



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Erasmus + project No. 585961-EPP-1-2017-1-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP (2017 -2926/001 -001)

“GRaduates Advancement and Development of University capacities in Albania”

Event title: Training on labour market analysis
Event date: 06-08 July, 2021
Event Venue: University “Ismail Qemali”
Event Address: Bulevardi Vlorë - Skelë
Online participation link / <https://us02ëeb.zoom.us/j/89108089669>

MINUTES 22 - EVENT REPORT

Participants:

In presence:

Agriculture University of Tirana	AUT-UBT
University of Tirana	UT
Polytechnic University of Tirana	PUT
University of Medicine Tirana	UMT
European University of Tirana	UET
POLIS University	U-POLIS
Catholic University "Our Lady of Good Counsel"	UNIZKM
Albanian University	AU
Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Tirana	CCIT
Consorzio Inter-Universitario AlmaLaurea	ALMALAUREA

Online:

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna	UNIBO
University of Siena	UNISI
Universitat de Barcelona	UB
ISCTE - Instituto Universitariò de Lisboa	ISCTE-IUL
Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth	MESY
University of Arts, Tirana	UART

First day-06 July 2021

The meeting opened with the greeting speech of the coordinator Mrs. Hoxha, who thanked for the participation in this meeting, the rector of the university "Ismail Qemali" Prof. Dr. Roland Zisi, Mrs. Aulona Veizi, Vice deputy of Vlora Municipality and the rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana, and recently but not of importance the coordinator of the Success project, Prof. Assoc. Elenica Pjero, who enabled the organization of this meeting in the premises of Ismail Qemali University.

Ms. Hoxha, explained that the choice of Ismail Qemali University was not random, but a very good opportunity regarding the promotion of EU funded projects and managed by Albanian HEIs, since this university is part of the SUCCESS project. Through these meetings it is possible to share experience and present new opportunities for cooperation at the national level between HEIs, in order to meet the goals of the GRADUA project.

Further the floor was taken by Mrs. Pjero, who after thanking the participants stressed that she is very happy to be offered the opportunity to cooperate with the Agricultural University and in particular with the coordinator of the GRADUA project, Mrs. Hoxha, as through this meeting it was possible to find common ground between 2 GRADUA-SUCCESS projects. She addressed the rector of Ismail Qemali University, Mr. Zisi, who after thanking the participants in the panel and the participating staff from MESY, stressed the importance of organizing this meeting at the university. He further emphasized the importance of project implementation and in particular the SUCCESS project where it is expected to strengthen the company-university relationship, but also GRADUA, presenting their main objectives. Given that the tracking of students is one of the priorities set by the ministry during the accreditation of programs but not only because it is very important in the internal decision-making of each HEI, he expressed his satisfaction to officially submit to the rector of AUT –Se, z. Sallaku, the document of expression of interest of Ismail Qemali University to join the GRADUA platform.

In this way he passed the word to the rector of AUT Mr. Sallaku, who thanked him and guaranteed that the GRADUA project will continue its success in the coming years. He stressed that such meetings are very important to be presented between us, creating a network of cooperation in such projects. AUT is a university that manages Capacity Building projects for years, but GRADUA has added importance in this regard, as already through it, AUT has shown that it has the capacity to manage such projects, given the fact that the GRADUA consortium is composed of 15 partners was among the largest consortia in such projects. He further focused on the real results of the project and invited other non-participating

universities to join the platform. He assured that AUT expresses its full will to best manage the platform and that it will engage the necessary staff in this regard, as the benefit is comprehensive, universities, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and companies. Given that all universities to enable student employment, organize career fairs in order to sign cooperation contracts, the GRADUA project through the platform offers all these opportunities. He further stressed that the cooperation between universities should be continuous, asking their leaders to prioritize student registration on the platform, to create a database needed for all

Furthermore, the floor was given to Mrs. Veizi, Vice deputy of Vlora Municipality, who stressed that she feels honored for her participation in this academic environment and in the presence of honorable rectors. She focused on the need to create a binomial Municipality - University, as currently there is a very positive trend in the development of tourism and especially rural. This new way of tourism also requires the need for qualified staff in this regard, asking the 2 rectors to create an opportunity for cooperation to provide employees in the field of agriculture, tourism, etc. She expressed her interest regarding the registration of the municipality on the platform, as only a month ago this institution had concluded 15 internship contracts, which professional knowledge did not match their requirements. Inclusion in the platform and posting of these internship requests can enable the acquisition of qualified staff according to real needs in these institutions.

