

Case Study on Input Supplier Training Delivery Model

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Disclaimer:

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Introduction

This report provides an analysis of the Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) project's vocational training model, known as the input-supplier model. The EYE project aims to bridge the gap between labour demand and supply by integrating training centres with businesses that supply industry-specific inputs, thereby linking skills development directly to industry needs. The primary audience for this report includes stakeholders involved in vocational training, economic development policymakers, and industry leaders in Kosovo. The intended outcome of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of the input-supplier training delivery model in promoting economic growth and improving vocational training. By focusing on three critical sectors—bakery and pastry, wood processing, and solar energy—the report seeks to provide insights into the model's success and

its potential for broader application across different sectors. The bakery and pastry sector has demonstrated significant export growth, indicating international demand for Kosovo's products. The wood processing industry, being highly digitalized, requires skilled carpenters and woodworkers to maintain competitiveness and support both import substitution and export efforts. Meanwhile, the energy sector, especially solar energy, is critical as Kosovo aims to increase the share of renewable energy in its electricity consumption under the National Energy Strategy (2021–2030).¹ The analysis below will evaluate the input-supplier model's impact on business growth and skill development, identify incentives for input suppliers to engage in training delivery, analyse challenges and potential areas for improvement, and assess the potential for broader application in other sectors.

By addressing the skills gap and providing targeted vocational training, the input-supplier model has demonstrated its potential to drive significant economic growth, underscoring its transformative potential for non-formal vocational training in Kosovo.

In summary, the input-supplier model implemented by the EYE project has proven to be a powerful tool for fostering economic growth and workforce development in Kosovo. By integrating industry-specific training programs directly into businesses, the model has successfully addressed skills gaps and provided immediate, practical benefits to both companies and employees. Success stories like Korabi, Shehu, and ELING Group highlight how the model can drive improvements in productivity, operational efficiency, and market expansion, while also boosting revenue

and enhancing product quality. Despite facing challenges such as funding constraints, trainee retention, and adapting training to local contexts, the model has shown strong potential for scalability and diversification into other sectors, such as metalwork. With further support, such as financial incentives, outreach programs, and policies to retain trained employees, the model can continue to strengthen Kosovo's economy. The crowding-in effect seen across industries further underscores the model's potential for widespread adoption and innovation, paving the way for a more skilled, competitive, and inclusive workforce.

“The input-supplier model implemented by the EYE project has proven to be a powerful tool for fostering economic growth and workforce development in Kosovo.

¹ Gerd Meier Zu Koecker, "KOSOVO FOOD AND BEVERAGES PROCESSING VALUE CHAIN STUDY," 2023, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.21847.69289>; "Economic Report 2022" (Pristina, Kosovo: Embassy of Switzerland in Kosovo, 2023).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) System in Kosovo

Kosovo's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system includes both formal and non-formal training. Formal VET is managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) and includes VET schools administered by municipal authorities and AVETAE. Non-formal VET is provided by public Vocational Training Centres (VTC) managed by Employment Agency public and private training providers. The VET system in Kosovo faces several significant challenges. Firstly, there is a lack of coordination, as no effective body exists to coordinate activities between MEST and MLSW, leading to a fragmented system. The administration of VET is highly decentralized, with unclear lines of authority, which complicates effective governance. The quality and relevance of VET programs are also inadequate. Many programs do not align with the current demands of the labour market due to outdated curricula and irrelevant training profiles. Vocational Education and Training (VET) system faces significant challenges in aligning the supply of skills with labour market demands. The mismatch between labour demand and supply is a persistent issue, with many industries struggling to find workers with the right skill sets. This discrepancy is worsened by the rapidly changing business environment, which requires quick shifts in skill sets to keep up with technological advancements and evolving industry standards.¹



The VET system often falls short in addressing these dynamic needs due to its slower pace of curriculum development and implementation. As a result, there is a growing need for more agile and responsive training solutions. This is where non-formal training can play a crucial role. Non-formal training programs are typically more flexible and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of industries and businesses. They can be developed and delivered quickly, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the latest skills required by the market.²

Non-formal training providers can adapt their programs to focus on current and emerging trends, thereby closing the gap between labour demand and supply more effectively. By partnering with businesses and industry experts, these providers can ensure that their training content is relevant and up to date. This collaboration not only benefits the workforce but also enhances the competitiveness and productivity of businesses.³

¹ Dita Dobranja, "The Big Picture: A Progressive Economic Agenda For Kosovo" (Pristina, Kosovo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Kosovo, 2022).

