 2019 with those of 2011, one can notice that the impact of the pandemic in the increase of the cases of death in all municipalities was considerable.

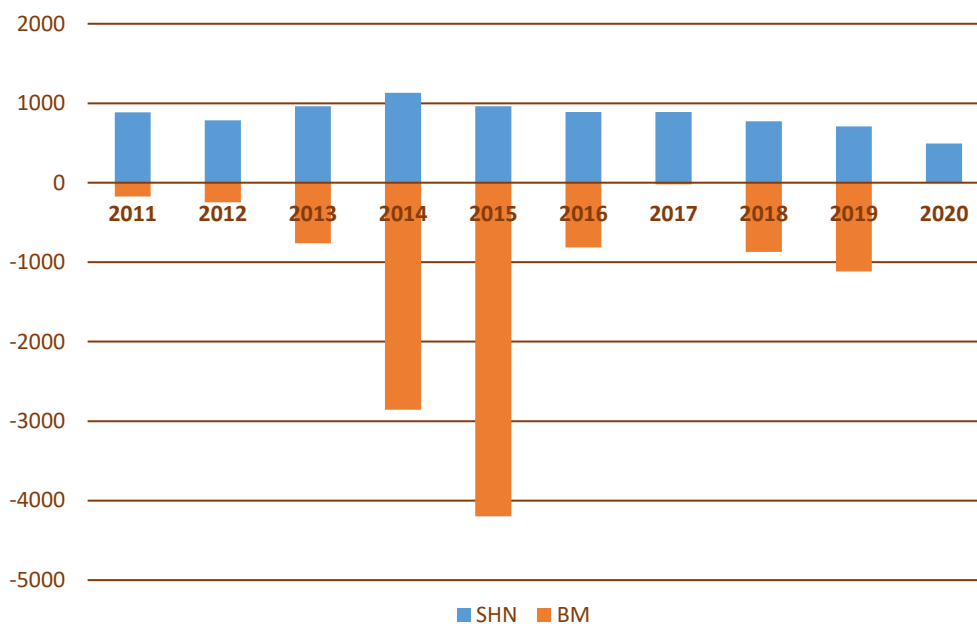


Chart 5. Natural increase and balance of migrations in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica in 2011-2020<sup>15</sup>

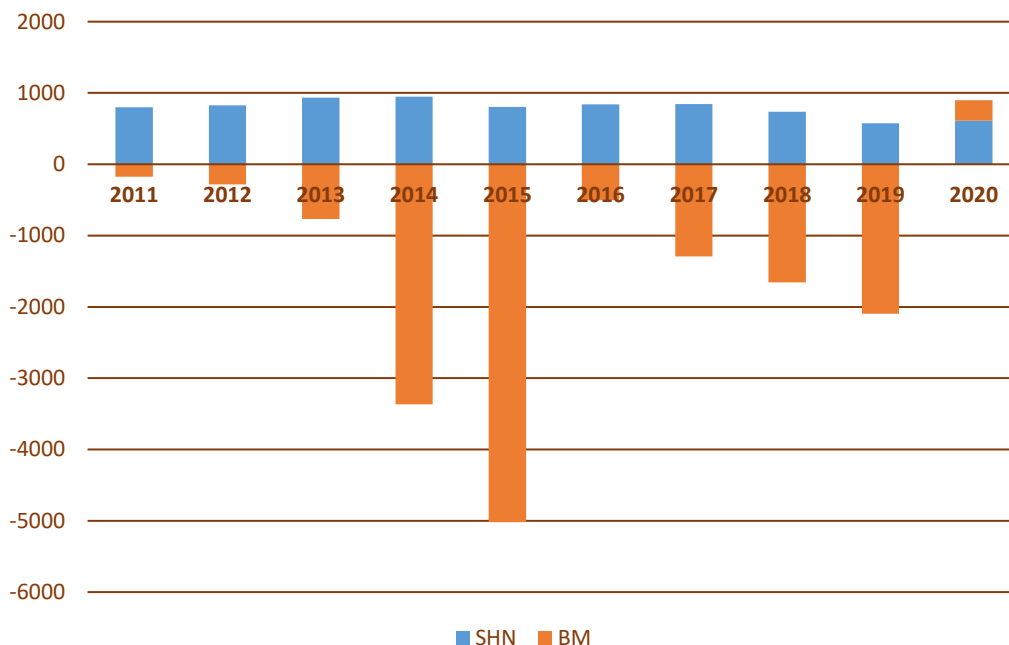


Chart 6. Natural increase and balance of migrations in Vushtrri/Vučitrn 2011-2020<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise> Data revised by the author

<sup>16</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

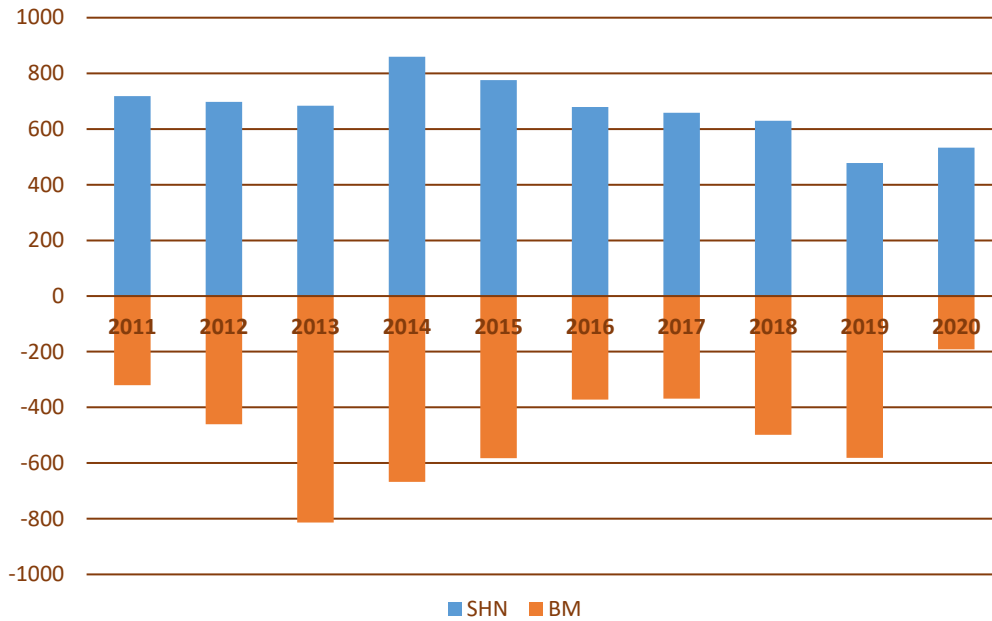


Chart 7. Natural increase and balance of migrations in Skenderaj 2011-2020<sup>17</sup>

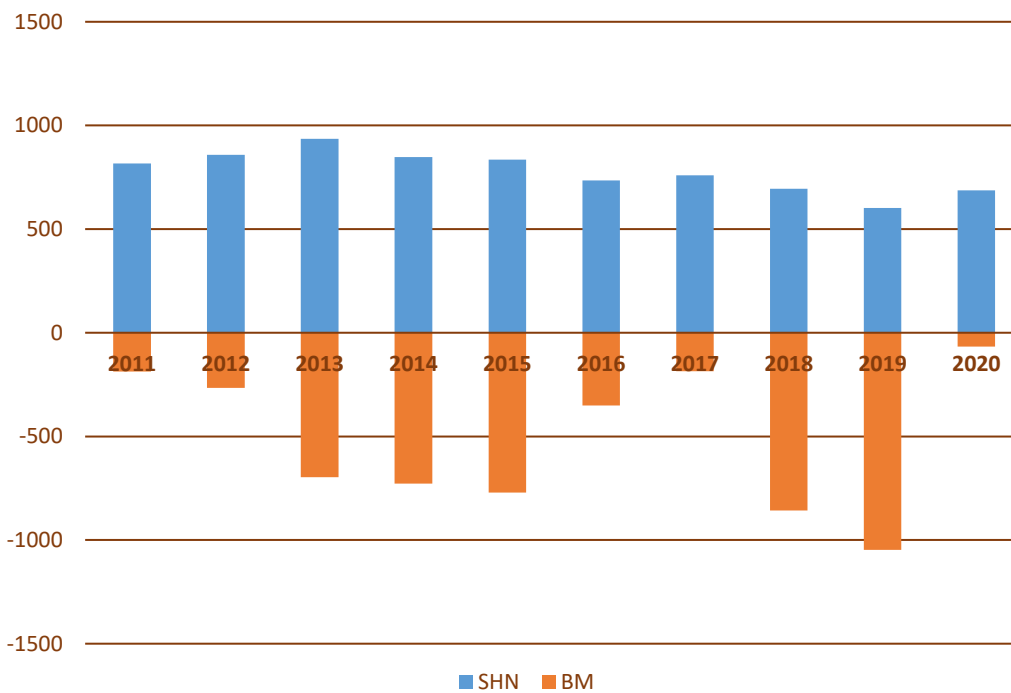


Chart 8. Natural increase and balance of migrations in Drenas/Glogovac in 2011-2020<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

