

Evaluation Report

Opportunities for the Use of the AKELIUS Platform in Public Vocational Education and Training Institutions

November 2024

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This Document was prepared by the Observatory for Children and Youth Rights as part of the “Reaching the Unreached 2” program, financially supported by UNICEF and the Akelius Foundation, implemented by the Observatory for Children and Youth Rights in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports.

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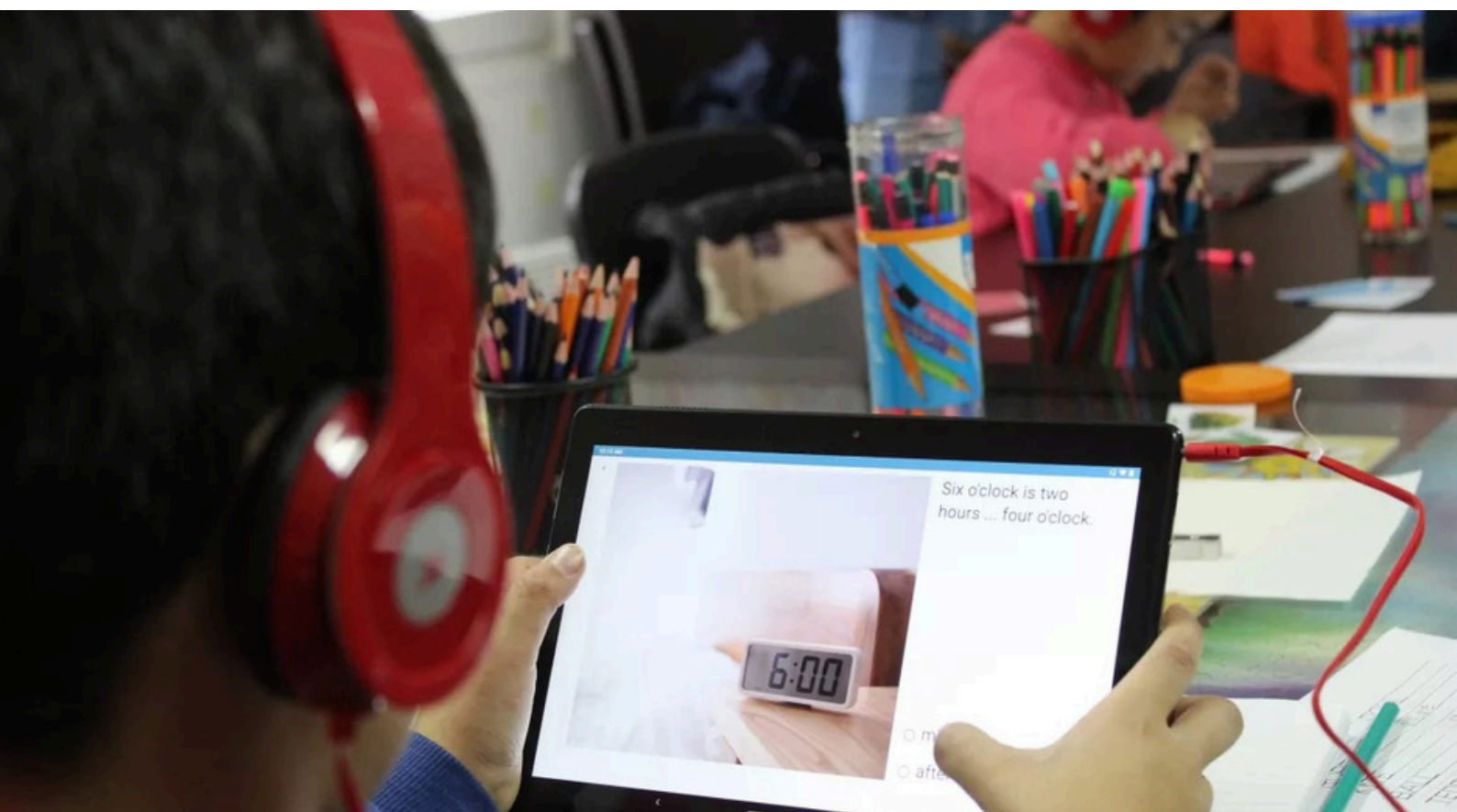


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Acknowledgment

The Evaluation Report "Opportunities for the Use of the AKELIUS Platform in Public Vocational Education and Training Institutions" aims to examine and assess the potential and benefits of integrating the AKELIUS platform into these institutions. It addresses the students' needs for foreign language skills and supports the development of competencies for more successful integration into the labor market. This report seeks to analyze the alignment of the AKELIUS platform with the goals of the vocational education system and national employment and training strategies, as well as to provide recommendations for its effective implementation to improve foreign language teaching in these institutions.

This document is prepared as part of the "Reaching the Unreached 2" program, financially supported by UNICEF and the Akelius Foundation, and implemented by the Observatory for Children and Youth Rights in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The working team extends its gratitude to UNICEF for their continuous support.

November, 2024

List of Abbreviations

VET	Vocational and Education Training
AKADP&K	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training & Qualifications
NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills
AQI	Accelerating Quality Initiative
ASCAP	Quality Assurance Agency in the Pre-University Education System
EU	European Union
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EHL	The Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne is the first hotel school in the world.
IOAFP	Professional Education and Training Provider Institutions
KPER	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
KSHK	Albanian Qualifications Framework
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sport
Observatory	Observatory for children and youth rights
QFP	Professional Training Center
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ICT	Information, Communications and Technology
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

I. Introduction

Education enables children and adolescents to grow, develop and acquire the knowledge, values and skills they need to reach their full potential, achieve economic independence, and play an active role in their communities and societies. Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for a free, equitable and quality education for all girls and boys by 2030, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Statistics and analyses on education indicators show that the number of students who do not complete higher secondary education continues to increase. Dropping out can have profound and long-term consequences for a student's future because it can limit their opportunities for higher education and well-paying jobs. The vast majority of the dropout literature focuses on individual factors as well as the environment of the family, school, and community where they reside, while pointing out that some of the reasons why some children do not enroll in school or drop out of school are: disability, migration, and extreme poverty which are often closely related. These factors are most evident in vocational education where the level of competence and skills of students result in lower levels.

The "Stay Project" funded by the Italian Government and implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), aims to advance the agenda of youth inclusion in education and training in Albania, through the implementation of an innovative and systemic three-stage approach addressing policy changes for youth inclusion in education, Training and employment opportunities, thus improving school practices for preventing school dropouts and improving youth skills, life skills and job skills.

Strengthening the mechanism of the Early Warning System in schools by raising the capacities of education professionals to identify students missing school, demonstrate behavioural difficulties or have difficulties in their academic achievements is one of the main goals of this project mainly in vocational secondary education, where the dropout rate is higher.

Reducing dropouts in secondary schools through improving fact-based policies, school practices and strengthening young people's life and employment skills is one of the goals of this project, aiming primarily:

- Improving school practices to increase education quality, innovation and reduce dropouts
- Life and employment skills for young people

The pilot recommendations of this project in 2023 have identified the low levels of soft skills of students in vocational education and mainly foreign languages that often hinder their professional growth and therefore lead to loss of their academic interests and dropping out of school.

UNICEF for the implementation of the activities of this project is cooperating with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of State for Youth, National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) and organizations at local level. The main municipalities where the project is being implemented are: Dibra, Durres, Kamza, Kruja, Elbasan, Korça, Fier, Tirana, Divjaka. Other municipalities that may be included are: Kavajë, Berat, Kukes.

