



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans September 2015

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: IMPROVING ALBANIA'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM



An enthusiastic student at the Beqir Cela vocational school learns how to install solar panels. © SDC

One of Albania's greatest challenges is its high youth unemployment rate. The reasons for this include the fact that training courses are rarely geared towards the professional qualifications in demand. The SDC is therefore helping to reform the vocational education and training (VET) system so as to align teaching more with practice and, in so doing, to meet the needs of the private sector.

Unemployment and informal and precarious employment conditions are a major challenge for Albania's economy. Around 30% of Albanians aged 15-29 years were jobless at the end of 2014. The country's vocational schools provide students with theoretical and practical training without often knowing exactly what it is that Albanian companies expect from these graduates or how the job market is developing. However, the Albanian government has now recognised that vocational education and training needs to be better geared towards the demands and development of the job market.

PRACTICE-ORIENTED EDUCATION AND TRAINING IMPROVES JOB MARKET PROSPECTS

Dual vocational education and training, i.e. practical training in a company whilst studying the theory at a vocational school, serves as a model. It is one of the

strengths of the Swiss education system but cannot be directly transmitted to Albania. Rather, the SDC is adapting the core elements to the context and integrating them into its projects.

In 35 vocational schools in Albania, the SDC has introduced innovative learning techniques, created new curricula for about 20 professions, developed teaching materials, trained teaching staff and helped 4,000 graduates take their first steps into the job market. Switzerland has supported the vocational education and training sector in Albania for 20 years.

MEASURES AND GOALS OF THE "TERRITORIAL EMPLOYMENT PACT" PROJECT

The "Territorial employment pact" is one of the SDC's education system projects in Albania. It targets young women and men aged 15-29 years in the regions of Shkodra, Tirana, Fier, Vlora and Gjirokasta. The aim of the project, which was started in 2011, is to promote appropriate working conditions and at the same time to implement concrete measures such as supporting partnerships between the public and private sectors. This means that:

- The project promotes improved and gender-sensitive measures for youth employment. Over 2,000 young people benefit directly from these measures. Indirect beneficiaries are an additional 17,200 young people who are currently being trained.
- The core elements of the dual vocational education and training system are adapted and integrated into the project. This means that the courses are closely connected to practice in the workplace and are geared towards the demands of the job market. Potential employers and private companies participate as active partners in the planning and implementation of the courses.
- Certifying vocational education and training courses: Certification of successful course completion is important as a reference for future employers.

- Job market information: Authorities, civil society organisations, schools, companies (including their associations) and students exchange information and are equally informed in terms of the job market and the professional skills needed to find a job.

RESULTS FROM FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT CONFIRM SUCCESS

Project results include the following to date:

- In 2014, the number of young people starting their training at a vocational school rose by 40%. Almost 62% of school-leavers in 2014 have found a job.
- The new measures for promoting employment have benefited 444 young people and 663 families.
- No fewer than 340 young people, including 20 with disabilities, were given the opportunity to complete on-the-job training in a private company.



Students from Durres at the Beqir Cela vocational school being trained as car mechanics. © SDC

The results show that with Swiss support Albania's efforts to reform its vocational education and training system are on the right track. Young people enrolled at VET schools are increasingly being provided with practical training to help them prepare in the best way possible for the demands of the job market.

FURTHER INFORMATION

SDC activities in Albania (en):
www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/laender/albanien.html

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

"Territorial employment pact"/Contribution to the regional employment pact

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEME

Economy and employment, job market development

COUNTRY/REGION

Albania

PARTNERS

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Local authorities and NGOs
 Private sector
 Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
 National Vocational Education and Training Agency

BACKGROUND

Combating unemployment and informal and precarious employment conditions, in particular among young people and young adults, is a major challenge for Albania. As a result, young talented workers leave the country.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Albania's vocational education and training system is reformed.

TARGET GROUP

The project's target group is young women and men aged 15-29 years in the regions of Shkodra, Tirana, Fier, Vlora and Gjirokasta. Particular attention is given to young people living in rural areas. The project also targets private companies.

PHASE DURATION

Phase 2: 20.12.2014 – 31.12.2018

PHASE BUDGET

Phase 2: CHF 3,000,000

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