



INNOVET ALBANIA NEWSLETTER

Let's contribute towards a stronger VET Community!

albanianskills
We promote skills



Dear Readers,

I am honoured to introduce the second issue of the INNOVET ALBANIA Newsletter! I have devoted my career to skills development and I am glad to see that the growing interest is materialized in a VET-specific newsletter for everyone to keep themselves up to date on the latest developments in this field.

My journey with Albanian Skills started 5 years back. It was a genuine conversation with Ana and a presentation of the previous editions of Skills Competitions that provoked my curiosity and will to contribute to this cause. We must all be well aware of the increasing importance VET is gaining in the job market. While enrolment levels for general high schools are falling, the opposite is true for vocational ones. However, many young people are still hesitant to make the leap to a vocational path, fearing that they may be missing out or that they will end up in a disappointing place.

Well, whatever your specific path is, the opposite is true. Let's take a look at the EU, which regularly influences the Albanian job market. Not to mention that almost half of all EU high school students are in vocational higher secondary schools and job prospects also look promising, as the employment of vocational graduates is larger than graduates coming from a general stream, with an average employment rate of 78.1% in 2016. Of course, nobody is hindered from success, as almost half (44.6%) of secondary vocational education graduates were female in 2018. From the age-old trades of electricians and plumbers to the most exciting jobs of the future, be it in Information Technology, Robotics or Artificial Intelligence, there is a lot to gain if you invest in a vocational future. **Dare to make the leap!**

Dorina Islami,

Executive Board member of Albanian Skills-National Association for Skills Competitions and collaborator for Skills Week chain of events.

Rubrics of Innovet Albania 2nd Issue

This publication was prepared and edited by: Orjeta Ramaj & Fatma Memalli

VET through VET learners eyes

Testimonial from **Nebion Kashari**, VET Student at "Hasan D. Gëni" VET School, Lushnja and from **Kristi Tako**, VET student at "Isuf Gjata" VET School, Korça

The announcement of the Albanian Skills Week 2021

We are happy and take pride to announce for the 4th year, the organization of the Skills Week in Albania, from **24 to 30 May 2021**.

Interview with Ms. Flutura Xhabiaj founder of SHGPAZ association

"Experience is science". It is the merit of a nation to promote what it knows best and to support it.

INTERVET WESTERN BALKANS - Një mundësi e shkëlqyer për arsimin dhe trajnimin profesional.

In November 2020 INTERVET WB opened the first student's call learning mobility opportunity for VET students in Albania, with the first destination in Forlì, Italy.

Coffee Talk, a monthly tradition that brings closer the VET community!

VET counts numerous achievements and issues that need a voice to be heard. "Coffee Talk" is the meeting place of a variety of ideas and discussions and a wide range of experiences.

Albanian Skills Intern

Testimonial from Beti Lika & Odeta Kurti



VET THROUGH VET LEARNERS EYES

Testimonial from Nebion Kashari, VET Student at "Hasan D. Gina"
VET School, Lushnja



When I heard that Albanian Skills would create a monthly newsletter on innovation in vocational education, and we could contribute as well, I was happy, because I am convinced that each of us has a lot to say when it comes to VET, its advantages and disadvantages, skills needed for all of us, innovation, etc. I am a student at the Hasan D. Gina VET School in Lushnja, currently in my second year of study for Information and Communication Technology.

I would like to start my view based on a general opinion about the situation in vocational schools which is not good at all. Most students, after finishing the 9th grade, are confused about their choice on attending high school, thus staying between general secondary schools and VET schools. Excellent students rarely think about continuing their education in a VET school, however recently this opinion has changed.

One of the most important reasons they consider when making this decision are the school related issues in the lack of work/study materials necessary for vocational practice in VET schools... In reality, I would say that one of advantages that VET schools have in relation to secondary school, is that when the student finishes 4 years of VET education, he is provided with two very valuable diplomas such as 'High-School Diploma' and the 'Professional Diploma'. Both of them are an added value for his future.