The main purpose of this evaluation report is to analyze the possibility of integrating the digital platform AKELIUS into public vocational education and training institutions (IOAFP), aiming at improving foreign language skills and supporting students for a better preparation for the labor market.

The objectives of this assessment include include:

- 1. Evaluation of the compliance of** the AKELIUS platform with the current curriculum of IOAFPs and with the specific needs of students in acquiring language skills for better performance in their professional fields.
- 2. Analysis of the technological infrastructure** of institutions to assess existing capacities and identify the needs for improvements related to technological equipment, internet, and access to the AKELIUS platform.
- 3. Evaluate human capacities** in terms of teachers' abilities to use the platform, identify and develop training programs that will assist teachers in the effective use of the AKELIUS platform during teaching.

II. AKELIUS Platform

The digital language learning platform AKELIUS is co-developed by AKELIUS Foundation and UNICEF in collaboration with UNICEF implementing partners. This platform continues to evolve and offers rich interactive multimedia with authentic materials such as video, audio, visual graphics, songs, games, equipping the learner with meaningful content and in line with his or her age interests and needs. It helps students deepen and strengthen language knowledge, enrich the vocabulary of foreign language, as well as have fun while they are learning.

Rich and interactive content is one of the most important elements of this platform that help motivate students and teachers to design lessons that respond to all learning styles.

The levels developed on the AKELIUS platform are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and Accompanying Volume ranging from Pre A1 to B2, levels that according to the foreign language programs in our education system schools correspond from grade I to grade XII (including VET schools which close with B1+ level).

The basic principles of the AKELIUS platform are:

- **Practical understanding of language and communication:** It aims to understand written and spoken language by learning lexical problems through interaction and using online platform materials by developing communication and digital competence.
- **Flexibility in usage:** On the AKELIUS platform, the student can select the components he/she wants and needs, at the pace he/she wants and can go back as many times as he/she wants to refresh knowledge before he/she gets new knowledge.
- **Modular content:** The teacher can also assign lessons to students according to their needs especially at the initial levels while advanced learners can navigate to the platform themselves according to their needs.
- **The platform:** is based on modern digital pedagogy and is simple without incomprehensible terminology or grammatical instructions. Chapters are built based on the varied themes and situations you're learning from everyday life. Students are naturally involved in fun and interaction.
- **Diversity in use:** The content of the platform is designed in several foreign languages, thus enabling widespread use in all schools regardless of the foreign language selected by students.

The innovation of the AKELIUS platform, which makes it highly suited to the VET system is the integration of professional vocabulary, which is included in a special category called "Jobs". This category is designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the labor market. This category offers a wide range of terminology and expressions related to the world of work, including words and phrases often used in professional contexts.

The content of the "Jobs" chapter:

- **Terminology used in the job market:** The jobs category contains keywords and phrases related to job search, interviews, CV preparation and motivational letters, as well as communication in the workplace. This helps students understand and use the correct terminology in real situations.
- **Simulated Situations:** The platform provides simulated scenarios and situations that help students practice vocabulary usage in different contexts, such as job interviews, conversations with colleagues and negotiations.
- **Interactive exercises:** The AKELIUS platform includes interactive exercises that help students strengthen their knowledge of vocabulary, allowing them to apply what they have learned practically.
- **Communication Skills Development:** The Jobs category also helps develop students' communication skills, preparing them to communicate effectively in a professional environment.

The "Jobs" category in AKELIUS vocabulary is important for students who want to prepare for the job market. It offers deep and practical knowledge that is necessary to succeed in the job search and professional environment. Focusing on terminology and real situations, this category helps students feel more confident and prepared for the challenges they will face in their career.

The AKELIUS initiative is being implemented since 2020 by UNICEF Albania in cooperation with MoES and the Observatory for Children and Youth Rights (Observatory).

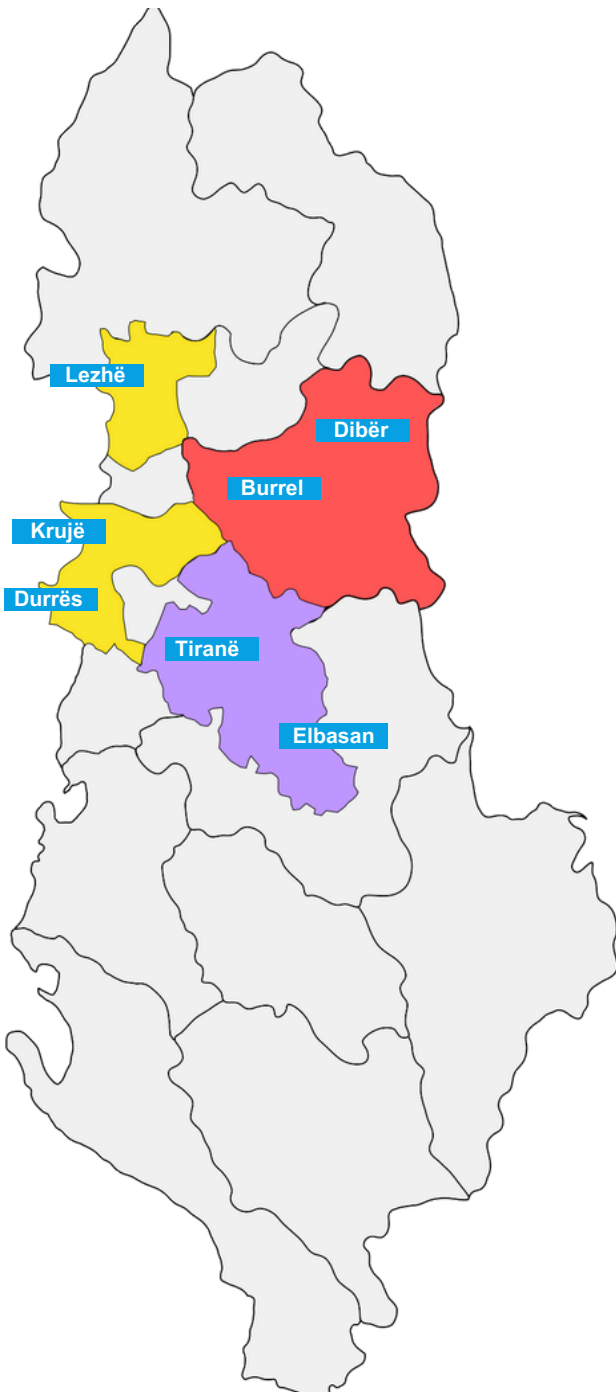
AKELIUS has provided opportunities for English language learning through a combined learning approach in 18 schools (in Tirana, Durrës, Lezha, Burrel, Peshkopi, Elbasan) as well as for Afghan refugee children, integrating the AKELIUS learning platform into the English language curriculum.

This intervention supports one of MoES's key objectives to make teaching English a top priority for education starting in first grade, as well as to improve teachers' ICT skills. Also, Albania is one of seven countries participating in the AKELIUS Accelerating Quality Initiative (AQI) aimed at achieving the latest digital learning standards. To ensure accelerated quality, UNICEF, in collaboration with Observatory, intensified efforts in four model schools, turning them into resource centers for other schools so they can improve on the implementation of the AKELIUS initiative.

During 2023-2024, Albania has worked towards improving the quality and effectiveness of the implementation of the AKELIUS learning platform by:

- enable the improvement of the school's digital environments with appropriate equipment and connectivity;
- providing technical assistance for combined learning;
- improving classroom management through teacher training.

The schools are equipped with tablets and smartboards used for foreign language learning.



