

Workplace learning in TVET

This is an intervention summary from the MSD for employment (MSD4E) landscape assessment.

S4J links the regional private sector with VET institutions. Students perform their practical learning with these businesses, and often end up working with those employers afterwards. This intervention exposes young people to the world of work before they finish school, and create opportunities for fast labour market insertion after graduation.

Background information

Project	Skills for Jobs (S4J)
Funder	SDC
Implementer	Swisscontact
Contact	Erka Caro (erka.caro@swisscontact.org) and Borana Barjami (borana.barjami@swisscontact.org)
Rural or urban?	Rural and urban
Sectors	Tourism, hospitality, ICT, electronics, mechanic services
Intended employment outcomes	Access to work Job quality
Target group (end beneficiaries)	Young people (14-20)
Cross-cutting priorities	Digitalisation
Years of operation	2016-2027

What constraints did the intervention aim to address?

Missing function in the skills development sub-system: Albania's VET system is still primarily school-based. S4J is working towards bridging the gap between a school-based system and dual VET with partner providers.

Which market actor partners did the intervention work with?

1. Businesses (past: individual companies, future: organised business structures and regional business networks)
2. VET schools
3. Ministry of Finances and Economy
4. National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications
5. National Agency of Employment and Skills

What were the intended behaviour changes for these partners?

1. **Businesses** buy into workplace learning, providing meaningful roles and work for students, supporting their learning, and participating in the final examinations of students. Ultimately, employers hire graduates after they complete their VET studies.
2. **VET schools** adjust their delivery model to focus more on workplace learning.
3. **Parents** encourage and support their children in choosing VET routes as a viable career option.
4. **Government partners** accept workplace learning through new laws and regulations.

How sustainable are these behaviour changes?

- Workplace learning is now part of the VET regulatory framework, with a new regulation on work-based learning in companies in place since September 2020, based on the S4J experience.
- Schools have instruments and processes to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate work-based learning (WBL) in companies.
- An in-company mentor training programme has been developed and is in the process of being endorsed by the national agencies, with 300 mentors already trained.
- S4J has helped establish a structured regional dialogue (annually) between schools, employers, and regulators. This has become part of annual plans, driven by the VET institutions themselves.
- The perception and behaviour of employers have become less sceptical and more accepting of young people, with this change tracked in the schools' annual assessments.
- Organised businesses now have an incentive to continue supporting WBL.

What were the intervention's key results?

- Over 1,000 businesses are now offering apprenticeships.
- As of 2022, 50% of students are apprentices.
- Before the intervention, only 34% of graduates were employed one year after graduation (2016). This figure has increased to 71% in 2022.
- More students are working in roles closely linked to their studies, with an increase from 50% to 60%.
- Gainful employment (above minimum wage) has risen from 27% to 77%.
- The transition into the labour market has become faster, with the percentage of students working before graduation increasing from 33% to 71%.

Note: The MRM Specialist leads and coordinates the overall measurement efforts of the S4J project in collaboration with external consultants. The impact is measured and validated by external auditors, such as the MTR conducted by an international consultant.

<i>Has a third party been involved in measuring these results?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the partner behaviour change the sole/major/minor contributing factor towards the employment-related outcome you've reported? (i.e. are there other contributing factors?)</i>	Major
<i>Results chain available?</i>	Yes

What is one lesson learned from this work?

- This intervention started as a grassroots approach, facilitating individual one-to-one dialogues between VET schools and employers. This process was time-intensive but necessary for building trust and making a compelling case to both key actors about the benefits and willingness to change. Over time, S4J has shifted its role away from being the primary matchmaker and facilitator to focusing on support structures within the schools that can play this role.
- Additionally, the success of this intervention depends on a series of other interconnected interventions, several of which focus on changes to the internal management model of VET schools (see Intervention 20 for more information).

Relevant project documents

- Programme overview:
https://www.swisscontact.org/Resources/Persistent/f/e/0/4/fe040cd459259f392a03ec352210f6c33b1c6fa9/Albania_S4J_Apprenticeship_Case_01.pdf

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