<sup>18</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

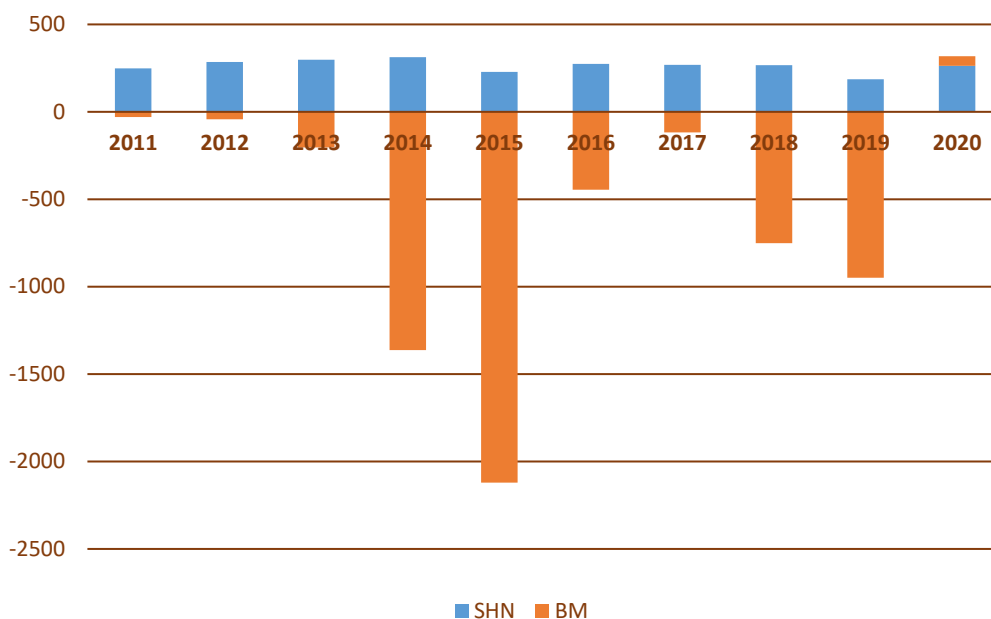


Chart 9. Natural increase and balance of migrations in Obiliq/Obilić in 2011-2020<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2. Emigration trends 2011-2020

Population emigration from Kosovo to European countries is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kosovo was and remained a typical emigrant territory. The main causes that forced the population to emigrate were and remain: the low rate of economic development, the destructions caused by wars and the unfavorable political situation, etc. There are other reasons related to emigration, such as the construction of a system based on nepotist criteria, avoiding meritocracy and values in the construction of the system, etc.

As it was noted in the beginning of this paper, the main reason for emigration is the dissatisfaction of the citizens of Kosovo with the current state of socio-economic prospects and the overall level of welfare, manifested in high rates of unemployment and poverty. There is a very close connection between external migrations and formation of diaspora. In fact, no diaspora can be formed without this type of migration<sup>20</sup>.

According to the official KAS statistics, more than 550,000 inhabitants have emigrated from Kosovo to European countries and overseas in the period 1969 - 2011, which together with their descendants reach the number of over 703,978<sup>21</sup> and constitute nearly 40% of the total population. Some side analyses<sup>22</sup> indicate that this number is even higher and reaches 965,000 people.

The municipalities sampled in this paper are characterized by a large share of emigrated population (external emigration) in relation to resident population in the municipality. Accordingly, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has 33%, Vushtrri/Vučitrn 26%, Skenderaj/Srbica 25%, Drenas/Glogovac 16% and Obiliq/Obilić 29% of the population abroad<sup>23</sup>. As in the case of Kosovo, in these municipalities as well, side analysis indicate that this number is even higher.

Emigration, especially the external one, continued with considerable intensity in 2011 - 2020. During this period, all the municipalities reviewed are characterized by a negative (internal and

<sup>19</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years.

Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

<sup>20</sup> Islami, H. (2012). "Ethnic aspect of migrations - Albanians in the course of violent migrations". Page 39. Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo. Pristina.

<sup>21</sup> "Kosovar Migration", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Pristina 2014, pg 75. Accessible at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1379/migrimi-kosovar-2014.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> This figure is reached if we compare municipal population statistics from the 2011 census and the census carried out by the OSCE in 2008 (differences) which has, in cooperation with municipalities and village councils, registered the total number of inhabitants at the level of settlements and municipalities, which includes people living abroad.

<sup>23</sup> "Kosovar Migration". Kosovo Statistics Agency, Pristina 2014, pg. 19. Accessible at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1379/migrimi-kosovar-2014.pdf>

external) migration balance, excluding 2020 due to the pandemic (the time when movements, especially those abroad, were limited) the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Obiliq/Obilić and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica are characterized by a positive balance.

It should also be emphasized that external emigration is the dominant form of emigration in these municipalities, reaching: 93% in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 96% in Vushtrri/Vučitrn, 43% in Skenderaj/Srbica, 72% in Drenas/Glogovac and 98% in Obiliq/Obilić in terms of migration balance. Only in the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica the balance of internal migration is higher than that of the external one.

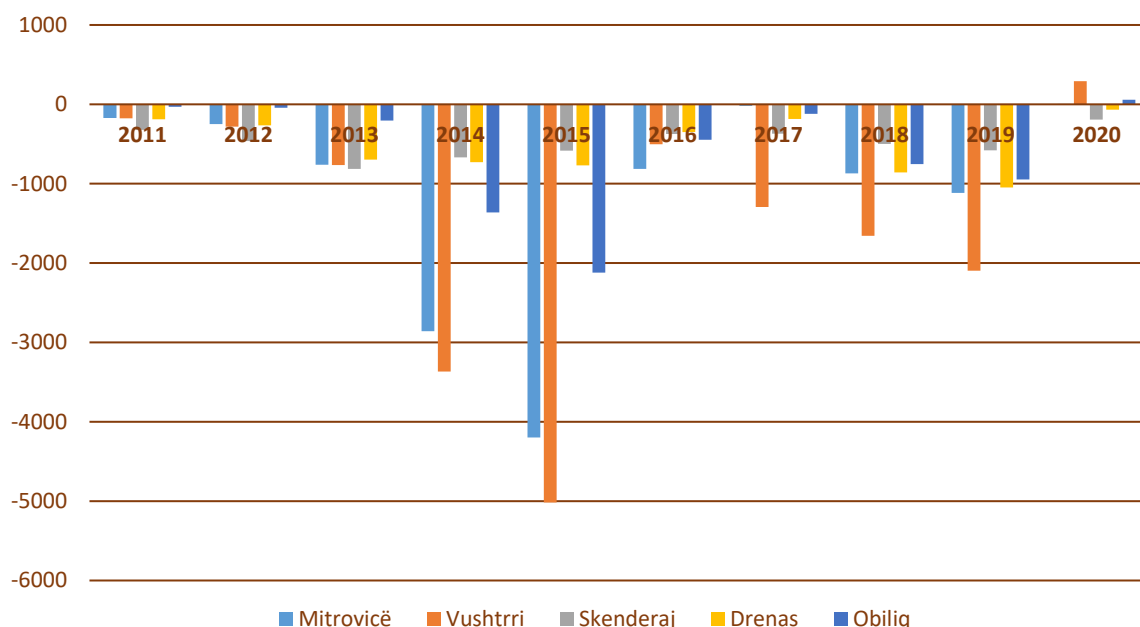


Chart 10. Balance of migrations in selected municipalities in 2011-2020<sup>24</sup>

From the data presented it can be inferred that Kosovo, but also most of its municipalities, including the selected municipalities, are characterized by a large number of members of diaspora, which can be a very important factor for development, at both local and national levels, if it is supported by genuine cooperation policies, which Kosovo lacks unfortunately.

### 3.3. Emigration and its impact on educational system

Over the past three decades, Kosovo has been characterized as a territory with a rapid decrease in the birth rate and natural growth and a high emigration rate, accompanied by changes in the structure of population by age, which have resulted in the reduction of school-age contingents, especially in the last decade. Demographic developments are so unfavorable that they may be established as a demographic crisis.

The most serious consequences of the demographic crisis are considered to involve: consequences to labor force or labor market trends, social protection system, health system, etc. In reality, the low birth rate and long-term emigrations mostly affect school-age population contingents.

Forecasts of Kosovo population dynamics in the coming decades show that the education system will face serious challenges caused by unfavorable demographic trends, which may especially affect the availability and quality of education, phenomena which at present affect the mountainous areas and are expected to increase in the future with the expansion of the demographic crisis and population aging process<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Assessment: Kosovo Population in 2011-2020", Kosovo Agency of Statistics, respective years. Accessible at <https://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/sociale/vleresimi-i-populise>

<sup>25</sup> Behrami S., Bajraktari F. "Challenges in the demographic developments of Kosovo and their impact on education system". Pedagogical Institute of Kosovo & CARITAS. International scientific conference "Quality of pre-university education in Kosovo and development directions". Pristina 2021, page 181-194.