² "Non-Formal Learning Is Part of the Solution" (Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, 2023).

³ Toni Popovic, Renata Relja, and Tea Gutović, "The Role of Non-Formal Qualifications in the Flexibility of Education and Labour Market," 2018.

EYE's Intervention Strategy

During phase 3, the EYE project shifted the focus exclusively working with non-formal training providers, primarily within the private sector. The non-formal training sector comprises various providers offering short-term training in different fields, but often lacking practical components and collaboration with companies and innovation. Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) project aims to make the non-formal training market more responsive to the evolving demands of employers. The project focuses on enhancing the competences and skills of the labour force to better align with market needs. EYE seeks to utilize and expand partnerships with private training providers and industry leaders to ensure that the interventions are sustainable and scalable. The reason of EYE working with industry leaders and the input supplier model is because it effective-

ly addresses in a faster direction the shortcomings of the existing VET system. This model ensures that training programs are demand-driven, aligning more closely with the actual needs of the market. It also offers a cost-effective solution for sustainable skills development and has the potential for scalability, allowing interventions to be expanded and replicated across various sectors. Over the past 12 years, EYE's work in the non-formal training sector has been instrumental in enhancing critical functions that were previously lacking or underperforming. These improvements include the quality and relevance of training, integration of private sector feedback, geographic expansion and diversity, innovative training delivery methods, and the promotion and marketing of training programs.





Overview of Input Supplier Model

Conceptualisation of the Model

The Input Supplier Model, introduced by the EYE project in 2020, is a strategic approach that integrates training centres within companies that supply essential industry-specific inputs. This model aims to address skill gaps by providing targeted training services directly through input suppliers, which are businesses that provide the necessary materials or products for other industries. The EYE project launched this model with a pilot phase in collaboration with a leading company in the pastry and bakery sector. Due to its success, the initiative expanded into other sectors, including the wood processing industry, where a training center was established with another industry leader. Further success led to its replication in the green energy sector.

By embedding training components into their services, these input suppliers enhance their product offerings and attract more clients, boosting sales and financial performance. Additionally, this model positions companies as industry leaders, showcasing their commitment to workforce development and innovation. Below are the comprehensive benefits of this model:

Model Benefits

1. Enhances Workforce Skill Sets:

Equips employees with advanced skills and knowledge, boosting workforce competence.

Comparison with other training: Traditional training methods often focus on basic skills and are not always updated with the latest industry trends. Curricula in many formal training providers take longer to update, leaving a gap in advanced competencies. The input-supplier model addresses this gap by providing industry-specific training.

2. Increases Business Value:

Boosts business value by driving higher demand for services/inputs and attracting a broader client base, leading to a noticeable increase in sales.

Comparison with other training: While other training options may contribute to business growth, the input-supplier model's direct integration with business operations and industry needs makes it more effective in driving sales and expanding the client base. The flexibility of the input-supplier model allows businesses to adapt quickly to market changes and customer needs, unlike more rigid formal training programs.

3. Offers Financial Incentives:

Helps improve productivity and efficiency, leading to significant financial gains for the business.

Comparison with other training: Compared to other training models that may require significant time and re-sources with uncertain returns, the input-supplier model offers a higher return on investment by directly linking training outcomes to business performance metrics. Additionally, businesses can implement training at their own pace, ensuring timely and efficient skill development aligned with the latest industry demands. Furthermore, by utilizing existing infrastructure and client base, businesses can achieve faster gains and maximize the effectiveness of their training programs.

