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Front cover photography: Cultivated terraces enable farming on steep slopes and give the landscape a special character, even if they are overgrown in some places, as the example from the Haloze shows (photograph: Lenart Štaut).
Fotografija na naslovnici: Kulturne terase omogočajo kmetovanje na strmih pobočjih in dajejo poseben pečat pokrajini, tudi če se ponekod deloma zaraščajo, kot kaže tudi primer iz Haloz (fotografija: Lenart Štaut).

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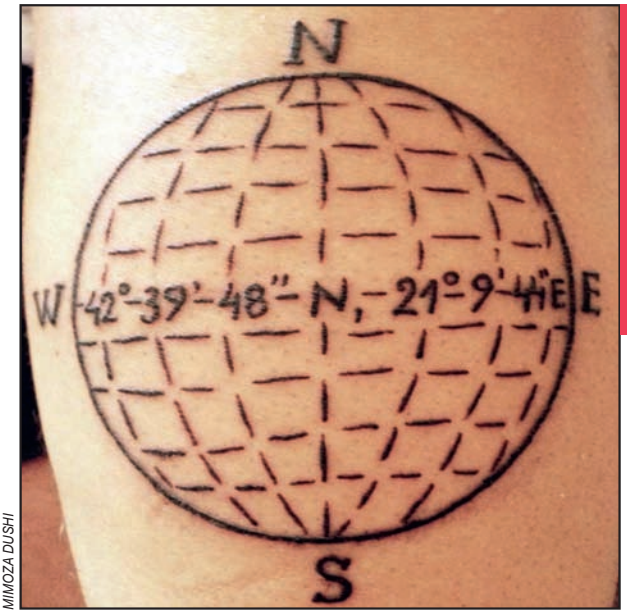
DIASPORA'S ROLE IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF KOSOVO

Mimoza Dushi, Albert Berila



MIMOZA DUSHI

Geographical roots in ink: Prishtina's coordinates as a symbol of belonging for second-generation migrants.

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Mimoza Dushi[1], Albert Berila[1]

Diaspora's role in their home country's economic development: The case of Kosovo

ABSTRACT: This study critically examines the challenges faced by the Kosovo Albanian diaspora in investing in their home country. Despite being a significant economic asset, particularly through substantial remittances that contribute to the national GDP, the diaspora encounters various barriers to effective investment. Based on 53 biographical interviews (2014–2016) with migrants in Switzerland and Germany, as well as 23 interviews with key informants, including officials, trade union representatives, and civil society actors, the study highlights the absence of adequate incentive packages to support diaspora driven investments in Kosovo. The research addresses both individual and policy levels, offering recommendations aimed at enhancing the impact of diaspora financial initiatives.

KEYWORDS: diaspora investments, Kosovo Albanian, remittances, economic development, policy recommendations, qualitative research, Kosovo

Vloga diaspore pri gospodarskem razvoju matične države: primer Kosova

POVZETEK: V članku so kritično proučeni izzivi albanske diaspore na Kosovu pri naložbah v matično državo. Čeprav je diaspora pomemben gospodarski vir zlasti zaradi obsežnih nakazil, ki pomembno prispevajo k nacionalnemu BDP, se spopada s številnimi ovirami, ki vplivajo na učinkovitost njenih naložb. Na podlagi 53 biografskih intervjujev (2014–2016) z migranti v Švici in Nemčiji ter 23 intervjujev s ključnimi deležniki, kot so uradniki, predstavniki sindikatov in akterji civilne družbe, je izpostavljeno pomanjkanje ustreznih paketov spodbud za podporo naložb diaspore na Kosovu. V članku sta obravnavani tako individualna kot politična raven, podana pa so tudi priporočila za povečanje učinka finančnih pobud diaspore.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: naložbe diaspore, kosovski Albanci, denarna nakazila, gospodarski razvoj, priporočila politiki, kvalitativna raziskava, Kosovo

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1 Introduction

Migration of Kosovo Albanians to Western Europe began in the 1960s, primarily involving low-skilled workers seeking temporary employment opportunities (Remiddi et al. 2019). In the following decades, especially during the 1980s, family reunification allowed many to secure residency in host countries. Political instability and economic hardship in Yugoslavia led to a significant outflow of migrants in 1989, including many educated young men from both rural and urban areas (Iseni 2013; United Nations … 2014; Gashi 2021). The 1998–99 war in Kosovo triggered a large-scale humanitarian crisis, resulting in a sharp increase in emigration, particularly of asylum seekers and refugees (Schwander-Sievers 2005; United Nations … 2014). After 2000, migration continued, driven by the pursuit of better employment, education, and living standards, with both highly educated and less-skilled individuals leaving the country (Meyer et al. 2012; King and Gëdeshi 2024).