Some of the main results of the implementation of the AKELIUS initiative in Albania:

The piloting of Akelius digital classes in 18 schools, as follows:

1. At Zef Pllumi - Shëngjin
2. Gjergj Fishta - Lezhë
3. Mustafa Myrteza Kacaci - Krujë
4. Bakushe Visha - Fushë Krujë
5. Shaqe Mazreku - Durrës
6. Neim Babameto - Durrës
7. Demir Gashi - Dibër
8. 31 korriku - Burrel
9. Androkli Kostallari - Tiranë
10. Kongresi i Manastirit - Tiranë
11. Ardian Klosi - Tiranë
12. Hamit Mullisi - Elbasan
13. Jorgji Dilo - Elbasan
14. Sulë Harri – Elbasan
15. Lidhja e Prizrenit - Tiranë
16. Haki Stërmilli - Dibër
17. Sule Domi - Elbasan
18. Shkolla e mesme profesionale hoteleri- turizëm - Tiranë

- As part of this work, 672 teachers in compulsory education were trained based on the combined learning approach and AKELIUS platform.
- A total of 6951 cumulative users, including 3969 current users (2051 boys, and 1918 girls) were reached by March 2024, most of them from vulnerable groups (such as children with disabilities, children from the Roma community and Egyptian).
- 226 Afghan children enrolled in informal education in Lezha have improved their English skills as well as digital skills through the use of the AKELIUS platform (March 2024).

In recent years, three training modules have been developed for teachers by the Quality Assurance Agency in the Pre-University Education System (ASCAP): 1) "English language content for level A1 on the digital learning platform AKELIUS"; 2) Integrating AKELIUS content into the English curriculum for Grade III and IV; "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), English curriculum and AKELIUS".

Mentoring sessions on combined pedagogy, classroom management and Technology, Informatics and Communication (ICT) for teachers of 16 participating schools in the project, as well as 4 AQI schools equipped with ICT tools such as tablets, headphones, charging stations and with internet connection based on AQI guidelines.

The digital platform for language learning AKELIUS, with the support of UNICEF, is being piloted for the first time in IOAFP and specifically at the Professional School Hotel Tourism in Tirana. Now, a classroom with internet access has been created in this school, which is equipped with 24 Tablets, 24 headphones, 2 storage boxes and tablet chargers, and 1 (one) smartboard for the development of additional foreign language courses of the students of this school. Starting from the school year 2024-2025, the School hotel tourism in Tirana will also be offered the qualifications of VET by EHL Group, which is the world leader in education in the field of three-way hospitality: "Kitchen", "Hoteleri" and "Food and Beverage Services".

EHL is the first hotel school in the world, founded in 1893 as the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, ranking for the sixth consecutive year as the best hotel school in the world, which will also offer in our country:

- Effective teaching under contemporary conditions.
- Teaching practices near the most vocal businesses in the field.
- The practices will start from the 10th grade.
- Certificates issued by VET by EHL for each successfully completed level, recognized outside Albania.
- Opportunity to continue higher education.

The above-taught profiles will be developed in total English and given the insufficient level of foreign languages by students who follow the tourism hotel in vocational high schools, it was assessed that the implementation of this platform in this school will enable through supplementary courses mainly students attending EHL programs to increase their skills in foreign languages.



III. Why AKELIUS Platform in IOAFP

Referring to the digital structure of the AKELIUS platform, the principles and opportunities it offers, as well as the characteristics of students and programmes in the VET system, we appreciate that its implementation in this system will be a positive initiative within the efforts to increase the foreign language skills of students/students in IOAFP dealing with the following reasons:

-Using online learning literature on recent technological developments

Currently in the VET system, school textbooks for subjects and modules of professional culture are lacking unlike general culture subjects. This requires a greater effort not only by teachers to design teaching materials for the development of the learning process, but also greater efforts of students to provide more information and extracurricular and school literature. The Internet has become a very important tool for the academic world not only for the additional information you can provide about the latest technological changes taking place in every field, but also for teaching materials ready in written form but also through tutorial videos created by experts in the field in many cases also teachers. This is a very good opportunity to support VET students in the learning process, but requires good knowledge in foreign languages, that this information can be provided not only at national but also international sites.

-Internationalization of the VET teaching offer through international agreements with other schools

The latest amendments to the Law 15/17 "On Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania", adopted at the beginning of 2024, entitles the Ministry responsible for VET or public providing institutions of VET/National Employment and Skills Agency, with the aim of increasing quality and standards, professional qualifications, to conclude agreements with internationally recognized foreign educational institutions or international bodies for issuing the joint or dual diplomas/certificates from participating institutions. Based on these changes for the school year 2024-2025, the first cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry responsible for the VET and the VET school by EHL Group (Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne) on the professional profiles offered by this school. This agreement is being implemented as a start at The Hotel Tourism School in Tirana, but to be extended later to all IOAFPs that offer this instructional direction, while in the coming years agreements will be possible in other qualifications. An additional measure taken by the Albanian Government for young people is the CODING PROGRAM implemented for the first time in 2022 by the NAES and continues to be active today, providing financial support for participation. These programs with duration from 3 to 12 months aim at qualification and requalification of young people over 16 years of age, in order to prepare for rapid integration into the labour market. Another innovation in this program is the inclusion of subjects offering international programs, enabling young people to acquire additional

skills and are equipped with international certificates. This helps them increase employment opportunities and be more competitive in the global market. This shows that the VET teaching offer is already being internationalized.

-Student mobility practices during school years

Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme for education, training, youth and sport in Europe, which will be implemented for the period 2021-2027 with an estimated budget of 26.2 billion euros. The focus of this program is on three main areas:

- a) Social inclusion
- b) Digital and Green Transition
- c) Participation of young people in democratic life

Erasmus+ offers opportunities for mobility and cooperation in six areas including education and vocational training. Our IOAFPs, as in all other European countries, participated in these programs through cooperation projects, from which many professional practices of 1-3 month students in Balkan countries and also of the European Union are organized. Almost all vocational schools have benefited from this experience, thus turning this experience ever more inclusive. This initiative increases the need for students pursuing vocational education to have a more satisfactory level of foreign languages in order to maximize the benefits of these practices.

-Development of tourism in the country

Albania's geographical location, local climate and terrain favour the development of a year-round tourism industry. In recent years, tourism has become one of the most important and growing sectors of the Albanian economy and is considered by the government as one of the main engines of national growth. Albania is increasingly being recommended as a tourist destination by various tour operators and international travel guides. 9.7 million foreign visitors were received from January to September 2024, at the close of the season, reaching almost the entire balance of last year, which was also the record year in tourism. The indicators of the last 3 years in the field of tourism have led to a lot of attention from the Albanian government to consolidate a bid with the highest levels of quality, standards and hospitality. In the face of this potential, we need trained and skilled employees to meet market demand. This is a significant challenge that must be addressed to ensure that tourism continues to grow and evolve. This has brought increased attention from businesses in this field to promote professional training of employees. This is reflected in the increase in the number of vocational education enrollments year after year. Currently, they are registered in the hotel tourism direction about 2900 students or 10% more than a year ago, making this direction with the inquired. The increase in the number of foreign tourists who choose Albania for holidays or cultural tourism requires a workforce not only professionally pro and with good foreign language communication skills. This requires an increased attention from IOAFPs, which provide guidance in increasing the level of skills in their students' foreign languages.