For the educational system, the most important part are the school age contingents, so, to ensure stability in educational system, it is necessary to ensure demographic stability.

#### *Consequences to educational system*

Educational system is the first sector where the impacts of negative demographic trends are felt through the reduction of the number of students at all levels of education. In the municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, in 2008 - 2021, the number of students has decreased by 3,964 students or by -20.4%. In this period, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has lost more than 1/5 of the number of students. Accordingly, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has in 2021 had 209 class parallels less than in 2008 (19 students per class).

In the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, in the same period, the number of students decreased by 4,596 students or by -25.8%. In this period, Vushtrri/Vučitrn has lost more than ¼ of the number of students. Compared to 2008, there were 242 fewer class parallels in 2021.

In the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica, the number of students decreased by 5,429 students or by -37.3%. During this period, Skenderaj/Srbica lost more than 1/3 of the number of students. Compared to 2008, there were 286 fewer class parallels in 2021.

The municipality of Drenas/Glogovac has in 2008 - 2021 lost 4,163 or -26.3% of the number of students (more than 1/4 of the number of students). Accordingly, Drenas/Glogovac has in 2021 had 219 parallels less than in 2008. In the same period, the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić has lost 1,005 or -20% of the number of students (1/5 of the number of students). Accordingly, Obiliq/Obilić has in 2021 had 53 parallels less than in 2008. Even more disturbing statistics are those of the number of students enrolled in the first grade, where the drop is even bigger.

The fact that the phenomenon has assumed disturbing dimensions is argued by the fact about 90% of Kosovo's municipalities face a reduction of the number of students, which ranges from 10% to half of the number of students. The perspective of future development makes it necessary to take measures to control the demographic phenomena, especially birth rate and emigration, since the findings indicate that, even in the future, school age contingents will drop even faster as a direct result of demographic developments.

If demographic development is not given adequate attention with immediate measures through proper population policies, then, from the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, demographic development will become a limiting factor for development in all domains, including the educational system.

### 3.4. Immigration and poverty

Though remittance spending structure in Kosovo remains very unfavorable in terms of economic development, they play an important role in social stability, contributing directly to the reduction of poverty and turning remittances into an important element for the achievement of SDGs. This is best illustrated in recent public opinion polls, which show that 84.2% of the respondents believe that the financial situation of families in Kosovo would deteriorate if funds were not sent from diaspora to Kosovo (35.6% estimate that the deterioration would be big)<sup>26</sup>.

As mentioned before, the economic issues related to unemployment and poverty are the main concerns of Kosovo citizens. Recent opinion polls suggest that these two economic parameters are also national security threats that Kosovo is facing. According to these data, about 70% of the respondents believed that the high rate of unemployment is the biggest threat to Kosovo<sup>27</sup>.

### 3.5. Immigration and urbanization

Urbanization is a historic, complex and global process that takes place alongside overall socio-economic development and changes. As a complex process, urbanization is the subject of study

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<sup>26</sup> "Remittances to Kosovo - large sums, little discussion". GERMIN Organization, March 2022. Page 10.

<sup>27</sup> Behrami S. (2019). "Emigrations! Is Kosovo endangered by the phenomenon?". Kosovo Today. Accessible at: <https://www.kosova-sot.info/opinione/431875/emigrimet-a-po-rrezikohet-kosova-nga-ky-fenomen/> (accessed August 2022)

in many scientific fields, so its definition depends on the aspect of the approach. Accordingly, *in demographic terms, urbanism entails a process of concentration of population in cities (urban areas) and*, in urban terms, it entails the concentration of functions in a settlement. Economists maintain that urbanism entails concentration of power of production in industry and post-industrial activities, whereas in social terms urbanism is a social development level process accompanied by changes in lifestyle.

Developed countries and municipalities are characterized by high urbanization rates, whereas developing countries and municipalities have low urbanization rates, but are characterized by fast dynamics in the process.

The ratio between rural and urban population is an important indicator of economic and social development rates, social division of labor, population breakdown and intensity of the process of deagrarianization, deruralization and urbanization.

The phenomenon of internal migration is primarily oriented from rural to urban settlements and is influenced by a number of factors, the dominant ones being socio-economic ones, such as: greater job finding opportunities, better salaries, higher quality education and health services etc.

These movements contribute to the concentration of population in some areas, on the one hand, and depopulation of other areas on the other. Areas characterized by concentration of population often face:

- economic problems involving: high unemployment in urban settlements, which is followed by an increase in poverty, violence, criminality, informal economy, etc.
- social problems involving: heavy load on all institutions in urban settlements (schools, health centers, kindergartens, etc.) and their abandonment in villages.
- ecological problems involving: high rate of pollution of environmental parameters (air, water, soil), noise, problems with urban solid waste, large number of automobiles, etc.
- infrastructural problems involving: unplanned constructions and superstructures, emptying of entire villages (especially in mountainous areas), the burden on urban infrastructure, problems in supply with drinking water, the burden on urban road network, etc.

On the other hand, areas with a demographic decline/depopulation constitute a worrying problem for the sustainability of any country for several reasons:

- depopulation puts the sustainability of a welfare state at stake and into question, because generally a population decrease translates into an increase in the average age i.e. aging, which implies an increase in public costs for pensions and health.
- Depopulation is accompanied by inhibition of economic growth, because it is accompanied by the emigration of young people, who are potentially the main carriers of economic, social and political development of the area<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Maestas, N., Mullen, K., & Powell, D. (2016). The Effect of Population Aging on Economic Growth, the Labor Force and Productivity. NBER Working Paper No. 22452.  
Accessible at: [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w22452/w22452.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w22452/w22452.pdf)

- depopulation is at the center of a vicious cycle of economic decline, as high unemployment alongside social, security and criminality problems is a decisive factor in the emigration of young and skilled people, which further impoverishes the local labor market, which is marking a downward spiral anyways<sup>29</sup>.

The depopulation of various areas in Kosovo (especially rural and mountainous areas) has been accompanied by the reduction of some public services, damaging the quality of life for the population, which has decided to flee in a search for better lives. Furthermore, this population reduction does not justify the presence of some other public services (schools, ambulances, etc.), which are reduced even more, making the system stuck in a kind of vicious circle.

A further depopulation of these areas would be accompanied by numerous consequences of a demographic nature, primarily by the aging of the population, which would:

- ❖ render demographic and economic revitalization of the area impossible
- ❖ create areas which cannot recover themselves (population) and economic life and
- ❖ render sustainable demographic development impossible, which would be followed by economic and environmental sustainability.

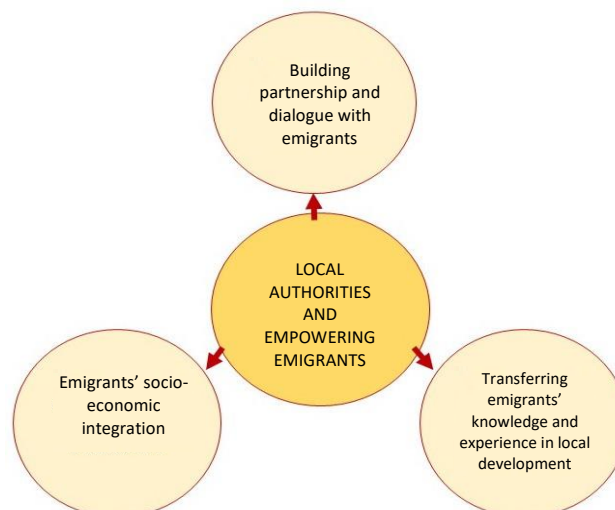
At the same time, the shrinking of settlements represents a problem and in some cases even makes it impossible to build the necessary infrastructure for life in those places.

In order to solve these problems, it is necessary to prepare real development and urban plans for municipalities and areas within those municipalities and to prepare an Urbanization Development Strategy in Kosovo. Otherwise, in both cases, if genuine plans and strategies are not prepared, that can be an obstacle for investments by diaspora, at both local and central levels, and make the journey of municipalities and Kosovo as a whole towards achievement of SDGs difficult.

#### 4. The role of the local level in empowering emigrants

##### 4.1. Empowering emigrants

The empowerment of emigrant communities allows them to maximize their engagement in local development, which will lead to positive results in many segments of development at the local level. Local authorities have a key role in facilitating the establishment of sustainable relations with the emigrant community, especially by empowering them.