The development of the input-supplier model is grounded in the specific needs and challenges identified by businesses across various sectors in Kosovo. The need for training provision in these industries arises from several factors, including the absence of formal training which are in line with the market demand in sectors like wood and food processing, as well as the rapidly evolving demands within each unique sector, such as the energy industry. The efficacy of formal training programs can be hindered by challenges such as lack of revised curricula, bureaucratic delays, limited industry collaboration, and re-

source constraints, potentially resulting in a workforce that may not be fully equipped to meet current industry demands.

In all these instances, the absence of a structured professional education system and the rapid shifts in industry demands underscore the importance of specialised training programs. By tackling these sector-specific challenges through the input-supplier model, businesses can ensure that their workforce possesses the requisite skills, thereby enhancing overall productivity and market success.

The Implementation Process of the Input-Supplier Model in Three Industries

The input-supplier model was initiated to address the challenges faced by businesses and the necessity for a more agile and fast-paced approach. Each company within three different sectors adopted this model to meet their specific needs. The following sections detail how each company implemented this process, including the timeline from initial concept to full operationalisation, the integration of training into business operations, and the structure of their training programs.



EYE: Enhancing Youth Employment
Case Study on Input Supplier Training Delivery Model

Wood Processing Industry: Shehu Academy

The Implementation Process

Wood Processing Industry: Shehu Academy

Shehu is a prominent wood-processing company that specializes in creating high-quality wooden products. Their range includes a variety of staircases, from classical to modern, as well as entrance doors. To improve their efficiency and competitiveness in lean manufacturing, Shehu aims to address the lack of formal education on new technologies. They are committed to providing continuous upskilling to keep up with the rapid pace of technological advancements.

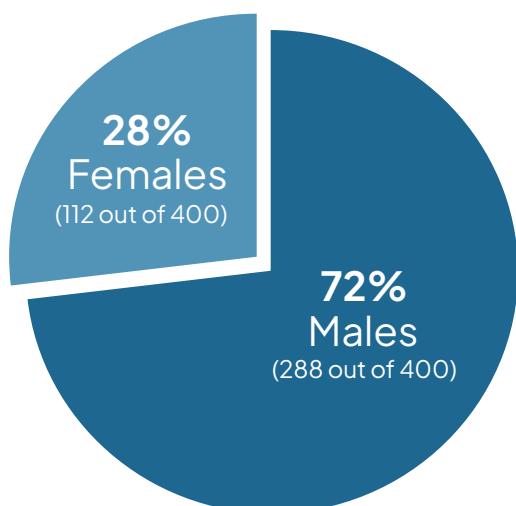
Besides its main activity in wood processing, Shehu also offers an innovative software application called Corpus, which is designed to streamline various aspects of lean manufacturing. Furthermore, they also serve as distributors of various equipment within the wood processing sector. Recognising the need for a comprehensive skillset, Shehu has integrated these new skills into a 12-module training program.

Benefits of Shehu's Training Approach:

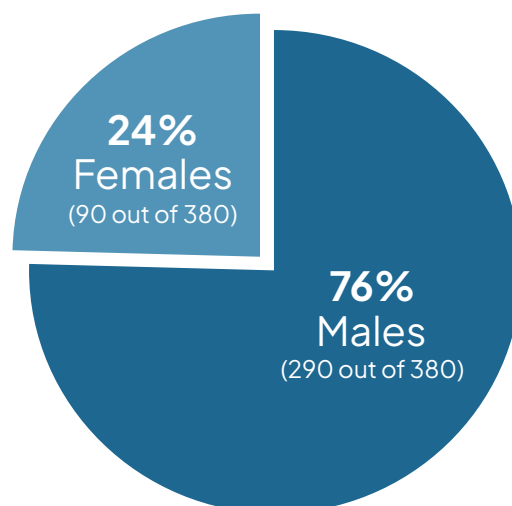
- **Higher Productivity:** Improved training leads to more efficient operations.
- **Better Product Quality:** Enhanced skills result in superior products.
- **Increased Competitiveness:** Continuous upskilling ensures competitiveness in the market.