-Globalization of the world of work

The labor market has already been internationalized, bringing about a globalization of the world of work, which in recent years has been increasingly felt and has brought about changes in some aspects. Companies have managed to shift their operations to places that have lower costs, a job known as outsourcing. Advanced technology has enabled work to be in a free state, allowing people to have companies in other countries without having to emigrate. There is increasing global labor competition that is accompanied by migration and labor movement. Digital developments, free movement of capital and technology bring more and more demands to develop new skills not only professionals and workforce flexibility for an already global market. The VET system in Albania, like any similar system in Europe and the world, must be prepared to face the challenges that globalization of the world of work brings. The system should have an increased focus not only on vocational training as much as possible in line with the needs of this labor market but also with other nonprofessional competencies to adapt as much as to this market as digital and communications.

The above mentioned are some efforts in the VET system to increase their students' non-vocational skills through investment in digital infrastructure for more internet access in order to train them professionally and not only, training IOAFP teachers with foreign language courses to support more students (Vocational schools Elbasan), as well as the creation of cabinets dedicated to teaching terminology of the profession in foreign languages (vocational industrial school Vlora).

One of the projects implemented in THE VET that has proved very efficient, supported by UNICEF in the framework of the "Stay" project focused on "Enhancing the skills of young people to integrate in vocational education and employment" was also the program "Skill Boost - Empowering the participation of students of 10th grades through engagement in extra-school activities". The programme implemented in 14 vocational schools in 7 cities of Albania, for about 12 Saturdays from October 2022 to May 2023, has supported about 1000 students of the tenth grade vocational education with poor results and come from the social strata in need with the purpose of providing them with the necessary skills including foreign languages to prevent school dropouts and help them integrate with the needy skills. Easy in the job market.

To better understand the need for IOAFPs to use interactive platforms in foreign language learning now not as overlapping the school curriculum, but as a complementary way to maximize its acquisition, we are providing comparative information on the subject foreign language programs in vocational training education with the content of the AKELIUS platform.

The "Foreign Language" classes X, XI, XII of AFP are designed in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (KPER) and the Accompanying Volume, defining the B1+ language level at the conclusion of the AFP.

**The
Independent
User**

B 1+

The student

- Understands the main issues of a clear standard information on familiar issues that are regularly encountered in school, work, entertainment etc.
- Manage situations that you may face during a trip to countries where the language you learn is spoken.
- Create simple materials for familiar topics or a field of personal interest.
- Describes experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and briefly gives reasons and explanations for his opinions and plans.

One of the key competences defined in the core curriculum is competence for life, entrepreneurship and the environment. In the subject programs, the learning outcomes for this competence are also determined:

The Student:

- Prepare an autobiography where you present yourself in writing or oral to others, emphasizing skills, desires, and opportunities, referring to your individual career goals or project;
- demonstrate organizational habits in individual and group work through real situations in particular teaching tasks or activities for life, work and the environment, managing individual and group potential;
- designs a well-managed phased project (individually or grouply) by exchanging, consulting and informing others, as well as identifying and evaluating human, material and informational resources in accordance with expected results;
- participates in various activities at the class, school and beyond (p.sh., competitions, sports competitions, cultural and musical activities, etc.), discusses with others about the results achieved and the organization process, and gives various arguments on how to increase participation in the activities and how to improve the process of their organization;

- uses materials, various sources of information and technology in school and in everyday life as a help for progress in learning;
- identify various sources of information for education and vocational orientation, and develop an individual plan for developing his career;
- Discusses with a simple dictionary about how students behave in the classroom, in school and other environments in a given situation, presenting ideas through concrete examples.

Meanwhile, the textbooks of foreign language subjects in VET schools are selected from the altertext catalogue. These schools work with foreign language texts of the high school. This results in foreign language teachers facing some difficulties and problems in successfully fulfilling the learning outcomes set out in curricula where we can distinguish:

- **Adapting teaching materials:** Textbooks are often not suitable for the specific needs of students in vocational education. Teachers face difficulties adapting these materials to reflect the professional context and terminology needed for different fields of study.
- **Lack of motivation:** Students in vocational education are often more focused on practical skills and may not see the importance of learning foreign language from general textbooks. This can lead to lack of motivation and engagement in the learning process, making it more difficult for teachers to achieve the realization of the program and the results of foreign language learning.
- **Lack of resources and training:** Teachers often face a lack of adequate resources and opportunities for training in the newest teaching methods. This can negatively impact the quality of teaching and their ability to use technology and innovative methods in the classroom.
- **Assessment difficulties:** Evaluating students in foreign language can be complicated, especially when using general texts that do not reflect the professional context in VET schools. Teachers often face difficulties in creating clear and appropriate criteria for assessing students' knowledge and skills.
- **Integrating culture and professional context:** Learning a foreign language in a professional context requires the integration of cultural and professional elements. Teachers often face difficulties in establishing a link between language and professional culture, making teaching more relevant and applicable to students.

By comparing the foreign language curriculum in Vocational Training Education and the digital platform AKELIUS we reach the conclusions as follows:

- They can complement one of the others very well because:
 - a) Are based on the European Framework of Reference for Languages and The Accompanying Volume.
 - b) They are focused on developing communication skills.
 - c) Promote the use of modern interactive methodologies.
 - d) They rely on differentiated and student-centered teaching.
 - e) Encourage teaching based on different learning styles.
 - f) It is used for several foreign languages.

- If the foreign language curriculum in Vocational Training Education focuses on developing practical and theoretical skills that are necessary for the labor market, providing a strong basis for students who intend to enter the different professions, the use of general culture textbooks creates difficulties for teachers and students in their career orientation.

- On the other hand, the AKELIUS platform offers an innovative and interactive approach to language learning, using technology to deliver personalized learning materials tailored to students' personal and professional needs and interests.

- The content of the AKELIUS platform regarding vocabulary used for different professions and interactive teaching methodologies presents an excellent complementary opportunity for the best implementation of foreign language programs, offering an innovative and flexible approach to learning this language for communication purposes in different professions.

- The AKELIUS platform offers opportunities for distance learning, making it accessible to students who may not have the opportunity to attend traditional lessons for various reasons. This makes the platform a valuable tool to fill gaps that can occur in the learning process and ensure that every learner has the opportunity to achieve success in language acquisition.

As for soft skills in adults, UNICEF is supporting the NAES in drafting a curricula that includes soft skills in its content, a package that will be used in training household participants, which benefit economic assistance mainly those who have not completed compulsory education, in order to reactivate them in the labour market. This change aims to equip participants not only with technical knowledge, but also with important skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving, which are critical to professional and personal success in today's labour market. The integration of these skills reflects the growing need for a more balanced approach to vocational training, better preparing the trainees for life and career challenges. The new curriculum will have a duration of 60 hours and will start its implementation in every Vocational Training Center (QFP) in November.

Another very important program for young people that UNICEF is supporting is the youth guarantee program. The youth guarantee aims to provide unemployed youth registered in the labour offices a quality offer for employment, training or education within 4 months. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was adopted in March 2023, as part of the National Employment and Skills Strategy document 2023-2030. The Youth Guarantee Scheme was launched on October 27, 2023 and is continuing the implementation of the Pilot phase in 3 Municipalities, namely Tirana, Shkodra and Vlore.