Despite this long history and large scale of migration, accurate data on the Kosovo Albanian diaspora remains limited. The diaspora is relatively new and less institutionalised, and Kosovo's changing political status has complicated its statistical visibility. Before independence in 2008, Kosovo Albanians were recorded in host country alongside with other ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia, making it difficult to isolate data specific to them. The first migration report by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2014) in 2014 relied on data from other countries, which often failed to distinguish between Albanians from Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, or Montenegro. As a result, reliable demographic and socio-economic profiles, such as age, gender, and reasons for migration, are still lacking. Estimates suggest that between 885,000 (Ministry of … 2021) and one million Kosovo Albanians live abroad (Gashi 2021; King and Gëdeshi 2024), accounting for roughly one-third to one-half of the population born in Kosovo (United Nations … 2014). Most reside in Germany and Switzerland (58.1%), followed by Italy, Slovenia, and Austria (20%), with around 4% living in the United States (Kosovo Agency … 2014; Ministry … 2019).

While the economic contributions of the diaspora, particularly through remittances, have been widely acknowledged (Mustafa et al. 2007), their potential to contribute more broadly to Kosovo's development remains underutilized. In many countries, diasporas are actively engaged as investors, entrepreneurs, and sources of knowledge transfer (Brinkerhoff 2008). However, in Kosovo, this potential has not been effectively tapped (Gashi et al. 2013). While remittances continue to play an important role in household consumption, only 3.9% are directed toward business investment, considerably below the regional average of 7.93%. In comparison, Montenegro leads with 18.26%, while Albania and Serbia report 7.9% and 7.2%, respectively (United Nations … 2012a; Topxhiu and Krasniqi 2017). These differences are largely attributed to more robust diaspora investment policies, including legal incentives and institutional outreach programs, which are largely absent in Kosovo.

Although the Government of Kosovo has adopted three National Migration Strategies between 2013 and 2025, they have not resulted in significant engagement of the diaspora, particularly in economic development. Unlike its regional neighbors, Kosovo does not provide a specific legal or policy framework to facilitate diaspora investment, classifying diaspora as the same as any foreign investor. This lack of targeted measures, combined with weak institutional coordination and limited communication, continues to discourage diaspora members from investing or sharing their expertise (Lee et al. 2011; Zhu et al. 2012). This article addresses these gaps by asking: how Kosovo can improve its migration policies to better attract and support diaspora investments? Through an analysis of migration policy documents and biographical interviews with members of the diaspora and key informants, the article identifies key challenges and offers policy recommendations to better connect Kosovo with its global population and unlock its diaspora's full potential in national development.

1.1 Diaspora financial, social and human capital

The Kosovo Albanian diaspora has played an important role in the country's development, especially through financial, social, and human capital. One of the most visible forms of support is through remittances. According to the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (Figure 1), migrants have sent over 500 million euros every year since 2007, and in 2021, this amount exceeded one billion euros (Central Bank … 2024). Between 2013 and 2023, remittances made up around 14–19% of Kosovo's GDP, placing the country among the top 15 recipients of remittances in the world relative to its economic size (Remiddi et al. 2019; World

Bank 2023). This financial support is mainly driven by strong emotional and family ties that migrants maintain with their home country. According to United Nations Development Programme (2012a), about 40% of remittances directly support the total household income of families in Kosovo.