As a VET student, I am satisfied with the opportunities that this education offers for a safer future and a profession that I want to further develop alongside my journey.

If they ask me about the aspects that need to be improved in my school, I would say "Infrastructure", talking about the poor condition of the work tools and the lack of some materials in the school. In the case of my field of study, Information and Communication Technology requires extensive practice with computer tools. In this case, the computers that the school has are first of all not enough in numbers and second not in good conditions. This affects directly the learning outcomes because despite the very good explanation and learning materials that are made available for us from our teachers, if the infrastructure is insufficient, it will cause the result to be inadequate and we will not be able to learn properly.

However, I would like to put aside the problems and look at the positive side of VET education. In my opinion, desire and passion are two of the pillars which push a student to be a good professional in the field he/she has chosen to study. If the two characteristics mentioned above are part of the student, the latter can overcome all the difficulties that the school has and achieve great successes!!

An additional activity that helps us achieve success and improve our skills, are the competitions held by various organizations or projects that provide opportunities for young people, such as the "INTERVET WESTERN BALKANS" project. This project is implemented in Albania from 'Albanian Skills' and provides a special experience in the professional training of a student through professional internships in different European countries. Personally, I have participated in various competitions, both in and out of school and **I have gained skills and experiences that I believe to be very valuable for my future!**

Testimonial from Kristi Tako, VET Student at "Isuf Gjata VET School, Korçë

The intensive hours of practice at school and the collaboration with consolidated businesses in my city have given me the opportunity to gain new skills day by day.

"Isuf Gjata" professional High School in the city of Korça, is confirmed as the school that prepares qualified high school specialists in several fields. The most important education field for me is that of Hotelier and Tourism. In this school I have found a friendly, collaborative and motivating environment. Teaching and learning outcomes in our school are based on a curriculum focused on general education, creation of personality, development of professional, theoretical and practical skills.

My choice in this school was the direction of hotelier and tourism, mostly because I like cooking. The combination of tastes, colors and shapes on a dish are as inspiring as they are intriguing. The intensive hours of practice at school and as well as the cooperation with consolidated businesses in my city, have given me the opportunity to gain new skills day by day.

Now, I know that the key to my success is the career I want to follow!



INTERVET WESTERN BALKANS - AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY FOR VET EDUCATION & TRAINING

Report by Albanian Skills Team

7 Mobility Destinations:

- Italy
- Spain
- Poland
- Slovenia
- France
- Malta
- Netherlands



In October 2020, the INTERVET WB Project opened the first student's call learning mobility opportunity for VET students in Albania, with the first destination in Forlì, Italy. The call's duration was one month and was closed on November 19, 2020. Throughout this time, there has been a high interest in the call, and it was finalized with the registration of 23 VET schools across the country and the application of 35 students in total, in the field of IT, Electrotechnics, Tourism and Construction. The 10 selected students are expected to complete a 1-month internship in June of 2021.

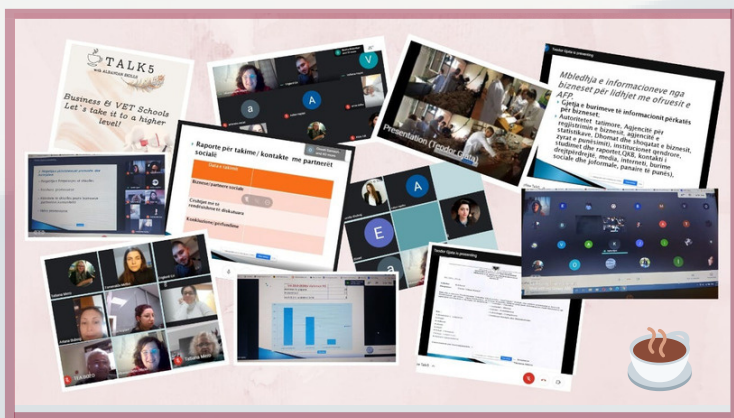
(In the following link is the testimonial of two VET learners, winners of this mobility:
<https://youtu.be/7SsvfONRs2s> .