In summary, we recommend:

- Successful integration of the AKELIUS Platform in the foreign language course in VET schools (English, Italian, German and many other languages of the European countries offered by the AKELIUS platform) as a supporting instrument for both teachers and students identified with significant lack of knowledge in foreign languages with a focus on those with the increased dropout.
- Integrating the AKELIUS Platform into classrooms as additional support for vocational school students, helping them better adopt important concepts and develop the skills needed to use foreign language for communication purposes in their profession.
- Using the AKELIUS Platform in the most efficient way in developing foreign language courses in QFPs or even through the star smart package for job seekers for their best integration into the labor market.
- Adapting the lessons of the AKELIUS platform for lifelong learning and as a platform that prepares young people in need with limited knowledge in foreign languages for the job market.
- Using the AKELIUS Platform in designing model journal hours and curriculum planning of foreign language with AKELIUS content to help fill in the gaps that are often created in the use of high school textbooks.
- Training foreign language teachers to use the AKELIUS platform in the classroom, daily planning by integrating the content of the AKELIUS platform, basic principles and implementation of Blended learning in classes.

IV. Identifying where the platform will be implemented

The system of vocational education and training in Albania aims at preparing students and young people for the labour market, providing theoretical knowledge and practical skills specific to the required professions. This system aims to develop technical and professional competences that enable individuals to integrate more easily in different areas of industry, economy and services.

Public vocational education system: provided by 31 vocational high schools offering about 26 teaching directions oriented towards professions such as information technology, construction, tourism, gastronomy, agriculture, crafts and other fields. Professional qualifications belong to levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Albanian Qualification Framework (KSHC) adapted for different groups, recognized their level of knowledge previously obtained.

Table 1: Number of students enrolled by directions 2023-2024

The source of information: AKPA 2024

Direction	X	XI	XII	XIII	Total
Agriculture	107	116	128	129	480
Seaman	21	22	17	10	70
Business-Economics	328	248	280	298	1154
Electrotechnicals	404	351	367	344	1466
Geodesy	12	17	9	10	48
Geology-Mining	20	12	12	8	52
Hotels-tourism	952	683	601	715	2951
Software Engineering	75	89	71	84	319
Oil, drilling and exploitation, gas and water	13	11	10		34
Mechanical	284	280	230	173	967
Construction	32	52	40	43	167
Wood processing	32	27	24	18	101
Forests	17	17	13	12	59
Social and Health Service	20	21	16	10	67
Elderly Care Services (GIZ Pilot)	20	30	26	33	109
Transportation services	716	718	648	593	2675
Social and Health Services	139	116	117	96	468
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	638	478	413	321	1850
Chemical technology				12	12
Food technology	111	119	124	176	530

Textile-confections	60	54	59	42	215
Thermo-hydraulic	306	248	245	224	1023
Veterinarian	79	47	52	47	225
Total	4386	3756	3502	3398	15042

Short-term vocational training programs for young people: offered through public vocational training centers, provide a wide range of opportunities for professional development. These centers spread across the nation's 10 most important counties offer over 100 programs to all age groups. The programs offered are focused on developing skills that are most in demand mainly in the field of tourism, services, construction, culinary, crafts etc. and are helping young people become more competitive and ready to adapt to the demands of the labor market. The Public Vocational Training Center also offers digital communication, "Start Smart" and "Foreign Languages" (English, German and Italian) courses. The vocational courses offered by the Public Vocational Training Center are offered free of charge to all unemployed job seekers registered in the respective employment offices. The curricula of these courses are unified at national level, drafted by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training & Qualifications (KPA&K) and approved by the Ministry responsible for the VET. They are offered in the same form by all vocational training centers.

Table 2: Total Savings by Courses/ DROFP 2023.

The source of information: AKPA 2024

Emertimi I kursit	QFP Durrës	QFP Elbasan	QFP Fier	QFP Gjirokastrë	QFP Korçë	QFP Levice	QFP Nr.1	QFP Nr.4	QFP Shkoder	QFP Vlore	Total
Building manager	22						32	9		20	83
Digital NSA	235	216	271	150	81	233	323	303	162	360	2334
Archive	14							26			40
Automechanical							94	18			128
Barber	66	93	46	22	54	10	95	64	43	34	527
Inkjatisje	15			33			9	36			93
Aesthetic	35	43	28		10	37	108	55		31	347
Fruits		26									26
Foreign language, English	87	8					56	7		111	269
Foreign language, German		47					94		13		154
Foreign language, Italian	68						23				91
Graphic Design	50	9			21	30	103	75	15		303
Ironing +Ironworking		7		8				32			47
Installation and maintenance of solar panels	7	10					36	18			71
Installation and maintenance of the electricity grid	109	113	170	38	85	151	108	198	76	78	1126
Installation and maintenance of heating-cooling systems	7	37					24	34	15		117
Installation and maintenance of air conditioning				31			19				50
Installation of solar photovoltaic panels	20	24					12	19	30		105
Hydraulic installations and maintenance	63	76	113	11	14	71	86	161	60	68	723

Gardening												29
Child caretaker	34	31	13	16			25	88				240
Social Guardian	197	7	55	40	37	38	27					423
Caregiver for the elderly	8	11					80	9				108
Caregiver for persons with disabilities	54							7				61
Kitchen	112	152	179	102	141	102	111	153	90	243		1467
Lamp and car painter							15	7				22
Manicure Pedicure	122	79	43		67	24	186	143	125	118		907
Furniture	16	19	21	9	29			40				134
Womenswear Modelling	15						32	9				56
Elevator mounting and maintenance							35					35
Tour Operator							29					29
Hairdresser	72	75	93	84	74	214	43	69	90	50		864
Pasticier	38		15	43			62					158
Fish processing	21											21
Picajol	16	7							57			80
Dough products		18		7								25
Duralumini Works		8					7					15
Muratimi and plasterwork works	16	9		16								41
Construction works		11				42						53
Platework	21	9	14	26								70
The embroidery			39			24						63
Reception									37			37
Repair of simple medical equipment							15					15
Sewing machine repair							21		12			33
Computer repair		29					9					38
Electrical repairs	15	37	12				23	26				113
Tailoring	53	69	109	46	15	63	64	31		12		462
Welding	46	25	21	37	25	39	42	48		76		359
Secretary	17	21			21		17	17	30	45		168
Electroauto service in light vehicles	16	23	28			9	42	9				127
Engine servicing in light vehicles	47	56		75		73			30			258
Generical service in light vehicles			29		61			28		41		159
Hotel Hospitality Services	23	30				17						70
Services in Bars and Restaurants	22					29						51
Services in hostels	7					9						16
Small business entrepreneurship and management	39			14	9	157	48	62	29	45		403
Dry systems in buildings	7	24					8	22				61
Start Smart			15							671		686
Torner	32											32
Tourist guide	45			48	15		16	33	27	48		232
Other	14	8	0	0	12	12	0	28	14	0		88
Total	1923	1467	1271	871	774	1383	2284	1961	955	2090		15111

Geographical coverage of the population with education and vocational training services by region is presented as follows:

Northern Region:

Geographical coverage in the northern region is concentrated mainly in its western part, concentrated in the districts of Shkodra and Lezha. The northeastern region is clearly the region with the lowest coverage. The lack of a VET provider in Kukës county, where secondary vocational education in the "information and communication technology" direction is provided, as part of a general secondary school.