A key concern surrounding remittances is their utilisation. Rather than being directed toward productive investment, remittances in Kosovo have primarily served to alleviate poverty and support household welfare. A survey by the Mustafa et al. (2007) found that 47% of remittances are spent on daily consumption, 18% on building or repairing houses, 17% on healthcare, 15% on education, and only 3% are used for business activities. These patterns were later confirmed by the World Bank (2011) and United Nations Development Programme (2012b), underscoring that most remittances serve short-term household needs rather than long-term economic growth. More recent studies reaffirm this trend, noting that remittances continue to be channeled mainly into consumption, housing repairs, healthcare, and education, with limited contribution to productive investments (United Nations … 2014; Gashi 2021). In terms of origin, the largest share of remittances comes from Germany (39.2%), followed by Switzerland (18.9%), the United States (7.2%), Austria (4.4%), Italy (4.2%), and France (3.9%) (Ministry of … 2021).

Besides remittances, the diaspora has contributed through charitable donations and collective support, especially during difficult periods. In the 1990s, Albanian communities in Europe and the United States worked hard to raise awareness about human rights violations in Kosovo (Koinova 2010; Koinova 2017; Remiddi et al. 2019). Many migrants donated 3% of their monthly income to Kosovo-related causes, a system that began in Switzerland. As the situation worsened in 1998–1999, their efforts shifted toward international lobbying and advocacy. One example is the creation of the »Homeland Calling« (alb. *Vendlindja Thërret*) initiative, which opened an office in New York (U.S.) to support international cooperation and attention for Kosovo (Ragaru and Dymi 2004; Hockenos 2018). These actions showed the diaspora's strong and lasting dedication to their homeland.

In recent years, the diaspora has become more active in foreign direct investment (FDI). While total FDI accounts for about 6.64% of Kosovo's GDP (Topxhiu and Krasniqi 2017), only part of it comes from the diaspora. Estimates suggest that 26% originates from Germany, 24% from Switzerland, and 12.5% from

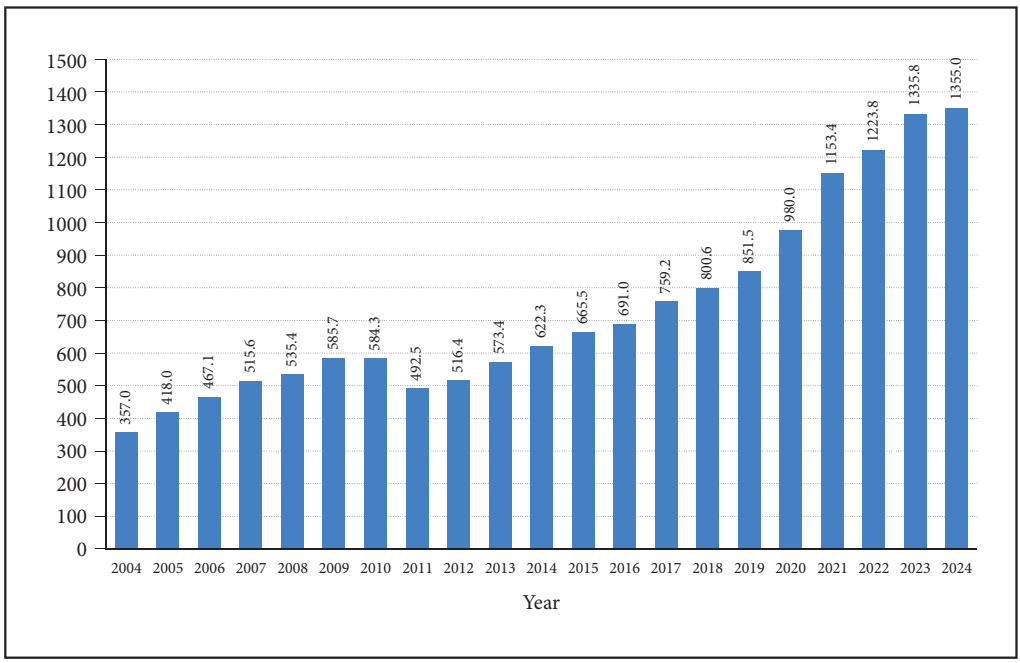


Figure 1: Remittances in Kosovo 2004–2024 (in millions) (Central Bank . . . 2024).

the U.S., countries with large Kosovo Albanian communities (Germin 2023). Although diaspora-led FDI represents just a share of the total, it plays an important role in creating jobs, improving infrastructure, and linking Kosovo to international markets. With their global experience and networks, diaspora investors are well placed to bring in new knowledge and attract further investment.