By integrating advanced training programs and innovative software, Shehu supports business growth and maintains a competitive edge in the wood processing industry.

- Shehu**
- **Certified Carpenters:** 187
 - **Certified Instructors:** 8
 - **Pre-Training Youth Enrollment:** 200–300 (not formalized)



Post-Training Youth Enrollment: 400



New Hires Post-Training: 380

Shehu began implementing the input-supplier model in the wood processing industry in 2017, following a meeting with the EYE project, which emphasised the importance of dual education. Recognising the need for formalised training, Shehu initiated a two-year process to secure **accreditation from the National Qualification Authority (NQA)**. Obtaining this accreditation was vital to ensuring that the training programs met national standards, received formal recognition, and enhanced the credibility of the training offered. With financial and strategic consultancy support from several donor projects, Shehu successfully acquired the necessary accreditation. By 2020, Shehu had launched its training programs, which were fully operational in addressing industry requirements.

Integration of Training Programs:

- Ensured the training programs were effective, directly contributing to the company's efficiency and productivity.
- Utilised facilities and equipment for both wood processing activities and training purposes.

This practical, hands-on training design mirrors real-world scenarios that trainees will encounter in their professional roles, ensuring they gain relevant skills immediately applicable to their work. The close alignment between training activities and actual business operations facilitates a smooth transition from the training environment to professional roles within the company.

Training Structure at Shehu Academy:

- **Target Audience:** Young job seekers, technical personnel in the wood processing industry, young engineers, and individuals with special requirements.
- **Course Offerings:**
 - Comprehensive three-month course for the authorised carpenter profession.
 - Shorter modular training (10–15 days) tailored to industry demands.
- **Modules:** The full carpenter profile consists of 12 modules, with two mandatory modules: Basics and Occupational Safety.

Accreditation:

- **Level 3 Certificate** in Carpentry for completing specific training.
 - **Level 4 Certificate** for attending all modules and passing the final test, qualifying as technical carpenters according to ISCO 08, the International Standardized Classification of Occupations.
- Revenue growth after establishment of the training centre: **65%**
 - Market Share Increase: **16% (from 25% to 41%)**
 - Investment in Training and Equipment: **€179,234.50**

Shehu's integration of training into business operations has fortified its market position and bolstered its competitive edge.



EYE: Enhancing Youth Employment
Case Study on Input Supplier Training Delivery Model

Pastry and Bakery Industry: Korabi Innovation Centre

The Implementation Process

Pastry and Bakery Industry: Korabi Innovation Centre

Korabi NTP is the leading company in Kosovo that specializes in distributing world-renowned brands of raw materials for various products, including those used in bakeries, pastry shops, and chocolate products. As part of their strategy to increase product demand, Korabi focuses on educating clients about maximizing the use of bakery ingredients. This involves providing training to bakeries, pastry shops, and food service providers on the best use of ingredients, equipment, and techniques to produce higher-quality baked goods.

Benefits of Korabi's Approach:

- **Stronger Client Relationships:** Clients value the added training and support.
- **Correct Product Usage:** This leads to higher satisfaction and fewer complaints.
- **Enhanced Business Reputation:** Clients producing better products improve their success, driving more sales for Korabi.

By investing in the skills and knowledge of their clients, Korabi creates a cycle of improved product quality, increased demand, and greater sales.

Korabi Corporation

- **Increase in Training Sessions:** From 5 per year to 50
- **Individuals Trained:** 1,800 (95% women aged 25–45)
- **Employment and Self-Employment:** 70%
- **Direct Employment:** About 200 individuals (11%)





Participation of Ethnic Minorities: 58 (including 8 from the Serb community and 50 from other ethnic groups) **Korabi Corporation**, similar to Shehu, initiated the idea of the input-supplier model in the pastry and bakery industry by collaborating with the EYE project in **2017**. This collaboration emphasised the importance of integrating formalised training into business operations. The first step in formalising training was to acquire **accreditation from the National Qualification Authority (NQA)**. Korabi modified its training module to meet these standards by leveraging existing occupational standards for Pastry and Bakery. Additionally, the company expanded its facilities, dedicating specific areas and laboratories to the training centre. By **2019**, Korabi had initiated fully operational training programs.