Central region:

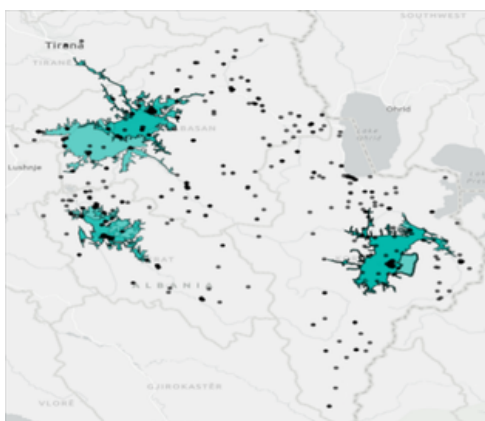
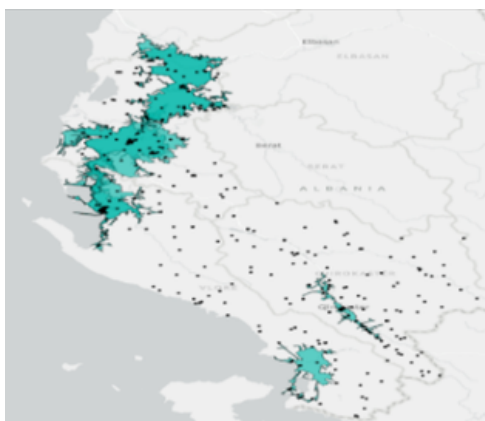
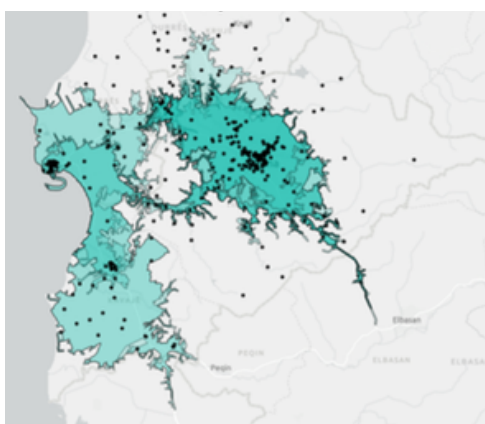
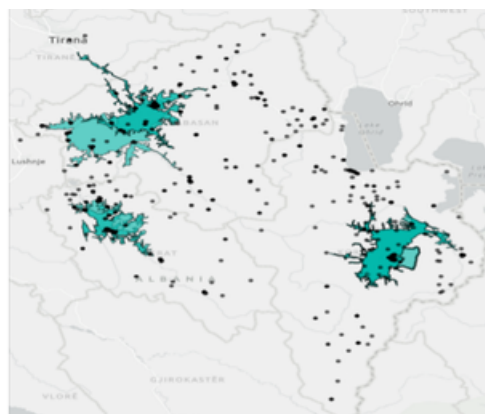
The central region is the region with the highest number of students enrolled in vocational secondary education, in which it is noted that the offer of vocational education and training follows trends and developments in the labor market. The needs of the service sector are addressed by VET providers with qualifications in the teaching directions "hotel-tourism" and "business economy", but also "services of transport", "mechanics". To be underscored is the increase in interest and number of students in the teaching direction "information and communication technology", which also corresponds to the growth of this sector in recent years.

Southwest Region:

Geographic coverage from vocational education schools in the southwestern region is more complete in the large municipalities of Vlora and Fier districts, while in the district of Gjirokastra is noticed a very low coverage. In secondary vocational education, in the southwestern region the offer of professional qualifications reflects generally the offer at the national level, where the largest number of students is the teaching direction "hotel-tourism", followed by the teaching direction "services of transport vehicles". In this region, there is also an increasing tendency in the teaching directions "information and communication technology" and "electrotechnicals".

Southeast Region:

The geographic coverage of the AFP offer in the southeast region is greater but the number of students is relatively small. In 2023, the institutions of this region underwent the optimization process with the aim of redistributing infrastructural resources in order to increase the quality of VET delivery.



Why the private system belongs to the VET, the Ministry responsible for the VET collaborates with the National Business Centre in the process of licensing private VET providers. Currently they are licensed:

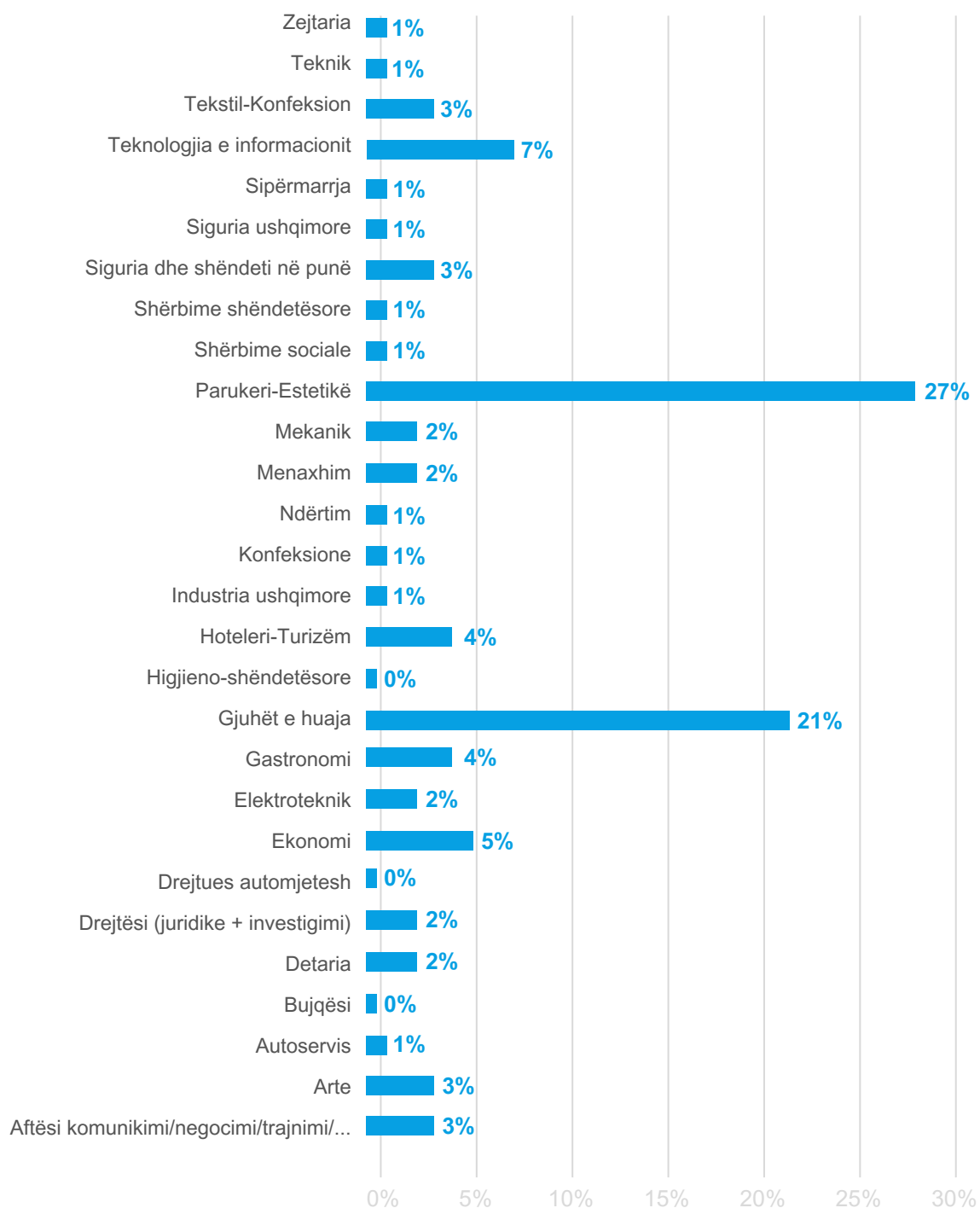
Table 3: *Private school enrolled students by schools and directions 2023-2024*