<sup>29</sup> Šerý, O., Svobodová, H., Šilhan, Z., & Szczyrba, Z. (2017). Shrinking of Cities in the Czech Republic and its Reflection on Society: Case Study of Karviná City. *Geographica Pannonica* 22. Accessible at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323362224\\_Shrinking\\_of\\_Cities\\_in\\_the\\_Czech\\_Republic\\_and\\_its\\_Reflection\\_on\\_Society\\_Case\\_Study\\_of\\_Karvina\\_City](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323362224_Shrinking_of_Cities_in_the_Czech_Republic_and_its_Reflection_on_Society_Case_Study_of_Karvina_City)

Local authorities can contribute to empowering the diaspora by:

- improving the means of communication between community members and emigrants to interact with other emigrants;
- supporting and organizing direct meetings between community members and emigrants of different interest groups;
- fostering partnerships between local authorities to engage in projects, exchange knowledge and develop initial joint project schemes;
- supporting and empowering the creation of organizations that promote and engage in migration/development and international networks of professional associations;
- deepening cooperation with certain countries or regions of destination countries where there is a greater concentration of emigrants, etc.

To achieve these objectives, local authorities must develop and support their capacities, as well as mobilize and be ready to support and create sufficient space for diaspora, professional organizations from diaspora and establish better cooperation with the community of emigrants in all fields of life, especially those of a developmental nature<sup>30</sup>.

#### 4.2. The role of local self-government in the field of migration and development in Kosovo

The powers of local self-government are stipulated in the Law on Local Self-Government. Law No. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government provide the full power of local authorities as regards local interests. The Law also clearly defines the competences concerning organization and functioning of municipal bodies, financing of municipalities, relations within municipalities, inter-municipal cooperation and cooperation with central level institutions.

Municipalities have full and exclusive powers in terms of local interests, adhering to the standards provided by applicable legislation, in the following areas:

- a) local economic development;
- b) urban and rural planning;
- c) land use and development;
- i) promotion and protection of human rights;
- j) provision of primary healthcare;
- m) public health;
- q) tourism;
- r) cultural and leisure activities;
- s) any matter that is not expressly excluded from their competence or that has not been assigned to another authority<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Introductory module on migration and local development, Joint Migration and development Initiative (JMIDI), pg. 81, Accessible: <https://returnandreintegration.iom.int/en/learning/e-courses/my-jm-di-e-toolbox-migration-and-local-development>

<sup>31</sup> Law on Local Self-Government No. 03/L-040, Accessible at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530>

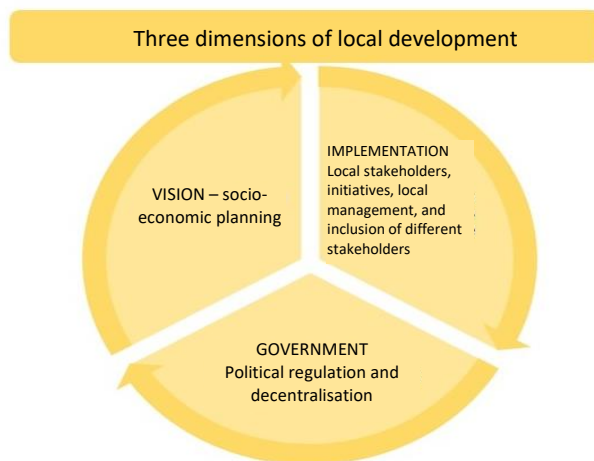


Chart 12. Dimensions of local development

As it can be seen, the local level, based on the legislation in force, has broad powers in many areas which enable cooperation with the diaspora. This is made possible by the basic principles of municipal finances, which stipulate as follows (Article 24):

- The municipal budget shall consist of own source revenues; grants from the Government of Republic of Kosovo; *donations and other revenues*, which are also provided by the Law on Local Government Finance.

The local self-government unit may, through the unit for local economic development and support for investment, employ instruments of local development policies to promote the attraction of investments, provide for existing investments and their expansion, the number and total value of investments and the quality of investors, apply standards of an enabling business environment and decide on measures to promote the competitiveness of local self-government in attracting investments.

To increase competition, municipalities should take the following measures:

- 1) establish the bodies that will support the investments;
- 2) strengthen the foundation and develop development policies, instruments and development measures in the field of local economic development;
- 3) set up transparent mechanisms of continuous communication and cooperation with local development stakeholders;
- 4) simplify local procedures for the implementation of investments (removal of bureaucracies);
- 5) balance the local labor market;
- 6) develop municipal and local economic infrastructure;
- 7) use information and communication technology to achieve communication;
- 8) include facilities in local strategic documents, etc.

The activity of the unit for local economic development and support for investments in the municipalities of Kosovo is carried out by the responsible directorates, but it can also be carried out by specialized institutions at municipal or regional levels, various associations, persons from among employees or persons with knowledge and experience in providing professional assistance to the investor, which local self-government units hire to carry out those duties. Also, two or more local self-government units may jointly assign a body to whom support to investments within the territory of local self-government units is entrusted.

#### 4.3. The inclusion of migratory potential in municipal strategic documents - situation in municipalities of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Skenderaj/Srbica, Drenas/Glogovac and Obiliq/Obilić

The review of strategic documents, at central and local level in particular, show how little do central institutions, and especially local ones, know about diaspora's potential for general and local development.

Also, it should be underlined that municipal development strategic documents are in most cases prepared with limited human and intellectual capacities and rather as legal obligations, so they often confuse rather than guide municipalities towards local economic development.

*A concrete example of non-professional preparation - the case of the Municipal Development Plan of South Mitrovica 2019 - 2027*

*The Municipal Development Plan is a strategic document that requires a multidisciplinary approach and treatment. Since we are dealing with development forecasts, it is understandable that here we are dealing with forecasts in many areas for a given period, where the dominant role is played by population forecasts, the accuracy of which also depends on the forecast for all other areas dealt with in the Municipal Development Plan.*

1. *Population scenarios: unprofessional in all three cases.*

*According to KAS, in the beginning of 2020, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica had 68,840 inhabitants (decrease of inhabitants compared to 2011). According to the realistic scenario prepared by the drafter in 2021, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica will have 99,593 inhabitants, an increase which cannot be explained from a demographic standpoint considering the trends of natural growth and balance of migrations in 2011-2020.*

2. *According to the same scenario, the urban population will reach 77,111 inhabitants, while in the table of settlements the urban area of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has 46,568 inhabitants (the urban population figure is not reached even with the growth of the population of suburban settlements)<sup>32</sup>.*

*There are also many such cases in strategic documents of other municipalities, which rather disorient than orient the municipalities towards local economic development.*

#### 4.4. Local/municipal level

From the elaborated local level strategic documents (10 strategic documents: 4 of the municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 1 of the municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn, 1 of the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica, 2 of the municipality of Drenas/Glogovac and 2 of the municipality of Obiliq/Obilić), respectively municipal development plans and local economic development strategies, it can be inferred that the local government in Kosovo does not have knowledge and vision with regard to the role and importance of migrations for local economic development.

	No. of pages	Reference to diaspora	Sponsor
Municipal Development Plan 2020-2028	95	0	Municipality of South Mitrovica
Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Mitrovica 2009 - 2025+	253	2	Municipal Assembly of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica
Municipal Development Plan (MDP) South Mitrovica 2019-2027	241	1	Municipality of South Mitrovica
Local Economic Development Strategy for Mitrovicë/Mitrovica 2014 - 2017	52	0	Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica
Vushtrri/Vučitrn Municipal Development Plan 2016-2024	221	1	Municipality of Vushtrri/Vučitrn
The Municipal Development Plan of Skenderaj/Srbica 2017-2025	120	1	Municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica
Municipal Development Plan of Glogoc/Glogovac (Draft) 2020-2028	181	1	Municipality of Glogoc/Glogovac
Local Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024	61	0	Municipality of Glogoc/Glogovac

<sup>32</sup> One of author's suggestions forwarded to the Municipality of Mitrovica after the public debate with the citizens for the drafter, the Director of Urbanism and the Mayor of the Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

Profile of the Municipal Development Plan 2020-2028	88	1	Municipality of Obiliq/Obilić
Local Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021	96	0	Municipality of Obiliq/Obilić

Table 1. Documents elaborated in the research (local level)

In the four strategic development documents of the municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, apart from the fact that the diaspora is not considered as a development potential, diaspora is only mentioned 3 times in 641 pages (all documents) and that in the parts dealing with issues pertaining to the national level.

The situation is the same with the strategic development documents of other municipalities (Table 1), which best explains the fact that local institutions have little knowledge of and fail to consider diaspora as a potential for development. This renders sensitization and training of local institutions indispensable in order to transform the diaspora into municipal development potential.

#### 4.5. Central level

The situation concerning the inclusion of diaspora in country's economic development is not better even in country's strategic documents. The three most important central level documents that regulate local economic development are:

1. Regional Development Strategy 2020-2030, which has three strategic objectives: (1) coordination of regional development policies; (2) balanced regional development and regions capable of inter-regional competition and (3) sustainable regional development based on natural, economic, cultural and human resources.

In this document, in the framework of development potential, diaspora is never considered as a development potential. To indicate that diaspora has been completely overlooked in the Strategy, it is enough to mention the fact that in this 59-page material diaspora is mentioned only once (pg. 36) and that *"the use of the knowledge of the diaspora about the development of regions"* and *"emigration of population as a risk"* once (pg. 33). This indicates the little knowledge of central institutions about diaspora's potential for general and local development.

