



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans August 2018

ORIENTING VOCATIONAL SKILLS TOWARDS THE JOB MARKET



Students and teacher at the Trade School in Vlora, Albania, before a practical cooking lesson. © SDC

Albania's economic and employment growth is hampered by a shortage in quality technical skills. In response to this, the government of Albania wants to improve vocational education and training (VET) and align it towards labour market needs. The Skills for Jobs project supports this reorientation.

Labour market data suggest that the economic growth experienced in Albania during the last two decades has not been translated into significant labour market improvements. In 2017, labour force participation rates remain below European averages, with women participation rates significantly lower than men's (58% for women and 76 % for men). Youth unemployment rate has a decreasing trend (26% in 2017 compared to 34.2% in 2015) but it remains a critical issue, since 32.8% of all youth population is neither in employment nor in education or training. The Government of Albania has expressed commitment to address job creation and skills development, with a particular focus on the employment of youth and women. Priorities include the substantial reorientation of vocational education and training (VET) towards labour market needs. The Skills for Jobs project (S4J) strengthens vocational education and training and orients it towards the labour market while making it attractive to youth. Perceptions need to change regarding this form of education whereas

the economy would benefit from a better match between skills obtained during education and future employment. So far, public vocational schools have little experience in working together with the private sector and still need to improve their performance, efficiency and effectiveness. The project engages with private and public providers to fill gaps in skills, knowledge, and attitude among graduates seeking employment.

The expected outcomes are:

- 1) Young people receive new skills and knowledge that matches market demands in tourism & hospitality, construction, textile, and ICT;
- 2) The private sector cooperates more actively with skills providers in Lezhë, Vlorë, Berat, Shkodër and Tiranë.

NEW WAYS OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING

The project has introduced new ways of learning suited for different types of students. New methods include blended learning which combines different modalities and individualised skills development. 9500 students will benefit from new ways of learning including virtual learning systems and mobile media. This way, teachers and students can communicate in real-time through digital means, and hence, former barriers within the education system – as for example fixed location and time – can be removed. The project's international experts are also testing and introducing further methods of learning and teaching, for example gradual skills development, critical reasoning, peer assessment, project-based learning and research projects in order to lift the students' capacities to a higher level.

ENGAGING PRIVATE SECTOR IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

For a long time one of the setbacks in Albania's vocational system was the lack of contact with the private sector and the labour market. The project is building interesting links between companies and schools. 218 companies in the tourism and hospitality sector granted apprenticeships for 704 students. Four career centres were established focusing on one-to-one relations between employers and VET providers. In the area of tourism, schools are now actively cooperating with main hotels and tour operators and leading business associations are now involved in elaborating the curricula with the schools supported by the project.

TWINNING OF SCHOOLS

Schools in Albania are entering a twinning partnership with Swiss vocational schools. This is enabling both teachers and students to open up to new and more advanced ways of learning. Through study tours and active exchange of inclusive learning materials and methods, both parties benefit mutually. By learning from other experiences, Albania's schools can contribute in shaping an own VET system that best suits the needs of the country.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Skills for Jobs (S4J)

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEME

Youth employment, Vocational Education and Training

COUNTRY

Albania

PARTNERS

Ministry of Finance and Economy

Ministry of Education

Swisscontact (implementation)

Public VET providers in Lezhë, Vlorë, Berat, Shkodër and Tiranë.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To strengthen labour market oriented education and training in attractive sectors with growth potential.

TARGET GROUPS

Albanian youth vocational skills providers.

PHASE DURATION

01.10.2016 – 28-02.2019

PHASE BUDGET

CHF 7'800'000

FURTHER INFORMATION

Bilateral relations Switzerland–Albania

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/representations-and-travel-advice/albania/switzerland-albania.html>

Youth employment – harnessing the potential of young people

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc/private-sector-development/youth-employment.html>

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