The source of information: AKPA 2024

Name	Direction	Student Directions/Profiles	
		Gj	Fem
Good afternoon	Services		
	Electrotechnicals	95	0
	Hotels	74	1
	Termohidraulic	65	4
	Information and Communication Technology	73	0
	Social Health Services	26	1
Tirane	Electronic	96	77
	Automechanical	598	40
	Business	184	0
	ICT	88	25
	Social and Health Services	17	
	Electrotechnicals	74	49
	Information and Communication Technology	26	0
Sarande	Hotels	66	24
	Mechanical	95	47
	Installer of Thermo-cylidraulic systems	67	0
Totali	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	13	0
		48	19
		1705	221

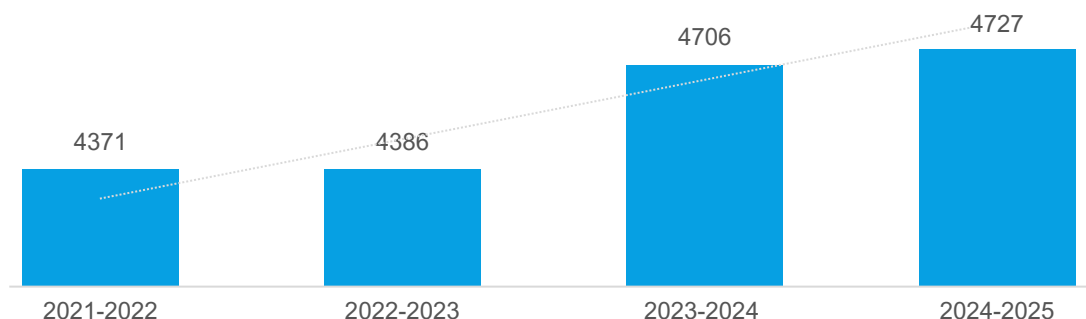
1040 private entities licensed for profession formation, of which 63% develop their activity in the Tirana region. Professional courses offered by field at the country level show that the hairdressing courses lead with 27%, followed by foreign language courses with 21%, information technology with 7%.

Graph 2: Number of students enrolled in vocational education over the years



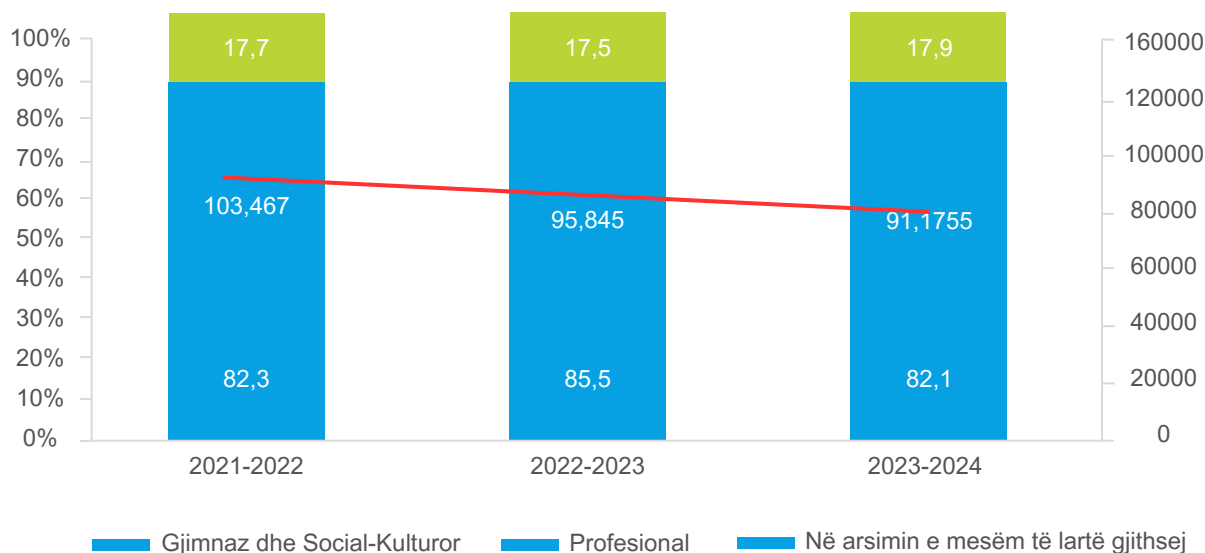
Registrations in vocational education in the last four years have increased, this is more noticed in the field of **Tourism, ICT and technical directions**.

Graph 2: Number of students enrolled in vocational education over the years
The source of information: AKPA 2024



The level of participation of the working population in the VET compared to pre-university education does not exceed 20%, this level is very low compared to not only EU countries but also other countries in the region.

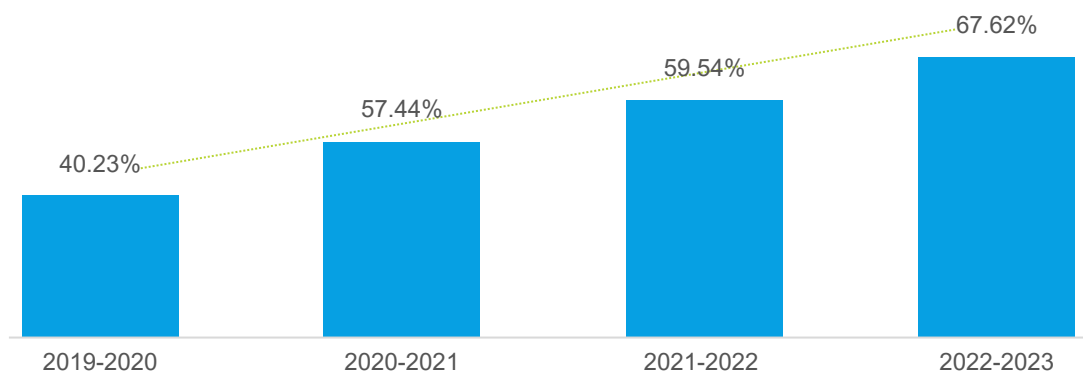
Graph 3: VET working age population participation rate compared to pre-university education
The source of information: AKPA 2024



Referring to national data on tracking of graduate students, who perform NAES, there is a significant increase in employment level 6 months after graduation, a significant increase in the field of **Tourism, ICT and technical directions**.

Graph 4: Nationally available data on the employability level 6 months after graduating undergrad students

The source of information: AKPA 2024



Vocational education and training has become a national priority for economic development, so encouraging participation in VET is one of the government's goals in the field of employment and skills through increasing funding for infrastructure improvement, desertification of programs to better respond to labour market demands and increase employment incentive policies for young people.

The AKELIUS platform is in line with the objectives of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 and specifically on the following priority measures:

- "Developing online platforms for facilitating combined learning and online learning, for young people and adults"
- "The gradual development and implementation of combined learning and teaching, according to digital products developed across VET providers.

In order to identify the needs for the best reference of IOAFP where the AKELIUS platform can be used, below we are giving some results of an analysis of the public system data of the VET. The analysis focused on:

For schools:

- The teaching directions where foreign languages are necessary;
- The level of ability of students in foreign languages;
- International agreements that have already started to have schools;
- Mobility agreements that schools have implemented or are implementing;
- Schools where the early prevention system for the 2023-2024 school year has been implemented and the schools where support for the 2024-2025 school year will continue.