Members of the diaspora are often more willing to take financial risks than domestic investors. This pattern is often explained by the idea of »home bias,« where decisions are based on emotional ties and personal attachment to Kosovo, rather than financial advice or expert analysis (Terrazas 2010). In addition to their money, diaspora members bring modern important skills, experiences, and networks, which can support economic development, knowledge exchange, and long-term cooperation between Kosovo and the countries where its diaspora lives (Dwyer 2010; Grabowska et al. 2017).

In short, the Kosovo diaspora contributes in many ways, through remittances, donations, and investments, and remains a key partner for Kosovo's future (Germin 2023). However, to better use this potential, Kosovo needs to create a more supportive environment. Clearer policies, greater incentives, and stronger institutions are necessary to encourage the diaspora to stay involved and to invest in the long-term development of the country (Krasniqi 2022).

1.2 Kosovo's policies on migration

Kosovo has made efforts to engage its diaspora through strategic and institutional initiatives. The first major step was the Strategy for Diaspora and Migration 2013–2018**,** seen as a continuation of the Law on Diaspora**,** aiming to protect diaspora rights, preserve cultural identity, and strengthen partnerships. Following this, two more strategies were adopted: the 2019–2023 Strategy for Diaspora and Migration and the 2021–2025 Strategy for Migration**,** reflecting the continued importance of the diaspora to Kosovo's development.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Diaspora**,** established in 2011, was a unique initiative among neighboring countries (Williams 2018). However, after government restructuring in 2019, it was merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a move that was widely criticized for weakening diaspora representation (Gashi 2021). Within this ministry, the Department for Diaspora operates across communication, culture, youth, sports, and education. Additionally, the Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA) under the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship, and Trade was created to attract investments, including from diaspora.

Despite these efforts, major gaps remain. Policies still treat diaspora investors the same as foreign investors, with no special incentives or support mechanisms effectively implemented. Much of the literature on migration and labor migration confirm that Kosovo lacks a dedicated registry for diaspora investments and possesses limited data on migrant profiles or labor market needs (Gashi 2021; King and Gëdeshi 2024). Earlier attempts by the Ministry of Diaspora to register the diaspora were incomplete, limiting the government's ability to connect with its expatriate talent and address brain drain.

Moreover, diaspora investors face many challenges**:** lack of trust in institutions, corruption, complex bureaucracy, unclear legislation, infrastructure problems, and financial insecurity (Hoxha 2009; Gashi et al. 2013). While the need for a »stimulus package« for diaspora investors has been acknowledged, it has not been implemented. Without stronger, more targeted policies and reliable information systems, Kosovo will continue to struggle to fully benefit from the diaspora's economic potential (Brinkerhoff 2012).

2 Research methodology

To empirically examine the challenges and opportunities related to diaspora engagement and investment, the study draws on 53 in-depth interviews conducted between 2014 and 2016 with Kosovo Albanian migrants: 27 in Germany and 26 in Switzerland (Figure 2). These interviews focused on their migration experiences, integration into the host countries, and ongoing connections with Kosovo. Fieldwork was conducted in three main locations: Kosovo (during migrants' return visits in winter and summer), Munich (Germany), and Zurich (Switzerland), which all host significant Kosovo Albanian communities.

To gain deeper insight into national policies and institutional frameworks shaping migration and diaspora engagement, we also carried out 23 interviews with key informants, 14 with policymakers and nine with representatives from trade unions, civil society organizations, NGOs, and academic institutions.

19 interviews were conducted in Kosovo with officials from government institutions, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and organizations facilitating student employment in Germany. The remaining four interviews were conducted in Germany and Switzerland with Kosovar diplomatic staff and representatives from local trade unions and civil society. These key informant perspectives helped us better understand policy gaps, implementation challenges, and institutional efforts related to diaspora engagement.

Our research used a biographical approach (Iosifides and Sporton 2009) and semi-structured interviews (Bogataj and Krč 2023), which are well-suited for exploring complex migration experiences. This method allowed us to reconstruct individual migration trajectories and connect them to broader socio-economic and political contexts.