Integration of Training Component:

- The training centre was included in the construction of the new company facility, providing a designated space for the training centre.
- Specialised training areas and laboratories equipped with tools and machinery used in regular business operations, facilitating cost-effective setup and quicker establishment of the training centre.

The training sessions at Korabi are divided into paid and unpaid programs. Unpaid training primarily caters to current clients, assisting them in using Korabi's products more effectively and increasing demand for these products. Paid training targets individuals outside the sector, equipping them with the necessary skills to start their own pastry and bakery businesses. By integrating training into the business model, Korabi not only enhances the skills of its clients and employees but also ensures a continuous demand for its products and services.

Training Structure at Korabi Innovation Centre:

- **Course Offerings**
 - Three-month accredited course
 - Shorter, intensive training sessions tailored to specific demands.
- **Training Programs**
 - **Training in Pastry and Confectionery:**
Various aspects of pastry and confectionery preparation and decoration.
 - **Professional Training for Bakers:**
Modern bread and pastry recipes and preparation techniques.
 - **Fondant Dessert Decoration:**
Specialised training in decorating desserts with fondant, including creating various motifs and decorations.
- **Certification:**
 - Participants receive a certificate from Korabi Corporation for each completed module.
 - Top candidates from all training groups are guaranteed employment in the country's most renowned pastry shops and bakeries.



By integrating comprehensive training programs into its business operations, Korabi Corporation enhances its internal capabilities. It significantly contributes to the broader industry by producing highly skilled professionals. This dual approach ensures a steady demand for Korabi's products and services while supporting sustained growth and competitiveness in the pastry and bakery sector.

- Revenue growth after establishment of the training centre: **204.35%**
- Attributed revenue growth to Training Programs: **20%**
- Market Share Increase: **5%**
- Investment in Training and Equipment: **€500,000**

The input-supplier model helped train employees of companies that purchase inputs from Korabi, leading to better product quality and operational efficiency. This cyclical relationship has created a reinforcing loop of improved product quality, increased demand, and greater sales.



EYE: Enhancing Youth Employment
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Solar Panel Industry: ELING

The Implementation Process

Solar Panel Industry: ELING

The renewable energy sector in Kosovo is in various stages of development, but it holds significant growth potential, particularly in the wind and solar subsectors. Employers in these areas anticipate annual growth rates of 25% to 30%, driven by the ambitious objectives outlined in the Energy Strategy and an increasing workload in both domestic and international markets. By 2028, the demand for skilled workers, specifically PV installers and mechanical technicians, is expected to rise to around 500 people. As the need for renewable energy solutions expands, providing targeted training becomes essential for ensuring business sustainability and facilitating growth. In response to this demand, ELING, a company specializing in electrical and solar installations, is planning to offer specialized training in collaboration with the Solar Academy of DGS.

Benefits of ELING's Training Approach:

- **Addressing Skills Shortage:** Mitigates the severe shortage of skilled workers in the solar panel industry.
- **Market Expansion:** Training programs attract more clients, expanding ELING's market presence.
- **Inclusive Workforce:** Targeting women in technical fields promotes diversity and inclusion within the industry.

By addressing the skills gap, ELING supports the growth of the solar panel industry, ensuring a well-trained workforce to meet the increasing demand for renewable energy solutions. However, it is important to note that ELING's training initiative is still at an early stage. Consequently, it cannot yet be compared to the more mature implementations of the input-supplier model seen in other beneficiaries. As the program develops, its impacts will become more evident, providing further insights into its effectiveness and benefits.



ELING Group

- **First wave of trainees:**
23 (including 5 women)
- **Expected Annual Training:**
Up to **100** individuals

ELING Group, a leading company in Kosovo's energy sector, initiated the process of establishing a training centre for solar technicians in response to the rapidly growing solar energy sector. This initiative stemmed from a collaborative effort with the European Youth Employment (EYE) program, which emphasised the importance of dual education. In cooperation with MIRECK and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sonnenenergie Landesverband Berlin Brandenburg e.V. (DGS), ELING Group started developing the training centre in June 2023. This one-year process involved creating an occupation standard necessary for accreditation by the National Qualification Authority (NQA).