Table 4: Data by schools for registered students etc.
The source of information: AKPA 2024

Emërtimi	Shkolla	Nxënës Rejstruar						Mesatar gjuhë e huaj	Mësues SPH gjuhë e huaj	Programe Erasmus+	Programe të huaja	
		total	Turizëm	TIK	Bujqësi	Teknike	Tjera					
Berat	2	487	137	42	0	221	87	645	5	+	(RICO-CANDI)	RCF, RYCO, S4J, CEAD
Dibër	1	295	34	58	0	0	208	6.4	2	+	CANDI	Save the Children
Durrës	2	2018	393	208	0	1013	404	6.37	8	+		Quendro, Unicef, RCF
Elbasan	2	1433	229	238	127	754	85	5.83	6	+	MomaVet, Intervet EB	Fuqizimii të rinjve Save the Children/RCF
Fier	3	1296	0	178	61	905	152	6.24	8	+		PEMA, Engim
Gjirokastër	1	144	0	34	0	110	0	6.4	1	-		
Korçë	3	1090	190	136	253	484	27	5.86	8	-	CANDI, Dc-VET ëB (Developing Capacity for VET Systems in Eastern Balkans)	RCF, EëinForVet-Rma Versitas, EU4 Innovation - GIZ.
Kukës	1	46	0	46	0	0	0	5.8	0	-		
Lezhë	2	445	125	135	0	28	157	6.25	3	+	Big art 3D, ERASMUS+, COHost, MomaVET.	S4J, RCF, Integrimi gjinornëzvogëlimin e riskut nga fatkeqësitë natyrore UNDP, Të rinjtë, të drejtat dhe drejtësia Terre De Homes, Eëorld Vision
Shkodër	4	1314	479	47	131	395	262	6	9	+	INTERVET EëB	Euin Albania GIZ, Skills Boot/Quendro Unicef, S4J, RCF
Tiranë	6	5122	889	1124	212	1771	1126	7.1	23	+	Vet 2Vet/CANDI, Prover, RYCO, Innovet, Integrating Digital Content and Digitalization of High Schools.	Reload UNDP, S4J, RCF, OSF, BMZ Cultivating talent for the digital transformation & integrated real estate program to enhance the educational.

About QFPs:

- Requirements for foreign language courses in the last two years;
- Counties with high numbers of families in economic assistance that need to offer smart start courses;
- Municipalities where youth guarantee will be piloted;
- Vacancies that will be referred to pu.pa to be employed in the field of tourism.

Table 5: Data on QFPs
The source of information: AKPA 2024

Name	Registered courses						Pu.pa with economic assistance with primary education	VLP in tourism	Youth Guarantee
	QFP	Total	Foreign languages	Digital skills	Smart Start	Other			
Berat	0						6	82	
Diber	mover	109		30		79	7	258	
Home	1	1923	155	235		1533	27	1088	
Elbasan	1	1467	55	216		1196	199	174	
Fier	1	1271		271	15	985	76	230	
HotelSast	1	871		150		721	14	306	
Korce	1	774		81		693	110	597	
Nsa	mover	97		17		80	16	126	
Lezhë	0			0		0	21	386	
Shkodër	1	955	13	162		780	35	676	
Tirana	2	4245	180	626		3439	73	3290	2
Vlore	1	2090	111	360	671	948	22	1479	5
Total	10	13802	514	2148	686	10454	606	8692	7



V. Conclusions and recommendations

Referring to the above analysis in order to identify IOAFPs where the AKELIUS Platform can be implemented, it is as follows:

5.1 About Schools

- a) Referring to the punctuation results according to the above indicators by districts, schools **in the districts of Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korca, Shkodra, Vloora and Tirana** are prioritized;
- b) As regards the qualification areas where the needs for capacity building in foreign languages are greater for students and teachers, tourism **ICT and technical directions are also noted as priority;**
- c) The average in students in foreign languages at the national level is 6.48 but if we refer to the districts result below 6 schools in **Elbasan, Korçë dhe Shkodër**, while the largest number of languages used or recruited teachers are the districts of **Durrës, Fier, Korçë, Shkodër, Tiranë dhe Vlorë;**
- d) UNICEF's support for Early Warning System was for 14 schools in 7 districts in 2022-2023, while for 2024-2025 will continue in 12 schools in 3 districts, Tirana, Vlore and Shkodra where the youth guarantee program will be piloted.
- e) Private vocational education schools are very few and extended to only 3 municipalities, which concludes the great role the public system has in training the professional workforce.

5.2 About QFPs

- a) In the Vocational Training Centers the foreign languages offered are mainly English, Italian and German and mainly in the districts of Durres, Tirana, Tirana and Vlore.
- b) In these districts, there are also more needs for working forces reflected in the vacancies announced in the field of tourism.
- c) If we refer to the needs for reactivating working-age household participants in economic aid without basic education through the soft skills curriculum, we conclude the districts of Elbasan, Fier, Korçë, Shkodra and Tirana.

d) In 2024-2025, in 3 municipalities, Tirana, Vlore and Shkodra, where the youth guarantee program will be piloted.

5.3 Recommendations on planning steps for the implementation of the AKELIUS Platform in IOAFP

Referring to the above conclusions and the characteristics of the AKELIUS Platform, we recommend that the platform be implemented in IOAFPs in the Districts of Tirana, Shkodra, Vlorë, Durrës, Elbasan and Korçë as follows:

1. “Hamdi Bushati” Shkodër;
2. “Arben Broci” Shkodër;
3. QFP Shkodër;
4. “Hoteleri Turizem” Tirane (ku ka filluar);
5. Profesionale Kamzë;
6. Tregtarë Vlorë;
7. QFP Vlorë;
8. “Hysen Cela” Durrës;
9. “Charls Erikson” Golem;
10. QFP Durrës;
11. Teknike Korçë;
12. “Enver Qiraxhi” Pogradec;
13. Profesionale Elbasan;
14. QFP Elbasan;

After the IOAFP selection of where this initiative will be implemented, it was necessary to conduct an evaluation of their human and infrastructure resource capacities in order to plan the needs for improvements in infrastructure and staff training to support the full implementation of AKELIUS in vocational schools:

- Evaluation of the technological infrastructure of vocational schools, including internet access and technological equipment;
- Assess capacities and identify the needs for training teachers and school staff in the use of AKELIUS;
- Planning infrastructure improvement needs to support the full implementation of AKELIUS in vocational schools.
- Planning training of foreign language teachers for the use of this platform since observatory is now carrying out as well as training accredited by ASCAP regarding the use of the AKELIUS platform, adapted to the English language school curricula in the country.

At the end of this analysis, the following intervention needs for implementing AKELIUS Platform in IOAFPs are evidenced:

Table 6: Future Intervention Needs
The source of information: AKPA 2024

Name	Infrastructure situation				Need for intervention				Training needs
	Home	classroom	Digital Equipment	Internet connection	tablets,	headphones,	smardbord	Charging stations and internet connection	Foreign language teachers
"Hamdi Bushati" Shkodër	A building	24	43 PC/Lap top	100%	15	15	1	No	3
QFP Shkodër	A building	2	53 PC/Lap top	75%	15	15	1	Yes	2
"Hotel Tourism" Tirana (where it started)	Two years	74	21 PC/Lap top	70%	24	24	1	Yes	5
Professional Kamza	Three years	78	68 PC/Lap top	75%	24	24	1	Yes	5
Commercial Vlora;	A building	18	49 PC/Lap top	100%	15	15	1	No	2
QFP Vlora	A building	5	41 PC/Lap top	50%	15	15	1	Yes	2
"Hysen Çela" Durrës	A building	22	32 PC/Lap top	80%	15	15	1	Yes	3
QFP Durrës	A building	3	25 PC	25%	15	15	1	Yes	2
Technical Korçë	Two years	22	126 PC/Lap top	70%	15	15	1	Yes	3
Professional Elbasan	Three years	66	182 PC/Lap top	75%	15	15	1	Yes	2

