

Vocational Education Support (VES)

Country/Region: Kosovo / Eastern Europe

Timeframe/Status: Current project phase III: 2010 – 2012 (previous Phases: VES I: 2004 - 2006, VESII: 2007 - 2009)

Needs: The war in 1999 was the last occurrence that made the VET-system in Kosovo collapse, after progressive destruction due to the Serbian politics in the nineties to exclude Albanian students from secondary and university education. State or socially owned enterprises as places for practical learning had given up this function; therefore the decision was made to include practical learning in technical, economical etc. secondary schools, thereby converting them into vocational schools. This is the reason for the project to support the development of practical learning through learning projects and practice firm learning considering required professional standards and a suitable certification system oriented towards the European Qualification Framework (EQF).



Ashkali trainee in his plumbing exam

Objectives: The vocational education and training system in Kosovo has increased efficiency, narrowed the gap to EU standards, is linked with the labor market and makes participating youth employable. This will be implemented through three main components: 1. Partner schools and the Kosovo VET system are enabled to sustainably continue to provide relevant quality training linked to the private sector through the institutionalization of innovations stimulated by earlier project phases, 2. The Agriculture School of Prishtina is on the way to become a center for agribusiness learning and trains youth, young adults and adults in core competencies relevant for the labor market and other private sector activities, and 3. Kosovo institutions have enhanced capacities to steer the implementation of strategies in selected policy areas (e-learning and decentralized funding and financial management) of VET schools.

Target groups: The final beneficiaries are the youth of Kosovo getting skills to increase their employability. The project addresses teachers/trainers who perform the practical teaching/learning, school managers who are in charge of the implementation, developers of course programs (curricula), teachers and craftsmen who set standards, authorities of the MoE who develop policies.

Focus / Activities: The project identifies needs for professional education and training, and related equipment requirements. It develops curricula (DACUM) and course programs, designs trainer training programs and implements them with professional and instructional experts. Implementation of course programs with trainees is closely monitored and supported. The development of professional standards, assessments and national qualification frameworks are supported by the project. The project advises the Ministry of Education on steering the implementation of the strategy of E-learning and decentralized education financing, trains municipal education financing officers and school managers.

Human and Financial Resources: 6 staff employed (1 international, 6 national)
Budget for phase III: CHF 3'470'000 financed by SDC

Results until the end of 2009:

- a) 1700 students per year involved in 3-years cycle practical learning in technical service fields as heating, water, electrical installation and auto mechanics.
- b) 2700 students per year involved in practice firm learning (business and administration).
- c) 500 students per year involved in vegetable production in greenhouses.
- d) 25 workshops equipped with modern learning and teaching devices.
- e) 500 weeks of trainer training realized.
- f) E-learning strategy and implementing plan developed, E-learning according to European standard (ECDL and EBCL) adapted and introduced in VET schools, in addition introduction of E-learning courses in Entrepreneurship Education and English language.
- g) Schools supported to train adults beyond normal schooling schedule, e.g. women from rural areas in business administration and vegetable production in greenhouses.
- h) Promotion and support of training courses for members of minority communities.

Particularities: The share of young people is the highest in Europe (50% under 25 years), resulting in a high pressure on the labour market. VET has therefore to comply with regional and EU market requirements and quality standards, either to attract foreign investments or to be able to find jobs regionally or under special arrangements in EU-countries or Switzerland. The project supports the development and implementation of quality trainings and quality assurance systems.

Implementing agency: Swisscontact

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Partners: Ministry of Education (main) Ministry of Labor (regarding certification) Ministry of Trade and Industry (internship) Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (youth employment) Ministry of Agriculture (Agribusiness Learning Center) Municipal Education Directorates (School financing, Autonomy) Chamber of Commerce (Quality of Training an internship and job placement) National Qualification Authority (Certification, Accreditation of course programs)

Special Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities: The involvement of the private sector in VET is still in a very initial phase, but internship programs implemented by the project for 12th graders showed a growing understanding of entrepreneurs that their support to the VET system will result in better prepared workforce and hence increase the profit of the company. The Ministry of Education has still a humble understanding of VET, the system is too donor driven and local ownership remains low. On the other side, the wish to be part of EU accelerate reforms and new developments for VET, the projects supports with expertise in innovative learning arrangements, as e.g. project- and virtual firm learning, developing of a Centre of Competence for agribusiness and building institutional capacities to include e-learning and decentralized funding into the education system.

Useful Tools, Documents, Resources: <http://www.swisscontactkos.org/web/index.php?vocational-education,11>