The role of Albanian Skills, as a linking bridge between VET schools, relevant institutions and the INTERVET WB Project, in the status of a "sending organization" included the successful completion of the following responsibilities:

- Promoting the INTERVET WB project and disseminating the necessary information in VET schools and VET learners.
- Creating online groups with students, to be as close as possible to their needs and continuous communication with them.
- Assistance and support in all necessary registration procedures.
- Constant updates on the project follow-up, taking into account the impact COVID 19 pandemic had on this call.

The challenges and difficulties encountered were mostly related to technical issues such as internet accessibility in some areas of Albania, lack of some of the documents for the students (ID, passports), difficulties in fully understanding English language and the lack of previous experience in similar application procedures.

COFFEE TALK, A MONTHLY TRADITION THAT BRINGS THE VET COMMUNITY CLOSER!



The new tradition of monthly evening meetings "Coffee Talk" kicked off with the start of the new school year, in September 2020. The overall goal of these monthly meetings is to build and inspire an inclusive VET community, in an interactive and cooperative environment, with the involvement of actors from VET schools, organizations, vocational education institutions and the private sector itself. Like any other field, vocational education counts numerous achievements and issues that need a voice to be heard. "Coffee Talk" is the meeting place of a variety of ideas and discussions and a wide range of experiences.

The experience of "Ali Myftiu" School for creating a positive, a productive and a collaborative school environment during and outside classes, The story of success from the Agricultural School "Mihal Shahini", The successful model that "Isuf Gjata" VET School has pursued for organising the professional practices of students, and following up after the end of these practices, in order to enrich the curricula in accordance with the needs of the host businesses, the experience of "Elite Travel Group" and the perspective of the private sector in relation to VET schools, have been some of the main topics addressed during this 5 months period.

Coffee Talk reinforces once again the powerful message of the value of communication and collaboration to walk in a common path. As quoted by Hellen Keller, a well-known American author of the last century, the special experience of Coffee Talk teaches us that **"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much"**. In the calendar of monthly activities, Coffee Talk is a special evening occasion not to be missed!

Join us on February 18th, at 17:00 for Coffee Talk 6!

"EXPERIENCE IS SCIENCE". IT IS THE MERIT OF A NATION TO PROMOTE WHAT IT KNOWS BEST AND TO SUPPORT IT".

Interview with Ms. Flutura Xhabiaj, founder of SHGPAZ Association



1. Ms. Flutura, could you please give all the readers a brief description of yourself and your association?

Dear readers,

I am Flutura Xhabija, founder of the National Association of Professional, Business and Craft Women. I have devoted my life to entrepreneurship, not only to create my own enterprise, but also to support other women in doing so.

In 1991, I established the Private Translation Institute "Flutura & Sons" and today I have stabilized my brand in the market. However, this journey has been just as fruitful and beautiful, as difficult and full of challenges. I started this journey in the '90s and that period of time has been a radical transition for our society. It was a struggle for survival for a lot of people. I started everything from point 0 and my beginning was full of difficulties. I started my "business" at a stall, near the courthouse and started to develop slowly. Today, I am happy and walking in the "golden middle way" has been my happiness.

In 1992, I founded the National Association of Professional, Business and Craft Women. I founded the association because I realized that the economy comes first. Economy don't mean only money, but work itself. Our society has sacrificed two generations and among these generations, many women and girls have lost their purpose. My goal was not only the empowerment of women, but their personal and professional development itself, bringing them as close as possible to civic civilization. Civilization is a life experience and it often means not passing through the same road twice. Civil society should dedicate its time to people and the development of civil society requires the contribution of everyone, not just the leader. As SHGPAZ, we have organized a series of services to support and encourage Albanian women in doing business. We have done so through information, training, conferences, forums, visits inside and outside the country, being part of a big network of regional and international organizations.