	No. of pages	Sponsor
Regional Development Strategy 2020-2030	59	Ministry of Regional Development
Local Economic Development Strategy 2019-2023	44	Ministry of Local Government Administration
Local Self-Government Strategy 2016-2026	75	Ministry of Local Government Administration
Kosovo Development Strategy 2030	186	Government of Kosovo
Diaspora Strategy 2020-2024 (Draft)		Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora.
Migration Strategy 2021-2025	44	Ministry of Internal Affairs

Table 2. Documents elaborated in the research (central level)

2. *Local Economic Development Strategy 2019 - 2023* represents a strategic document based on the action plan that aims at drafting and coordinating local economic development policies.

The Strategy has four strategic objectives, which include: (1) increasing municipal financial sustainability; (2) attracting foreign investments; (3) strengthening local economy by investing in human capital and (4) utilization of resources at the service of sustainable economic development. As in the previous document, diaspora's potential is not considered as development potential. In page 44 of the document, the diaspora is not mentioned even once, including Strategic Objective No. 2: Attracting foreign investments.

3. *The Local Self-Government Strategy 2016 - 2026*, whose first objective (out of a total of 5 objectives) is to strengthen the role of municipalities as main actors in local economic development. As in the previous document, diaspora's potential is not considered as development potential. In page 75 of the document, diaspora is not mentioned even once.

Although 21 different institutions were included in the working group formed for the preparation of the strategy, the main stakeholders are missing, including: The Ministry of Diaspora and Strategic Investments (which was operational in this period), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as scientific institutions.

The two most important national level documents in which the development component related to migration should be included consist in many shortcomings. One of the main shortcomings of the *Kosovo Development Strategy*, as the main strategic document in the field of development, is related to the fact that it completely neglects migration as a means of development. In the same vein, the *Diaspora Strategy* focuses mainly on social, political and cultural inclusion of diaspora and does not offer policies that would encourage a greater engagement of diaspora in the socio-economic development of the country. This document primarily aims to preserve the ties between diaspora and Kosovo. As such, it mainly focuses on social, political and cultural inclusion of diaspora, failing to provide a platform for diaspora's contribution to economic development in Kosovo based on remittances and contribution to foreign direct investments (FDIs).<sup>33</sup>, although one of strategic objectives is diaspora's role in socio-economic development.

*Migration Strategy 2021 - 2025* is oriented towards making migration regular and safe and as such has a developmental approach. In this regard, measures have been foreseen to link migration and development further with a focus on using diaspora's potential for the purpose of economic development, by facilitating the transfer of remittances, promoting investments, developing human capital and engaging experts from diaspora (return of knowledge). Also, measures have been foreseen which consist in the development of policies and schemes aimed at managing migration for employment purposes and consolidating a migrant mobility system<sup>34</sup>.

Currently, Kosovo has several policies related to migration and diaspora, but those policies are fragmented and do not contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, the Government of Kosovo should review the current strategic policies and develop a new strategic document based on the concept of migration and development with the aim of maximizing diaspora's potential for Kosovo's economic growth<sup>35</sup>. Experts and academic institutions should play an important role in the preparation of strategic development documents, at both local and national levels.

In this case, central level institutions, but also those of the local level, in order to successfully implement the inclusion of migratory potential in strategic documents, must take into account the accomplishment of three main objectives.

Firstly, local authorities should integrate migration and diaspora into dynamic, planning and strategic development documents. This owing to the fact that migration is a cross-sectoral issue and has an impact on many sectors (economy, health, education, etc.), also affecting the

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<sup>33</sup> "Kosova: Migration Trends Require a New Strategic Approach". Balkan Policy Research Group (BPRG), September 2020, pg. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Migration Strategy 2021-2025. Ministry of Internal Affairs, pg. 20.

<sup>35</sup> "Kosova: Migration Trends Require a New Strategic Approach". Balkan Policy Research Group (BPRG), September 2020, pg. 34.



achievement of many SDGs. Accordingly, institutions at both levels of government should adopt measures to strengthen the management of migration and increase the impact on development.

Secondly, local authorities must encourage and promote connections with immigrants' territory of destination by using immigrants as a bridge between both territories, such as the case of twinning of municipalities or cooperation with professional associations in diaspora, especially given the scarce professional profiles in business and health (through study visits and transfer of knowledge). A higher degree of decentralization of competences in the field of immigration and development is required to deepen this cooperation.

And thirdly, local and national authorities should coordinate in preparing strategic programs and documents to provide room and opportunities for diaspora's investments in the homeland, by:

- enabling emigrants to express their potential;
- providing them with a favorable environment that will enable integration of emigration into local development policies;
- creating a new social reality for them in consistency and coherence with national migration policies, making available comprehensive services conducive to development, ensuring equal treatment for all, etc.

## 5. Role of local authorities in integration of diaspora

### 5.1. Creating conditions for successful reintegration

It is essential that local authorities create a favorable and inclusive environment by offering immigrants space to have their thoughts and ideas heard and to create frameworks to boost the trust between local government and immigrants, local government and immigrant associations, etc.

One of the factors with a direct bearing on efficient integration of diaspora into local development is the ability of local authorities to improve the conditions for integration, which requires taking several steps.

Firstly, the level of decentralization is important as it directly affects the competences of local authorities in cooperation with diaspora, which is important for their determination and implementation at the local level. Though not a precondition to set up integration mechanisms, decentralization is an added value, because it allows for a greater participation of all the local stakeholders, meaning that policy-making and implementation efforts better suit the local needs.

Secondly, regardless of the level of decentralization, the dialog mechanisms that exist between national and local authorities are key to developing adequate policies that are in line with national priorities and local realities that require coherence between national and local policies. In this case, an advisory center for emigration and development should be created at the local level, by allocating relevant budget and personnel to lead the activities in order to tap into immigrants' potential for local development in each municipality. All this must be followed by the inclusion of migration into local, regional and national development planning.

Thirdly, the implementation of Agenda 2030, in which migration is included through specific objectives, represents a unique opportunity to increase the role of local authorities in managing migration in relation to development. This is also enabled and included in the Quito Local Agenda, supported by the United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI)<sup>36</sup>. Moreover, the New Urban Agenda considers migration and migration management as key components for ensuring sustainable urban development. All these transform migrations into an element instrumental to achieving many (about 60% of) SDGs. This is also the reason why local institutions must necessarily create conditions for successful integration of migration into local development

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<sup>36</sup> Accessible at: <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2017/01/10/migration-an-overlooked-tool-for-local-development/>

policies, since local authorities have a very important role in achieving SDGs and implementing Agenda 2030.

## 5.2. Possibilities for cooperation with diaspora and use of its potential for local development

The daily practice serves to conclude that diaspora's interest in investing is much greater in terms of investments at local (place of birth and municipality of origin) rather than central level, conditioned by many factors, which means that even in cases when members of diaspora decide to invest in their country, in most cases it is an investment in their places of birth. 90% of the total number of investments by diaspora refers to investments in the place or region of birth. These data indicate great development opportunities available to the local government based on diaspora's potential for investment. Also, diaspora invests in new and qualified workforce, organizing training for employees and supplying companies with modern equipment. Local governments can encourage further investment in infrastructure by offering public-private partnerships and other forms of cooperation to diaspora investors. In addition to investments, diaspora's motive is not always profit, but also the desire to contribute to the development of the homeland, which is related to motives of an emotional nature, humanitarian actions, etc.

Diaspora investors are important because they have great potential to lobby with foreign companies to invest in Kosovo, the region or at the local level. Diaspora members often organize events targeting representatives of certain economic sectors and branches from home and host countries, which contributes to twinning and promotion of local economy in international market.

Another very important element is the necessity for local governments (at both central and local levels) to recognize and promote diaspora as an important partner for local economic development and sustainable development more broadly, as well as an important source for financing strategic projects at all levels.

In this regard, given insufficient development of capacities for cooperation with diaspora at the local level, with the aim of developing the capacities for cooperation with diaspora or entrusting this competence to the existing ones, it is necessary to start training employees who are involved in this activity. Also, it is necessary to develop a training program for employees of local and central self-government units, including a training program for those responsible for cooperation with the diaspora.

Among development partners of both central or local levels of the country, diaspora should be treated as one of the main development partners of the country of origin, especially in cases where diaspora represents about half of the population, such as the case of Kosovo, or even 1/3 or 1/4 of the population, as in the case of many municipalities of Kosovo. In this case, the use of good international practices, which are not few, would be an opportunity that should be used at both local and central levels. Today, governments in many countries of the world (especially those with a large diaspora, such as the case of Kosovo), are oriented towards the advancement of support policies for the diaspora with the aim of creating conditions and facilities to engage the diaspora in the development of the country through measures that relate to facilitation of remittance transfers, promotion of investments in the country of origin, the circulation of knowledge, etc.