The rest of the meeting continued with the presentation for the participants not involved in the project, such as the staff and students of the University "Ismail Qemali", the staff of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vlora of the achievements and benefits of the GRADUA project by Mrs. Hoxha. In particular, she focused on success cases where several employments have been provided as well as the findings of the report on the profile of students and internships. While, Ms. Piero presented the objectives and goals of the SUCCESS project, as it was in the first steps of implementation.

After a short break, the meeting continued under the moderation of Mr. Drini Imami, AUT staff, and focused on training by experts in the field of employment in terms of labor market analysis, methods, strategies, indicators and their relationship to project results. This section started with the presentation of Dr. Daria Luchinskaya, who focused on issues such as: Definition of the graduates employability, ways in which it can be measured and implication for practice. She stressed that the growth of graduates is noticeable significantly after the 1990s, so the supply in the market related to graduates is high, and on the other hand the demand seems to be shrinking due to the economic crisis, technology changes and most recently Covid 19. This indicates that the employment strategies undertaken by different actors should be carefully analyzed, moreover good coordination is required between actors such as job agency,

professors, family, graduates, tutors, Career office and academic advisers. She also added that success in employment can be measured by indicators such as: are employers satisfied with the graduates, Is the diploma worth it, are the graduates in their profession, are the graduates using their knowledge, etc. On the other hand based on these indicators, it has resulted that the growth of employees outside the profession has increased significantly recently, posing a concern.

The following presentation focused on Graduates overeducation, measurements and validation issues, Italy evidence was conducted by 3 Junior Assistant Professors in Economic Policy at the Faculty of Economics and Law, Korea University of Enna, Italy, starting first with Mr. Giovanni Guidetti, who discussed the OECD defining of Skill as well as the theoretical aspect of overeducation. The second part of the presentation was made by Luca Cattani, who delved on the meters of the problem of overeducation, emphasizing that there are several meters from different schools complicating this process the most. And the last part of the presentation was made by Giulio Pedrini, who focused on concrete evidence of a study published by them on the above issues including data from various European countries as well as some evidence from Albania.

Colleagues of Almalauera, Phd. Dorel Manitiu, Dudko Malgorzata, Silvia Galeazzi continued with their presentations focusing mostly on the strategies and tools that AL has applied for years to create a bridge between key actors in the labor market. And further in the tracking and employment of students focusing on the benefits of annual studies that AL prepares in this regard, this to come to the aid not only universities but also the ministry.

Ms. Ina Hila, Specialists in the Employment Services sector, Directorate of active and passive labor market programs in the National Employment Agency, took the floor for her presentation. The issue discussed by her was Statistical aspects of Environmental of job seekers registered in employment offices on 2017-2020. She starts the presentation by emphasizing, as well as European partners, that a thorough analysis of the labor market requires the involvement of actors such as HEIs, INSTAT, private and public employment agencies as business actors. Faced with employment issues in graduating professions, the situation in Albania is such that the number of jobseekers is higher than the offers for the two years analyzed, meaning that from the challenges of agencies and HEIs, to increase more collaboration with companies to hire graduates. Meanwhile, the National Employment Agency is engaged in the implementation of the IT program, where to identify a compatibility between the requirements and professions required. She also stressed that not only employment mediation but also employability sustainability is another important aspect. This is related to Alumni's tracking from the perspective of career office staff, where the GRADUA platform has started to contribute.