The interviews were structured into three parts. First, participants shared their life stories, focusing on key personal experiences. Second, they reflected on their migration and settlement in the host countries, with particular emphasis on labor market integration. Lastly, we explored the impact of their legal status, well-being, and opportunities abroad on their ties to Kosovo and future plans. While many participants discussed their transnational connections unprompted, we also asked specific questions about family responsibilities, financial support, and their views on investing in Kosovo.

To build trust and ensure that participants felt comfortable sharing their stories (Knox and Burkard 2009), each interview began with an informal discussion about the study's purpose. All interviews were conducted in Albanian, the participants' native language, to support clearer and more emotionally accurate communication. Ethical standards were strictly followed, including informed consent, full anonymity, and confidentiality. Interview settings were chosen by participants and included homes, offices, or quiet cafés to ensure a relaxed atmosphere. We used snowball sampling (Mack et al. 2005; Erdal and Ezzati 2014; Uršič and Tamano 2019), which proved effective in reaching a diverse sample of migrants in both countries. Participants were assured that their information would remain confidential, as outlined in the signed consent forms. Therefore, participants are identified by codes, as shown in Table 1.

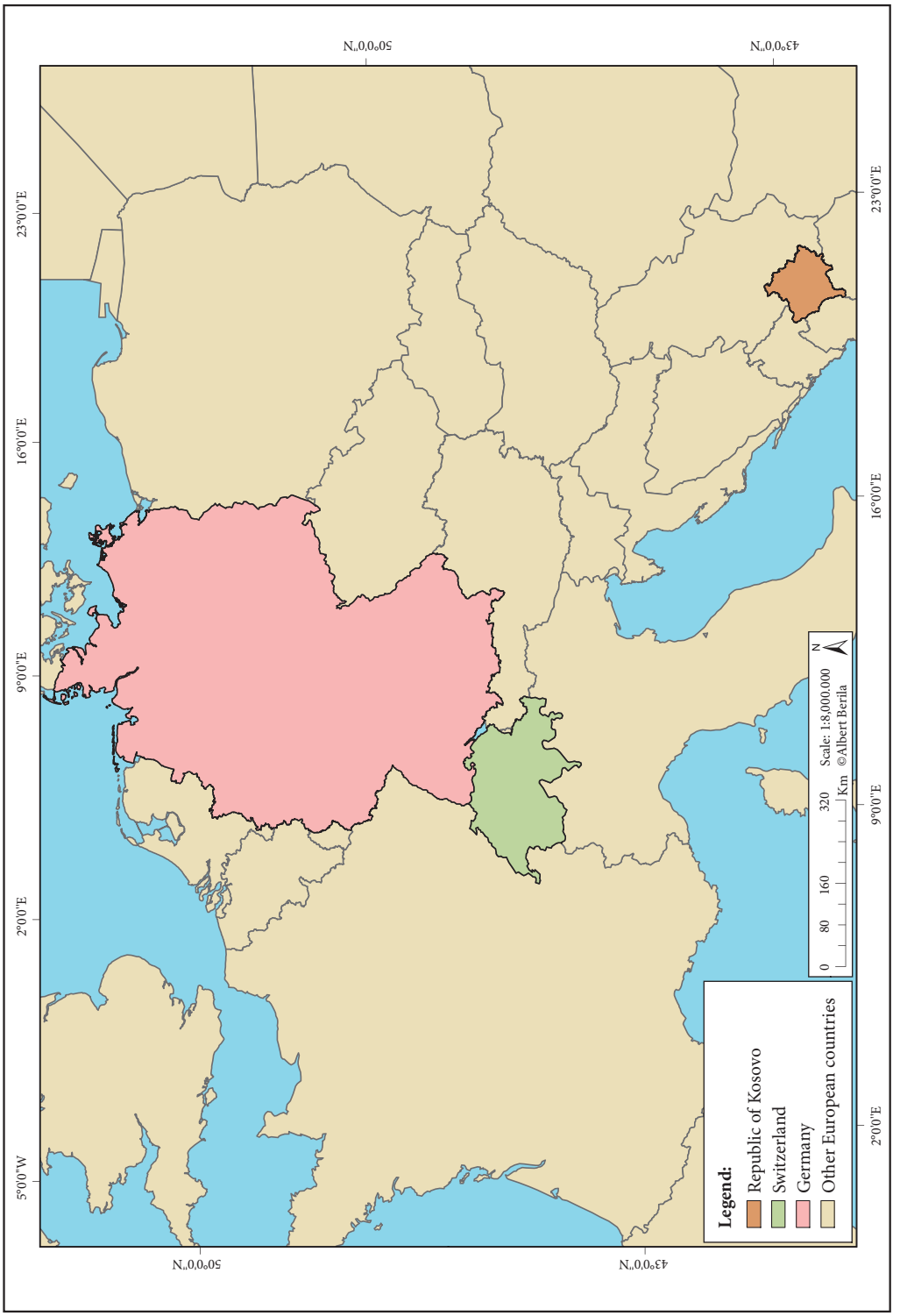
The interviews ranged from one to three hours and were recorded (with permission) and transcribed in their original language. We analyzed the transcripts using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA, starting with version 14 and later using version 24. Thematic analysis was applied, guided by grounded theory (Birks and Mills 2015). The coding process followed three stages: first, descriptive coding to identify general themes; second, initial coding to refine and expand these themes; and third, focused coding to organize findings and deepen interpretation (Jacques 2021).