The specific contribution of diaspora depends on the stakeholders involved, the pattern of their actions, the reasons why they are involved in the development process and on the nature of their activities. Sending remittances, transferring skills and knowledge and investing in and creating transnational links are mechanisms that contribute to the development of the country of origin.

The members of diaspora can get involved in development processes in the country of origin in different ways, starting from the country of destination, in case of permanent return to the country of origin, through temporary return or "virtual return" and circulation of knowledge (online platforms, online mentoring, etc.), which is being used increasingly as a practice nowadays.

In order to activate the potential of and establish cooperation with diaspora, it is first necessary to know the geographical distribution of the diaspora and the existing associations but also to conduct extensive consultations with the members of diaspora before embarking on specific forms of cooperation. In this regard, Kosovo has a good database for the distribution of emigration, data and cooperation with numerous associations of diaspora as well as good cooperation with numerous professional networks created by diaspora to provide for cooperation, coordination and exchange of experiences between the members of diaspora.

In order to deepen cooperation and increase diaspora's impact on local development, the local authorities must meet several conditions:

1. Mobilize in the inclusion of diaspora's ideas in strategic development documents,
2. Seek and provide room for diaspora's advice and instructions and include them in concrete municipal development programs, giving them an important developmental role,
3. Encourage consultations and receive advice from diaspora in planning, implementing and developing projects and boost its participation in policy-making process through advice from diaspora experts, inclusion of immigrants via representation in local level bodies, etc.,
4. Develop programs to increase information and awareness of immigrants (even at individual level) about the realities in their countries of origin, ongoing development projects and opportunities for their engagement,
5. Include immigrant communities in the planning of local policies and projects as very important tools for their (re)integration in the country of origin that guarantees the growth of their interests, respect and their rights,
6. Boost active participation of emigrant associations and communities in the policy-making process, especially in areas related to migration and development by local and central level institutions, etc.<sup>37</sup>.

### 5.3. The importance of remittances and investments for local development

In Kosovo, in the last decade, remittances have recorded a continuous growth, despite global economic, health, political and other crises. In 2021, 1,143.9 billion euros were received from diaspora, which, compared to 2008, marked an increase of 541.2 million euros or 88.9%.

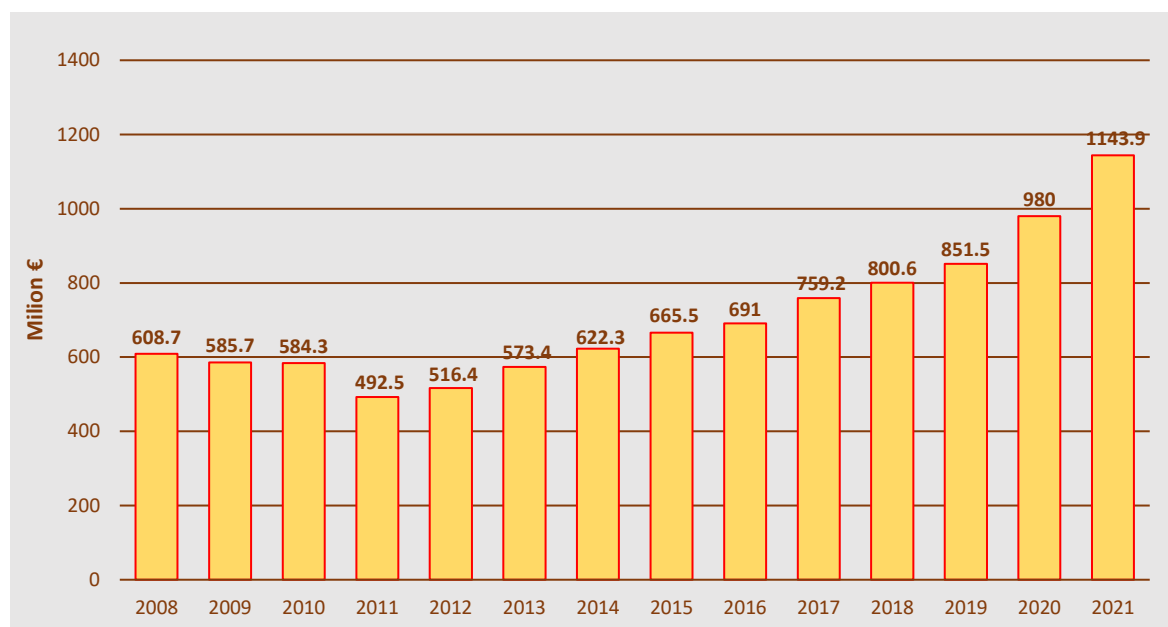


Chart 13. Remittances in Kosovo 2008 - 2021

<sup>37</sup> Introductory module on migration and local development, Joint Migration and development Initiative (JMDI), pp. 85-86, Accessible at: <https://returnandreintegration.iom.int/en/learning/e-courses/my-jmdi-e-toolbox-migration-and-local-development>

According to the data of the Central Bank of Kosovo, the total amount of remittances sent to Kosovo from diaspora from the declaration of independence in 2008 to 2021 is 9,874 billion euros.

However, this potential is still not used or channeled sufficiently into productive activities that would have chain economic effects. Half of cash remittances were used for consumption, 18% were used for house construction and repairs, 17% for health purposes, 15% for education and only a modest 3% was used for investment, which indicates that only a very small part of remittances received in cash is invested in production/entrepreneurial activities (less than 4%)<sup>38</sup>.

If Kosovo showed better performance in reducing poverty and ensuring a sustainable economic development, there would be no need to use remittances for consumption of food products, but would be concentrated in children's education and investments that would generate income and higher employment, given that even the recipients of remittances consider that the biggest investments should be made in opening businesses (36%) and in education (33%)<sup>39</sup>, which is very different compared to their real spending. This makes financial education of recipients of remittances necessary, in order to inform them so that they are spent in more productive sectors and in improving their welfare.

Adding the absence of encouraging policies, plans, strategies and other development documents and the failure to include the diaspora in these development plans and strategies at either central or local levels, remittances from diaspora cannot but have a strong positive impact on central and local economic development.

Although the remittance spending structure in Kosovo remains very unfavorable, as far as economic development is concerned, they play an important role in social stability, as they contribute directly to the reduction of poverty, turning remittances into an important element for achieving the SDGs. As a source that ensures stable social conditions, remittances also reduce the burden on the state budget.

Like many other processes, remittances also have negative effects, which can involve:

- the increase of inequalities and the creation of a gap between areas with a high participation of emigrants versus those with a lower participation (e.g. between municipalities, urban and rural areas, between rural settlements, etc.);
- the negative impact on the labor market by creating a "culture of dependency" (at family, municipal and state levels), which leads to the loss of incentives to look for a job;
- more reasons to emigrate, etc.

It is particularly important to note that remittances are private capital that a migrant sends to his family, but they should in no way replace the funds invested by the state or other funds.

Channeling remittances through formal channels, banks especially, remains challenging for Kosovo's economy, given that more than 80%<sup>40</sup> of remittances from diaspora are sent via money transfer agencies or in other ways, transfers which have high costs. Governmental institutions should, in cooperation with financial institutions, develop joint policies in order for service costs (sending remittances from diaspora) to be as favorable as possible, which would motivate the diaspora to contribute more by using formal channels, banks especially, to send remittances.

#### 5.4. Cooperation with diaspora – guidelines of municipal bodies for improving cooperation with diaspora

For all activities in terms of local development and migration and establishing cooperation, municipalities need to be more proactive in their positions towards diaspora, update their data on immigrants and consider what kind of cooperation and policy development they can use to enhance this cooperation.

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<sup>38</sup> "Strategy on Diaspora and Migration 2013-2018", Ministry of Diaspora, Pristina 2014, pg. 18.

<sup>39</sup> "Remittances to Kosovo - large sums, little discussion". GERMINE organization, March, Pristina 2022. pg. 9.

<sup>40</sup> "Remittances to Kosovo - large sums, little discussion". GERMINE organization, Pristina, March 2022. pg. 9.

In the following, some recommendations will be presented, which can help find ways to cooperate by supporting specific diaspora initiatives and by adjusting them to the local development needs through joint projects.

### 5.5. Activities aimed at strengthening cooperation with diaspora

In the framework its engagement for local development, diaspora represents one of the most important partners for local government, not only in terms of social-economic development, but also in the development of local infrastructure and many other developmental segments.

The fact that all Kosovo municipalities have their own diaspora makes it necessary for the local government to engage in establishing contacts and cooperating with diaspora, since diaspora has a great development potential. In this case, it should be emphasized that an important element is the size and characteristics of diaspora (number, emigration waves, level of education, employment, etc.), which vary, so cooperation mechanisms will also vary from a municipality to another.