After lunch break, the meeting continued with the presentation of Mrs. Nestjana Dedo, staff of the Tirana Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who presented the findings of the questionnaire regarding their evaluation and readiness for financial support of the platform completed by 31 companies, although it was distributed to all companies registered on the platform. The results showed that companies have positively assessed the possibility provided by the platform for downloading CVs but also in general the information and search options through filters. Regarding the suggestions regarding the improvement of the platform, they requested that the information be accompanied by a diploma, CV- with presentation photos, and attached qualification documents, as well as the students themselves to express their interest where they want to be employed. As for the full use of the platform, they have expressed themselves positively, evaluating the platform very easy simple and compared to other platforms.

Regarding the number of CVs downloaded up to those moments, the maximum number was up to 40-100 CVs, mainly large companies. Recently, regarding the readiness of the payment, the answers varied from 0 - 1500 ALL for the dismissed CVs, while regarding the payment for the publication of job offers, they expressed to pay 2000-5000 ALL.

As there were delays during the presentations, also for technical reasons, it was agreed that the discussion on the issues of sustainability of the platform be postponed for the second day of the meeting.

The meeting closed with a summary of the trainings discussed during the first day.

Second day-07 July 2021

After the greeting speech of Mrs. Hoxha, the second day of the meeting continued with the presentation of the draft national strategy for education for the period 2021-2026 by Mrs. Ermelinda Dyrmishi. She informed about the 3 main goals of the strategy, focusing in particular on higher education as well as quality management and assurance. The lack of a proper information management system in university education is one of the challenges of MESY in this regard, while this system exists for pre-university education. Another challenge mentioned by her is the lack of implementation of the university system performance analysis. She suggested that the platform implemented by the project will contribute in these directions and is working on the report prepared within the project. Despite the changes that have taken place over the years, she stressed that there are still outdated curricula that are not based on competencies or results, emphasizing once again the role of information that the platform generates. Other issues such as curriculum improvements, the development of study programs in line with market needs were some of the other issues mentioned where she clearly emphasized the importance and contribution that the platform has given in providing information in addressing these challenges. Finally, she stressed that MESY should be considered as a strategic partner to continue further applications in such projects, very important for the performance of higher education in Albania.

The meeting was followed by presentations by the representatives of the career office of the partner universities regarding the indicators of efficiency and effectiveness of its institution in order to assess the actual capability of the Albanian HE system to enhance graduates' employability.

During the presentations, almost all universities express themselves not in positive terms regarding the commitment of their institutions in this regard. Although efforts have been initiated through the conclusion of agreements with companies, it is necessary that these collaborations be coordinated with the organization of internal structures to follow the graduates to positions in the labor market in their professions. More commitment is required from the career office staff also in pursuing Alumni. During the presentations it was noticed that graduates in the field of electronics, IT, engineering are more easily positioned in the labor market in Albania, while other common professions you can count students who are not positioned in their professions. However, they acknowledged that during these years regarding the analysis of these indicators are few or not realized as a result of the lack of internal organisms. Alternatively it can be said today, where through the platform a database has been created, and the career office units have been reorganized. This is also evidenced in the full reports on the profile of students prepared for the entire implementation period, but which will be discussed at the final conference. After the presentations, a discussion was held regarding the promotion of the management role in stimulating the performance of higher education institutions through the review of the database of the beneficiary universities.

The afternoon session started with the presentation of Eqrem Cabej University for the attendees by Mrs. Irma Gjollleshi, representative of the office of international relations. She presented a summary of the university history, study programs and related cycles as well as information on the number of graduate students in recent years. She also focused in particular on the importance of including Egerem Cabej University in the Gradua platform. She guaranteed that the university staff was ready to make available all the information or materials required by the coordinating institution to advance this process.