3. What are some of the skills you would suggest for the future of young people, be it women or men?

Professions and skills must be at the forefront of any economic and social policy. Our country is a small country run mainly by tourism and agriculture. We do not have large industries. In the past we tried to do everything and we failed, so today we should promote those areas in which we have had continuity. In our country, handicrafts should be promoted, for a number of reasons. Heavy industries are falling and handicrafts enable us to return to traditions, develop tourism and innovation, turning resources into productivity for the benefit of the people. I remember an article about the former US Secretary of State, John Kerry's visit to a small village in Peru, where it was mentioned that 20% of that country's GDP came only from handicrafts. Our design also has a lot of potential, but by not investing in it, others are "taking" it from us. I once met an Albanian girl who worked in a shoemaker's shop inside London Heathrow Airport and her talent was remarkable. To conclude, I think we should pay a lot more attention to the field of handicrafts as a whole.

4. What is innovation for you? Two words about innovation? What would contribute most to the development of innovative skills?

Sometimes, the word innovation sounds like something big but we often encounter it everywhere. Innovation is just the application of an invention to everyday experience and implies the development of the work intuition from each one of us. Innovation can be found in every field. Even a small change or improvement in a product or service can be seen as innovation. So everything new that we learn and apply would contribute to innovation, be it for us, the workplace or society as a whole.

Promoting innovation requires experts and motivation above all. Motivation translates into love for work itself. We need to instill in young people a love for work. An Italian saying says **"Experience is science"**. It is the merit of a nation to promote what it knows best and to support it.



5. An encouraging message for young people?

The period of adolescence is a very difficult period, similar to the example of Odysseus trying to cross the island. Adolescence is a "mermaid period". Everything starts from early family education. We should give the best examples to young people, as society intervenes where the family has no strength. Also, cooperation between young people is fundamental. You, as young people, have to cooperate, thus not losing your potential. We need to stick to values, not envy. Envy is the problem that has prevented us from moving forward. **You must have civic courage and fight for what you want, not only for yourself but for the others also!**

6. What would be your message to newsletter readers?

My message to the readers of this newsletter is saying from Naim Frashëri "Work, work night and day to see a little ray". We can move forward only by work and education. One must respect oneself and others. We must respect the knowledge of the other as life has its own levels and one day it will be everyone's turn. Every slave dreams of becoming a master one day. What will you do when your turn comes?

All in all, **we must be real, true to ourselves and to the society surrounding us!!**



TESTIMONIALS CORNER - INTERSHIPS PROGRAMME @AS

TWO WORDS BY ALBANIAN SKILLS'S INTERNS



After having completed my studies, I researched different paths that I could take to boost my career. This internship took me down the road I didn't even know I needed, it benefited me in countless ways.

Albanian Skills allowed me to unleash my potential and sharpen my acquired skills.

By Beti Lika

'Girls Power', as Anna said to us. It was a great girls team work, and my experience during these 3 months was an added value for my personal development and new skills in the field of marketing.

I am very pleased to be part of the Albanian Skills team, as I found a warm and a motivating work environment.

By Odeta Kurti



Announcement of the Albanian Skills Week 2021!!!

We are happy and take pride in announcing for the 4th year, the organization of the Skills Week in Albania, from **24 to 30 May 2021**.

Skills Week is an unique initiative of the Albanian Skills inspired by and held every year in the frame of the activities of the European Vocational Skills Week, an initiative of the European Commission that aims at making vocational education and training (VET) for quality skills and jobs, more attractive through a combination of events taking place all over Europe, locally, regionally and nationally.

Albanian Skills Week 2021, will be a Festival of Skills organized by Albanian VET learners and trainees. **Stay tuned and join us during this exciting journey!!!**

Follow us on social media - AlbanianSkills