In order to increase and strengthen the cooperation with diaspora, the local government should undertake several activities which, among others, could be:

1. Identification of main development priorities and specific projects with the aim of creating joint programs with diaspora (joint funds), innovative development practices (business incubators, groups, social enterprises, women networks, business services, training, etc.) and various community stakeholders - representatives of private sector, science, the public sector (hospitals, schools), international organizations, civil society organizations;
2. Data on diaspora - it is important to collect data on diaspora (size, geographical distribution, gender, age, education, skills, employment status, property status, contribution to trade, level of direct investment and remittances, affiliation to networks, groups, organizations and associations with development goals);
3. Identification of diaspora partners and their engagement - it is important to recognize existing diaspora initiatives - professional networks, associations, professional and business clubs, various associations - and find ways to connect them with the needs of the local community for development;
4. Identifying how and where diaspora can make a greater and specific contribution to development - it is necessary to classify the diaspora according to profession, qualifications and skills in order to involve them in solving the challenges identified in certain sectors - information technology, health, education, etc.;
5. Developing stimulating policies that will encourage diaspora to participate in local community development programs by providing easier access to loans and micro loans, better business registration requirements, remittance transfer conditions at low prices, etc.;
6. Identifying and addressing the main obstacles to cooperation with the diaspora, such as: lack of infrastructure, bureaucratic procedures, weak partnerships, corruption, lack of support from institutions, the banking system and their offers, lack of definition of competences between local and central governments, weak consular services, etc.;
7. Strengthening adequate direct (facilitation of taxes, funds, human resources, information campaigns, diaspora events and meetings in the homeland, scholarships, etc.) and indirect (infrastructure development, reduction of bureaucratic burdens, development and advancement of partnership, development of business stimulating instruments) stimulating measures and policies;
8. Development of local self-government capacities to work with the diaspora. In this case, the exchange of experiences with other countries that have established a good cooperation with their diaspora will also contribute to the development of this capacity and diaspora's connection with a wider development, migration policy and research context;

9. Ensuring policy coherence - it is important to ensure the coherence of diaspora policies at national, regional and local levels, but also the coherence of local policies with the policies of destination countries at all levels. It is also necessary to ensure the compatibility of diaspora policies with development policies;

10. The inclusion of diaspora representatives in the process of consultation during the development of planning documents and public policies - all these activities require the municipality to adopt a proactive approach to diaspora, while treating the contact and cooperation with diaspora as a of process of dialog between two parties<sup>41</sup>.

For the purpose of cooperation and success, it is important that the local government considers emigration and diaspora as a source and opportunity for development that should be included in local strategic documents. Also, cooperation is necessary, at both horizontal (local services, municipal administration departments, local government representatives, etc.) and vertical levels (cooperation with all institutions that have any connection with the diaspora, at either local or central levels).

Local governments can use a number of mechanisms to encourage diaspora investment. In addition to the classic investment of capital to open a business or buy shares of companies in the country of origin, local governments should also support public-private partnerships, which have not been used enough as an investment by the central government and at all by the local government. Public-private partnership is a long-term cooperation between a public and private partner (which can also be a representative from the diaspora with experience in a given field) to provide financing, construction, reconstruction, management or maintenance of infrastructure and other facilities with public importance and the provision of services of public importance.

Unfortunately, many of the above-mentioned activities aimed at strengthening cooperation with the diaspora in Kosovo are missing even at the central level, while at the local level they almost do not exist at all. Therefore, it is high time that central level institutions, and especially those of the local level, take measures towards the advancement of cooperation with the diaspora, which represents a very high development potential, so as to turn a "big opportunity, small benefit" situation into a "great opportunity, great benefit" one.

At the same time, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, central and local level institutions, should deal with investors from the local diaspora as a matter of priority, as opposed to practices so far, when they were treated like all other foreign investors.

The major objective of the Kosovo government remains to direct the Kosovo human capital to the development of the country, where the youth undoubtedly place a very important role. The fact that almost half of Kosovar diaspora is made up of young people (age group 15-39 make up 45.8%<sup>42</sup>) necessitates cooperation between these two categories so that they can exchange ideas and experiences. It is also important to use opportunities to connect young people with associations in diaspora and projects that can be implemented, where special attention should be paid to the intensification of cooperation between the young people and diaspora.

Guidelines for strengthening cooperation between the young people and associations from diaspora.	
✓	To conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework, policies and practice for the participation of youth representatives from diaspora in the decision-making process and development of youth policies.
✓	Identification and inclusion of young people from diaspora in local youth councils and National Council.
✓	Supporting the processes of establishing youth associations from diaspora.
✓	Inclusion of young people from diaspora in the processes of development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local youth plans.
✓	Supporting the development and implementation of projects related to encouraging cooperation with the young people from diaspora.

<sup>41</sup> Ionescu, D. "Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policymakers". IOM Migration Research Series 26. Geneva 2006.

<sup>42</sup> "Preliminary results of diaspora census", Ministry of Diaspora, Pristina 2017, pg 55.

✓	Development of a model to connect young entrepreneurs from diaspora with the young people from Kosovo or municipalities in order to exchange knowledge and advisory support.
✓	Encouraging the volunteering of young people from diaspora with the support of municipal youth offices and networking with peers from the homeland.
✓	Involvement of local academic networks/associations and connection with the young people from diaspora.
✓	Establishing cooperation and coordination of information programs and youth services at the local level with other programs, services and structures for the youth from diaspora.
✓	Providing content for young people in the media and adapting it to the identified needs of the young people and topics of interest to the young people from diaspora, with the exchange of information and promotion of cooperation with the young people from the country.
✓	Providing support for programs created and implemented by diaspora youth in collaboration with youth from the homeland in order to strengthen ties and promote and preserve the homeland tradition and culture.

*Table 3. Guidelines on strengthening cooperation between young people and associations from diaspora*

These recommendations indicate some of the forms of cooperation where the local level can contribute to the creation of concrete development initiatives by encouraging the cooperation of the young people from the diaspora with those in their homeland and local institutions.

#### 5.6. (Potential) local level institutions for cooperation with diaspora

The local government can regulate cooperation with diaspora in several ways, depending on the needs and the size of the diaspora and human and institutional resources. For cooperation with the diaspora, existing institutions or those that can be established can be responsible, such as:

1. Association of Kosovo Municipalities;
2. The Council (municipal assembly) for cooperation with diaspora;
3. Members of municipal assembly, responsible for cooperation with diaspora;
4. Advisors for cooperation with diaspora;
5. Deputy mayor/responsible for cooperation with diaspora;
6. Local Economic Development Office;
7. Office for Cooperation with Diaspora;
8. Appointment of another legal person who may be municipal staff or even new employment;
9. Association of several local government units;
10. Creation of a joint mechanism by several municipalities (at regional level) for cooperation and coordination of activities with the diaspora in respective municipalities.

#### 6. The main challenges for bringing the potential of migration to the service of development

The main challenge for bringing the potential of migration to the service of development at the central level, and especially at the local level, is:

- Insufficient knowledge of the topic of migration and development and their relation,
- Lack of local institutional capacities for the inclusion of diaspora in development processes,
- Complex (often unsuitable) administrative (lengthy processes to obtain permits and accompanying documentation), economic (poverty, corruption barriers, etc.) and political environment.

Lack of knowledge and institutional capacities for this important phenomenon in the long term is also followed by a non-inclusion and treatment thereof by the local administration in strategic

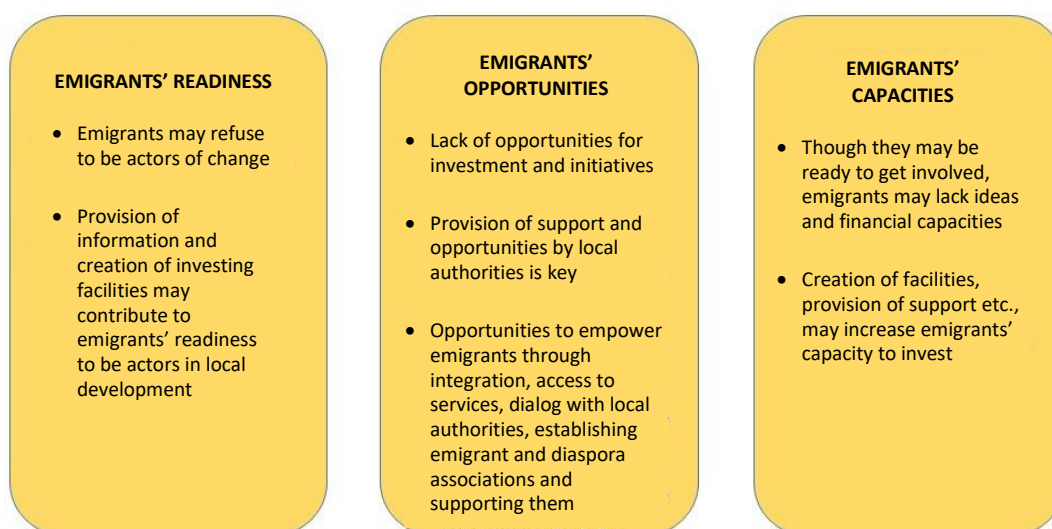
documents while planning relevant public policies. At the same time, there is a need for research and scientific analyses of potential inclusion of migration in development policies. In addition to financial contributions for social welfare, it is also necessary to focus on development opportunities offered by diaspora and diaspora's human and social capital, which should be paid the attention it deserves – by both researchers and policymakers.

