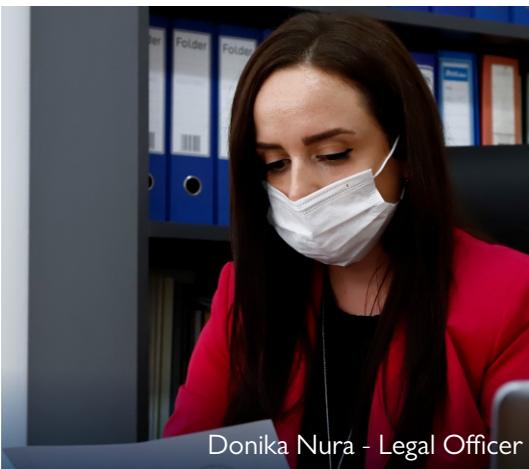




Interview with: **DONIKA NURA** by: **EDONA MËZIU**

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I consider myself lucky to have worked with Ms. Donika Nura in one of the mobile offices of the Free Legal Aid Agency (FLAA) in Skenderaj. Since I started working as an intern at this Agency as a Justice Matters intern, last year, I was better informed about the very valuable work done by its officials and the very important role of the Agency in providing access to justice for all citizens.



Donika Nura - Legal Officer

Also, this period has helped me a lot to expand my professional knowledge in practical terms and develop communication skills. This whole experience has been very beneficial in helping me gain work ethic while working in a dynamic work environment. I hope others will have the opportunity of working with such inspiring people, who encourage you to grow professionally and give the maximum contribution to your community. Below, through a short interview with Donika Nura, you will learn more about her experience and impact.

1. Why did you decide to study at the Faculty of Law?

I can't say that I have always wanted to become a lawyer, because I had other professions in mind. However, towards the end of primary school, after I started reading more about justice, I decided to study law.

2. How much has working as an official at FLAA helped you become more communicative with people?

Since working as a free legal aid officer I have had the chance to work directly with clients. This has helped me a lot to become more communicative with people and to better understand people's justice needs.

3. What are the challenges that accompany your work as an official in the mobile office in Skenderaj?

Like any job, working as a legal aid officer at FLAA has its challenges. One of the challenges we as an office face, is the uncertainty regarding the sustainability of the operations of our office since the office is opened with donor support. This is having negative effects both on me and my clients.

4. In which legal procedure is free legal aid provided the most?

Free legal aid is provided in four legal areas: administrative, civil, criminal, and minor offenses. The majority of our cases are from the administrative field, which is mainly related to social assistance and pension.



Donika and Edona at the mobile office in Skenderaj

5. How is it working with an intern in the office?

I also think it's a great opportunity that USAID's Justice Matters is offering graduate students the opportunity to get involved and take the first step towards professional advancement. I think it is a very beneficial opportunity as it gives a better understanding of the profession, citizens' justice needs, and what contribution you can give.

6. People with various problems come to seek free legal aid. How much does this affect your emotional state on a daily basis?

One thing that accompanies us during our work is emotions because all clients come to the office with a certain problem. It happens that they affect me as well, but I do my best in trying not to associate the emotions with work. However, in many cases this is inevitable.

7. In addition to excellent communication with your colleagues from other offices and the opportunity to exchange experiences, you also attended different trainings. How much have these trainings helped you to improve your work and expand professional knowledge?

Yes, I have excellent communication with all colleagues from other offices, which helps us to consult with each other on various work-related issues. I am also very grateful for the training organized by FLAA, with the support of various donors, because we benefit a lot from the knowledge and experiences of the people who train us, such as judges, lawyers, prosecutors.

8. Do you prefer working from home or working in the office?

Undoubtedly, office work. Considering the nature of our job, it is more effective when we work from the office. I think this is the case with our clients too.

9. How difficult has it been to communicate with clients and work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Since our work is directly related to contact with clients and given the category of people who are beneficiaries of free legal aid, which in most cases do not have access to the Internet, online work has been very challenging during pandemics. However, we have provided legal services through email and over the phone.

10. "Which is lawyer's office?" is a question that is often heard in the CSW (Center for Social Work) corridor. Is lawyering part of your plans for the future?

In fact, working as a legal aid officer is similar to being a lawyer. My goal is to become part of the judiciary in the future.

11. Is there anything you don't like about the work you do?

No, there is nothing I don't like about the job I do. Among other things, working as a legal aid official really gives you spiritual satisfaction, especially having in mind the category of people you are able to help.

12. In your opinion, what should be done to make citizens more aware of the existence of the Agency?

In order for citizens to be more informed about free legal aid, various awareness campaigns should be done organized, especially in the cities where there are offices for free legal aid. This can be done through various TV commercials, meetings with institutional actors, and direct contact with potential legal aid clients.

About this interview: This interview was conducted by Justice Matters interns as part of a "listening" project: Interview with legal professionals. Justice Matters Activity is a three-year project to improve access to justice for all, inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, by strengthening the institutions, actors and processes for providing legal services and legal information.