Participants included individuals who had entered their host countries through different channels, mainly tourist visas, family reunification, or irregular entry, followed by asylum claims. By the time of the interviews, all participants had clarified their legal status. 15.1% had completed primary education, 45.3% secondary education, and the rest held associate or university degrees. Employment was distributed across different sectors: 35.8% worked in services and administration, 22.6% in manufacturing, 11.3% in construction, and 28% in other professions. The majority of respondents were men (79.2%), reflecting a gendered pattern in Kosovo's labor migration, while women (20.8%) had primarily migrated through family reunification.

Table 1: List of interviewees.

Type	Codes (number of interviewees)
Migrant in Germany Migrant in Switzerland	MG1-MG27 MS1-MS26
Policy maker (Kosovo and Switzerland) (Ministries of: Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Diaspora, Labour, Trade and Industry, Community and returnees, Kosovo Police)	PMK1-PMK12; PMS1-PMS2
Trade Union (BSPK Kosovo, DGB Germany and UNIA Switzerland)	TUK, TUG, TUS
Civil society (Kosovo and Germany)	CSK1, CSG1
NGO and researchers	N1-N4

Figure 2: Map of the study area. ► p. 83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3 Results and discussion

This section presents the key findings from interviews with Kosovo Albanian migrants and key informants, highlighting their contributions to their homeland and the structural barriers they face when translating interest into meaningful investment. While the diaspora demonstrates strong emotional and financial commitment to Kosovo, institutional gaps continue to limit their engagement within national development.

3.1 Unrealized potential: Barriers to diaspora investment

Despite their strong willingness and financial capacity to contribute, many members of the Kosovo diaspora encounter serious barriers to meaningful economic engagement. The interview data reveal a recurring frustration: that institutional shortcomings, lack of transparency, and weak coordination continue to hinder investment efforts.

One informant from Switzerland (MS12) noted that institutional support is a major obstacle. His comments reflect a broader concern: that even when diaspora members have the capital and willingness to invest, a lack of streamlined procedures and effective communication discourages them from doing so. In many cases, these frustrations lead to mistrust in Kosovo's public institutions.

A major issue is the diaspora's limited awareness of the investment environment in Kosovo. Despite genuine interest, many potential investors lack access to clear information about opportunities, procedures, and regulations. A study by Gashi et al. (2013) found that 56% of surveyed diaspora members did not know where or how to invest. Nevertheless, 42% expressed strong interest, and 52% said they would consider investing – only 6% were not interested.