The afternoon session was followed by bilateral meetings between the staff of "Ismail Qemali" University and the staff of the partner institutions of the project. The issues discussed were mainly related to the possibilities of cooperation in EU projects, the possibilities of memoranda of cooperation with the consortium partners, since such a memorandum had been signed with the coordinating institution. Sharing experiences related to the management of EU funded projects, and opportunities for cooperation in future projects, one of them being the TRACE project.

Third day-08 July 2021

The third day of the meeting started with the greeting speech of the coordinator, Mrs. Hoxha. After thanking the audience in the hall and online, he indicated that the focus of the meeting would be related to technical and financial issues of the project.

First, she started by presenting information about the number of graduates and companies registered on the Gradua platform, asking the partners for more commitment in this regard. Taking the example of the commitment of Catolok University, polis and AUT, who had registered on the platform more than 70% of graduates, she asked other partners for such a commitment. In particular, the demand went to the staff of the University of Tirana, as their commitment for three years of implementation in this regard has been very low, despite ongoing efforts (contacts with the rector, coordinator and other representatives of UT) by of the coordinating institution.

Another important issue discussed regarding the platform was its sustainability. After the problems raised by RASH, regarding the impossibility of hosting the platform according to communications and online meetings, the consortium decided in full unanimity that the platform be hosted near the premises of the Agricultural University of Tirana AUT and not the University of UT which also expressed interest in this direction (please refer to the link) <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Y1vqJ31173a1dg0p5oHNufFHy4J01Y88qkeë-EgdF0g/edit#responses>

Regarding the fees that the partner higher education institutions will pay for the maintenance of the platform (an issue discussed before during the activity in EUT) some opinions were shared by the participants. Some of them were of the opinion that we should refer to the practices that local public institutions such as NAIS, RASH etc. applied regarding HEIs (ranged from 100 All / students -130 All / students), some others were of the opinion that the fee of 1 euro (suggested by the coordinating institution) is acceptable as it is almost the same as the applicable fees for HEIs, so those present are decided in full unanimity regarding the application of a "1 euro" fee which will be paid by cdo IAL. The following discussion was related to the application of this fee, ie whether it will apply on:

1. The total number of graduates in each HEI
2. The number of registered on the platform from each HEI.

As for the first alternative, it was generally accepted by those present, but not unanimously. One of them was the University of Tirana. Given that this university is the university with the largest number of graduates, this would burden the costs of the university. The same medal was shared by the representative of the European University of Tirana as one of the largest private universities. In order to motivate these universities to further their inclusion in the platform, the opinion was given that for a period of 1-3 years the fee will be applied based on "half the number of graduates", an opinion which was accepted unanimously by consortia. The "number of graduates" indicator was set as fair and accurate as each university has a legal obligation to report this information to the MES and other institutions, so that would be an easily verifiable figure but also fair in proportion. with the size of the HEI.

As for the second alternative, it was not fully accepted by the consortium as it would demotivate the increase in graduate registrations on the platform, in order to reduce the total fees. Summing up the discussion, the consortium unanimously decided to apply the fee of 1 euro / graduate and each institution will pay a total of 50% of the number of graduates each year (maximum up to the first 3 years).

Based on these decisions, Ms. Hoxha asked the MES staff to make the necessary reflections on the sustainability plan by calculating the expected revenues and expenditures for the medium term.

The discussion continued with financial issues, such as the submission of financial documents for the project by partners, issues and opportunities in this regard. The concern raised by her was the delays in the submission of documents by some partners such as Warts, UT, Barcelona university, etc. She informed the participants that the delay in launching the documents is also the reason for the late transfer of project funds, so they should speed up this process.

She stressed that problems identified in the financial documents should be corrected, such as brief descriptions of Timesheet / ITR activities, inconsistencies in the description of JD and TSH, lack of documentation in travel or bank transfers, etc.

Other issues such as the organization of dissemination seminars, participation in other promotional activities of the project, finalization of reports on professional practices and Graduates profile Survey were part of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting was discussed on the organization of the final conference in the premises of MES, opportunities to invite companies, new universities, representatives of public institutions related to issues of employment and higher education, etc.