Integration of Training Component:

- ELING efficiently set up the training centre without additional infrastructure investments.
- Sessions are conducted both at ELING Group's premises in Cagllavica and on-site at solar installation projects, ensuring a balanced mix of theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Training Structure at SOLARIT Academy by ELING:

- **Course Offerings** Short-term (7–10 days) and longer, more intensive sessions, depending on the candidates' prior knowledge.
- **Training Programs**
 - **Solar Technician Training:** This is for job seekers, local company personnel involved in solar installation projects, electrical installation technicians, engineers, and other interested candidates.
 - **Professional Training for Solar Technicians:** Focused on developing practical skills and knowledge in solar panel installation and maintenance.
 - **Advanced Solar Installation Techniques:** Specialised training on cutting-edge solar technologies and installation methods.
- **Certification and Employment:**
 - Participants who complete the training receive a certificate issued by ELING Group and DGS Solar Academy.
 - Top candidates from each training session are guaranteed employment opportunities within the industry.

By integrating comprehensive training programs into its operations, ELING Group addresses the severe shortage of skilled workers in the solar panel sector, ensuring a well-trained workforce to meet the increasing demand for renewable energy solutions.

- **Sales Growth Forecast: 4.17%**
- **Investment in Training: €6,493**



Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities of the Model

Strengths of the Model

The implementation of the input-supplier model has shown measurable improvements in business performance for companies adopting this approach. Increased productivity, enhanced quality, and revenue growth have been observed as direct results of better-trained staff. Additionally, improved training and skill development have led to higher employee retention rates. By integrating training centres with their business operations, companies not only enhance their product offerings but also ensure a continuous supply of skilled labour, driving long-term growth and competitiveness in the market.

One of the most significant strengths of the input-supplier model is its direct integration with industry needs, ensuring that training programs are tailored to equip trainees with skills that are immediately applicable in the workforce. This direct industry integration has resulted in tangible benefits for businesses, as evidenced by the success stories of three key beneficiaries: **Korabi Corporation, Shehu, and ELING Group**.

The input-supplier model has shown remarkable strengths in promoting youth engagement and employment across various demographics, a key objective of the Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) project. This model has significantly increased the number of individuals trained and employed, thereby contributing to economic growth and workforce development.

All beneficiaries have reported significant improvements in productivity and profitability due to the input-supplier model. For instance, one beneficiary mentioned an **80% pure profit from the training centre yearly**, amounting to about **€80,000** in direct payments.

The success of these businesses illustrates that the input-supplier model is not merely a training initiative but a strategic business enhancement tool. By addressing the specific needs of each sector and fostering a skilled workforce, the model promotes a cycle of continuous improvement and repeat business. This, in turn, leads to



increased revenue, market share growth, and a more robust competitive position.

One of the most significant strengths of the input-supplier model is its direct integration with industry needs, ensuring that training programs are tailored to equip trainees with skills that are immediately applicable in the workforce. This direct industry integration has resulted in tangible benefits for businesses, as evidenced by the success stories of three key beneficiaries.

Moreover, the input-supplier model complements the formal vocational education and training (VET) sector by providing non-formal training

options. This dual approach ensures that industrial growth is better enabled by having both formal and non-formal training avenues. Businesses benefit from a more flexible and responsive training system that can quickly adapt to industry changes and demands, thus enhancing overall sector performance.

In summary, the input-supplier model offers substantial benefits for businesses by improving productivity, profitability, and employee retention. It enhances the VET sector by integrating non-formal training options that align closely with industry needs, ultimately driving industrial growth and economic development.