Frustrations with this lack of institutional support are strongly reflected in the words of diaspora members. One migrant (MS15) noted: »*It must be the investments of migrants in Kosovo. We don't feel just an obligation. We have the desire and obligation to build our country. These are things that remain*.«

Another (MG6) expressed disappointment after returning to Kosovo with the goal of contributing: »*We went to Germany to make money fast and to return and invest in Kosovo. To do something in Kosovo... When I decided to return to Kosovo, after graduating there with German investment from the neurology hospital (migrant workplace), I thought I would attract attention, that doctors from Germany have invested in Kosovo. This is how we started, but in the first months, we went through a lot of difficulties. We did not have any work at all... I mean, Kosovo is a rough market because we do not find support as foreign investors. I am Kosovar, but I do not find the support of the locals. They do not see us as collaborators but as competitors.*«

These concerns were echoed by another informant (MG22) who emphasized three core concerns:

1) the financial capacity of the diaspora:
   »*Do you know how much remittance money is sent to Kosovo? Officially, it's over 700 million euros a year. But in reality, it's closer to 3 billion. That's nearly double Kosovo's national budget. And yet, the government doesn't take it seriously.*«
2) the need for supportive policies: »*Everything we asked for, they (referring to potential German investors) have been able to fulfil us. Look, we cannot help the Germans much; they can help us more. Although I still do not understand why the economy of Kosovo or the people, for example, did not tell me what we should do to make the most of that opportunity? What can we do to attract investors? But a very bad game has been played; we are too late with different policies …*«
3) the urgency to act before interest fades: »*There must be a reform in Kosovo for things to change and for the diaspora to have greater opportunities to contribute. This spirit (readiness) must be used, which will last for a maximum of 20 years. The diaspora, which today is very interested in investing in Kosovo, will lose interest in the future. Look, my child will not have the same feeling for Kosovo.*«

Institutional shortcomings were further emphasized by interviewees, such as MG7 and MS12, who pointed to the lack of institutional support as a critical obstacle. Both described how complex procedures, limited facilitation services, and bureaucratic inefficiencies made investing in Kosovo less attractive. Their experiences reflect a broader issue of weak coordination, inadequate information flow, and a lack of trust in public institutions, all of which discourage sustained diaspora engagement.

These individual accounts highlight a broader dynamic. Kosovo's diaspora contributes far more than just remittances. In addition to monetary transfers, they offer valuable knowledge, including human capital, innovative ideas, business models, technological skills, and entrepreneurial spirit, all of which are vital

for Kosovo's development. In other words, the diaspora's impact extends beyond remittances and plays a key role in national development (Wei and Balasubramanyam 2006; Riddle et al. 2010; Grabowska et al. 2017).

Members of the diaspora often possess deep knowledge of local markets and maintain strong cultural and social ties with their communities. At the same time, they have experience and networks in international business environments. This dual expertise makes them well-positioned to promote entrepreneurship by blending global and local perspectives (Vaaler 2011; Xavier et al. 2013). Their contributions also support peacekeeping, knowledge transfer, and democratic empowerment (Bush 2008; Gibson and McKenzie 2012). Previous studies confirm a positive link between return migration and business ownership, although many diaspora-owned business remain small and informal (Nicholson 2001; Kilic et al. 2009).

Without stronger, more targeted policies and reliable information systems, Kosovo will continue to struggle fully benefit from the diaspora's economic potential (Brinkerhoff 2008; Riddle et al. 2010). The government must act to remove barriers and enable conditions that turn this potential into a lasting force for national development.

3.2 Institutional challenges and the need for reform

Key informants from government institutions echoed the concerns raised by migrants. Although Kosovo has adopted several strategic documents and established relevant agencies like KIESA and the Department for Diaspora, implementation has been weak. A policymaker (PMK4) confirmed that, while a »stimulus package« for diaspora investment has been identified as a policy priority, no such measure has been implemented to date.

Kosovo also lacks a centralized database of diaspora investors. Previous attempts to register the diaspora have failed to produce comprehensive or usable data (Gashi 2021). Key informants from the Ministry of Labor (PMK7), KIESA (PMK9) and NGO (N3) all highlighted the absence of accurate statistics on diaspora investments, noting that institutional coordination is poor and information-sharing between agencies is limited. As a result, strategic planning and targeted outreach efforts are significantly hindered. The actual scale of diaspora investment remains unclear but is widely believed to fall short of its full potential.

One major issue is that diaspora investors are treated the same as any foreign investor. There are no tailored incentives, advisory services, or streamlined procedures to reflect their unique position. This approach is a missed opportunity, particularly given the diaspora's emotional, cultural, and often long-term commitment to Kosovo.