Another challenge for bringing the potential of migration to the service of development is the lack of inter-institutional and inter-sectoral cooperation within and between different levels of government in Kosovo, which are involved in matters of diaspora and development in a way or another. Also, there is a lack of cooperation with the representatives of authorities and institutions of Kosovo diaspora host countries.

Communication with emigrants is insufficient, sporadic and informal, often at the request and initiative of the emigrants themselves. Emigrants are not involved in drafting strategic documents and monitoring their implementation, much less in cooperation with civil society and academia.

There are also difficulties in building trust and mobilizing emigrants, which is a result of several obstacles that their initiatives come across. Current (unfortunately frequent) practices point to administrative and institutional barriers to doing business that should be overcome through diaspora policies at the state level, which should then be reflected in local policies, where investments are made.

In addition to internal challenges, there are also challenges from emigrants themselves for their transformation into effective actors for local development that can be summarized in three groups of factors, namely: readiness/will, opportunity and capacity.



*Chart 14. The main challenges for bringing the potential of migration to the service of development*

In institutional terms, unfortunately, Kosovo has taken a step back with the dissolution of the Ministry of Diaspora and its merger with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, as it would be the backbone of all activities for cooperation with diaspora, including the incorporation of the concept of migration and development in sectoral policies in Kosovo and the establishment of a comprehensive coordinating mechanism for migration and development that would also improve inter-institutional cooperation at all levels of government, enabling a response to the main



challenges related to bringing the potential of migration to the service of development in Kosovo in general and at the local level in particular<sup>43</sup>.

### 6.1. Basic recommendations for the inclusion of the concept of migration in development policies

- To include the concept of migration in development policies in Kosovo, it is important that the diaspora is not only seen as a financial resource, but much more than that. It has to be seen as a human resource (education, training, skills and knowledge), financial and entrepreneurial resource (remittances, foreign direct investment, trade, savings, business investment, real estate, humanitarian aid, etc.), social resource (diaspora networks, associations, professional associations cooperating with the country of origin and the host country, friendly and family ties, connections with the community and local institutions, professional connections), emotional resource (engagement, nostalgia, goodwill) and local resource (knowledge of local context and special bond with the country of origin). These resources can make an important contribution to the human and economic development of the country.  
Local and central institutions in Kosovo, taking into account the fact that the person who plans to emigrate undergoes various stages and impact, also require different policies.
- Kosovo (and of course its integral units, the municipalities) has a great development potential in migration, so:
  - a much better connection between (local and central) development policies in the country and better harmonization of opportunities provided by diaspora should be aimed at,
  - Competent institutions should be encouraged to create and use migration statistics, but local and international capacities as well, including academic research that deals with migration and development, and to encourage and allocate financial resources for policies that include the concept of migration and development,
  - also, in case of development of new policies, the effects of the policies already implemented by local and international institutions should be assessed to ascertain which policies should be resumed (if any) or what should be improved or to develop and implement new policies to achieve a maximum effect.
- Strengthening institutional capacities at all government levels is very important for the inclusion of the concept of migration in development policies in Kosovo:
  - it is important to build capacities through training for civil servants on different fields of economic and social sectors and hence start the process of building capacities within the municipal administration on the concept of migration and development and its specifics related to specific sectors and policies,
  - capacity building through training necessarily requires the inclusion of the concept of migration and development in sectoral policies and should be developed together with diaspora representatives, using here the academic community in Kosovo, but also in diaspora;
  - the key role in coordinating this process should be played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, the Ministry of Internal Affairs - the Immigration Sector, but also the Ministry of Local Government, as the main institution for cooperation with the local level, etc. However, the distribution of tasks in many institutions presents a problem, because it requires good coordination of activities, which is unfortunately missing within the institutions of Kosovo;
  - the engagement of central institutions in implementing activities related to improving the knowledge of civil servants on the concept of migration and development.
- It is necessary to encourage the development of academic programs that study the phenomenon of migration in an interdisciplinary manner. The phenomenon of migration can also be seen from economic, sociological, cultural, psychological, legal, philosophical and political aspects, and each of these scientific fields is important for the study of the

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<sup>43</sup> "Recommendations for inclusion of the concept of migration and development, development and implementation of public policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Ministry of Refugee Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, pp. 22-23.  
Accessible at: <https://dijaspora.mhrr.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Preporuke-finalna-verzija-prelom-19jul2017.pdf>

phenomenon of migration and development. In this case, the right step would be to develop an undergraduate or postgraduate program related to migration and development.

- An important element for the creation, implementation and successful evaluation of public policies is the availability of the most accurate and comprehensive migration statistics.
  - through the process of consultations and cooperation, it is necessary to create opportunities to improve the existing cooperation in the context of migration and development.
  - the support of qualitative research from the academic sector and civil society in relation to the phenomenon of migration and development is extremely important and can be of great importance to be addressed and considered from both central and local levels, especially in the case of preparation of strategic development documents.
  - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora and the Ministry of Internal Affairs - Immigration Sector, in cooperation with other agencies and institutions (KAS), can play an important role in initiating a debate regarding the statistical monitoring of migration in the context of development.
- Establishing communication with the diaspora, namely its associations, should be one of the priorities of Kosovo local and central government institutions. Drawing up a plan for communication and cooperation with the diaspora in relation to clearly defined development activities at local and central levels, such as: Ministry of Diaspora, Ministry of Internal Affairs - Sector for Emigration and Refugees, but also other bodies, such as diplomatic and consular missions, should be strengthened with the clear aim of targeting the diaspora in order to exchange information and knowledge with emigrants.
- It is necessary to strengthen capacities and establish more efficient cooperation with civil society organizations in order to increase their commitment and dedication to the inclusion of the concept of migration in the development policies of Kosovo and municipalities, namely cooperation with diaspora.

## 7. Recommendations

Kosovo, at both national and local levels, does not use the opportunities offered by population migrations for development, especially for local development. With the aim of turning emigration into real potential for local development from *"very big opportunity, very little benefit"* to *"very big opportunity, very big benefit"*, it is necessary to do and have the following:

1. Emigration and data on emigration should be at the center of decision-making in country's development sectors and especially at the local level, where the creation of mechanisms for cooperation and coordination of activities with the diaspora is also necessary;
2. A guide on increasing cooperation between local government and diaspora and organizing trainings with relevant local institutions at the local level in order to get informed about the possibilities of cooperation with the diaspora and its involvement in local development;
3. Encouraging and facilitating policies for diaspora investment at both local and central levels - by not reducing emigration and diaspora only as an economic potential, but also as educational and health potential, etc. - must be developed, including introduction of local practices on these principles that would be beneficial to all the stakeholders;
4. Work on improving the image and identify and remove obstacles to cooperation with the diaspora, such as: infrastructure, bureaucratic procedures, corruption, lack of support networks, etc., promoting the development of general stimulating tools in the areas of competences of local authorities - reducing the price of construction land, granting the necessary permits, reducing the costs of services for certain investments, and the like. It is equally important to ensure the coherence of diaspora policies at national, regional and local levels;
5. Integrating migrations as an integral part of development plans and strategies, at the central level and the local level especially - receiving diaspora suggestions and ideas when preparing plans, strategies and other development documents at the local level. It is necessary to approach migration and diaspora as a development potential when preparing and drafting local policies, as well as future strategic documents which should be reflected in the relation between migration and development policies. In the preparation of strategic development documents, at the local (in particular) and central level, experts and academic institutions should also be included;
6. Use of good local and international practices in development of policies to improve cooperation with diaspora and their adjustment to local specifics, as well as promotion of good practices of inclusion of diaspora in local development, will greatly help improve cooperation, which should be promoted;  
It is particularly important that diaspora representatives are consulted at all stages of project development and that the diaspora is not treated as a source of investment, once local strategic documents are prepared and investment projects are identified and defined;
7. Improving migration statistics, especially those at the local level - using local resources for the creation of databases on migratory potential of municipalities. In this case, it is necessary to encourage the joint work of local stakeholders in systematic collection of data on local diaspora and its inclusion in official municipal databases, given the fact that recognition of diaspora's diversity can help identify various resources and members of diaspora. Events, such as diaspora days, organized in many municipalities of Kosovo, can be a good initial step in identifying diaspora resources;
8. Government institutions should, in cooperation with financial institutions, develop joint policies so that the cost of services (for sending remittances from diaspora) is as favorable as possible;
9. In all the steps aimed at increasing cooperation between the local levels and diaspora, special attention should be paid to the young people, who constitute the largest part and the greatest capacity for development;
10. This paper must be presented to as many decision-makers as possible, at all levels of government in Kosovo, so as to obtain institutional support for a systematic and comprehensive inclusion of the concept of migration in development policies in Kosovo, especially at the local level.

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