Beyond these policy gaps, broader structural challenges persist. Civil society organisations and international reports highlight broader challenges in the investment climate. Corruption, weak infrastructure, legal uncertainties, and a lack of trust in public institutions continue to deter engagement. As one NGO representative (N3) noted: »*The diaspora has both expertise and capital, but without a supportive environment, they won't invest. What's needed are policies that actively encourage and facilitate their involvement.*«

This sentiment was mentioned by a key informant from the Institute for Management and Development (SKC1) explained: »*There are no government policies oriented toward diaspora needs, and there is a lack of statistics on how many businessmen from the diaspora have invested in Kosovo. Despite some investments from the diaspora resulting in disappointment due to the lack of formal information channels, the state does not provide any facilities for such initiatives.*«

While institutions like the RiInvest Institute and KIESA have made efforts to promote investment, they face similar obstacles. According to key informants (PMK9), there is still no dedicated registry of diaspora investors or a clear strategy for attracting and supporting them.

Although the diaspora shows strong interest and capacity to contribute, Kosovo's institutional weaknesses and lack of focused policy measures continue to limit meaningful investment. Without reforms, the potential of the diaspora will remain largely unrealized.

3.3 Moving forward: What can the government do?

Kosovo must implement targeted reforms to better leverage diaspora investment and engagement. Interview findings (e.g., PMK4, SKC1) confirm strong interest among diaspora members in contributing to national development, yet this willingness is undermined by weak institutional support, administrative barriers,

and limited access to information. A transparent and supportive environment is essential to transform this interest into long-term development partnerships.

These challenges are not unique to Kosovo. Similar obstacles are observed in other countries. Sinatti and Horst (2015) highlight that many governments engage diasporas symbolically, without offering meaningful support. Likewise, Page and Mercer (2012) argue that diaspora policies often fail when structural constraints, such as institutional inefficiencies and low trust, are overlooked. These examples underscore the importance of inclusive policymaking and comprehensive institutional reform.

Kosovo should move beyond a remittance-focused approach and view the diaspora as a strategic development partner. This requires clear legal frameworks, targeted incentives, streamlined procedures, and improved inter-institutional coordination. Establishing a reliable monitoring system and actively involving diaspora representatives in policymaking could help Kosovo align with international best practices and fully harness its diaspora's potential for sustainable development.

4 Conclusion

This study highlights the valuable yet underutilized role of the Kosovo Albanian diaspora in national development. Migrants from Kosovo, particularly in Western Europe, express a strong willingness to invest in their home country, not only financially, but also through the transfer of knowledge, networks, and skills. Their motivations are driven not only by economic opportunity but also by deep emotional and cultural ties. Despite this enthusiasm, their engagement is hindered by institutional and structural challenges, including the absence of dedicated incentive schemes, fragmented coordination among state actors, limited access to reliable information, and a general mistrust in government institutions. These barriers make it difficult for diaspora members to contribute effectively and sustainably, often leaving their potential untapped.

The findings of this study underscore that diaspora investment should not be treated merely as foreign capital but as a form of socio-economic partnership with long-term national benefits. Migrants' demands are clear: their contributions must be acknowledged as part of the national development agenda, and they should be offered tailored support mechanisms such as tax incentives, simplified procedures, and access to advisory services. Policymakers must recognize the urgency of creating a more enabling environment, as the current generation of diaspora members retains a strong sense of identity and desire to contribute, while future generations, more deeply rooted in host societies, may not maintain the same level of attachment.

Government institutions must respond with coherent and integrated reforms, including improved data collection on diaspora engagement, streamlined communication across agencies, and structured dialogue with diaspora representatives. A long-term strategy should focus on building trust, reducing administrative and legal hurdles, and creating clear pathways for investment and knowledge transfer. Institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, must take a more proactive role in coordinating efforts, promoting successful diaspora-led projects, and offering consistent support throughout the investment process.

Diaspora engagement offers more than capital: it could serve a bridge between global expertise and local development, bringing innovation, job creation, and broader international networks to Kosovo. By addressing the gaps identified in this study and committing to concrete policy action, Kosovo can transform its engagement with its diaspora from a symbolic relationship into active partnership in its economic and social advancement. Failing to act risks losing not only financial resources but also the trust and goodwill of a highly motivated and capable global community.

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