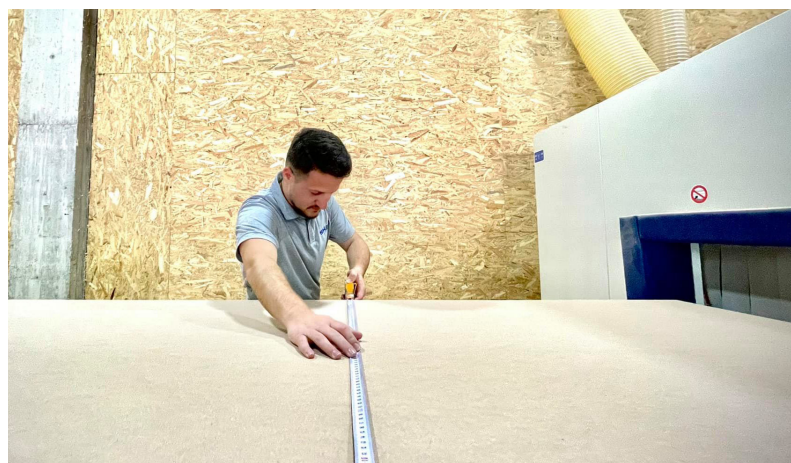


Challenges in the Implementation of the Input Supplier Model

Implementing the input-supplier model has presented several challenges for beneficiaries, reflecting both common and unique obstacles. These challenges highlight the complexities and operational difficulties associated with integrating training programs within business operations.

Summary of Challenges Faced by Businesses

Beneficiary	Specific Challenges
Korabi Corporation	• Bureaucratic delays in obtaining construction permits. • Securing sufficient funds for training infrastructure and equipment. • Extensive outreach and marketing are needed to attract trainees. Ensuring consistent student enrolment. • Managing no-shows from committed participants.
ELING Group	• Identifying and negotiating with a suitable training partner (e.g., DGS). • Coordinating with vocational schools and the Ministry of Education to align training objectives with standards. • Adapting training content to fit the cultural context of Kosovo. • Recruiting women, many of whom are already employed and unwilling to commit due to contract obligations.
Shehu	• Convincing industry stakeholders of the fundamental value of training. • Addressing concerns about the lack of protection for training investment. • Lack of regulations ensuring employees stay post-training.



Despite these unique challenges, several obstacles were common among the beneficiaries, indicating systemic issues in implementing the input-supplier model.

1. Securing Funds

2. Attracting and Retaining Trainees beyond their clients

These unique and common challenges highlight the hurdles of implementing the input-supplier model and suggest areas where additional support and strategic planning could help mitigate these obstacles. By addressing these issues, the model can become more effective and sustainable.

To ease the process for future businesses willing to implement similar models, a set of potential solutions has been developed. These solutions focus on key areas such as engagement and advocacy, funding strategies, marketing and outreach, flexible payment and participation plans, partnership development, cultural adaptation, support for women, stakeholder education, and policy advocacy.

1. Funding Strategies:

To secure sufficient funds for training infrastructure and equipment, exploring diverse funding sources such as grants, public-private partnerships, and crowdfunding.

2. Marketing and Outreach:

Developing comprehensive marketing strategies that leverage social media, community events, and partnerships with local organizations which helps businesses attract and retain trainees.

3. Flexible Payment and Participation Plans:

Implementing flexible payment plans to help participants manage payments for their training. Introducing attendance incentives and maintaining regular communication can reduce no-shows and ensure participant commitment.

4. Support for Women:

Offering flexible training schedules and providing childcare support can accommodate women's participation, especially those already employed or with contract obligations.

5. Policy Advocacy:

Advocating for policy changes to enhance protections for training investments and promoting awareness of existing protections are crucial. Developing retention strategies, such as offering competitive salaries, career progression opportunities, and bonding agreements, can ensure that employees stay post-training.

Conclusion

The implementation of the input-supplier model within the EYE project has proven to be a significant driver of economic growth and workforce development in Kosovo. **The model's direct integration with industry needs** ensures that training programs are tailored to equip trainees with skills that are immediately applicable in the workforce. This direct industry integration has resulted in tangible benefits for businesses, as evidenced by the success stories of Korabi, Shehu, and ELING Group.

Korabi, for example, experienced more than double growth in sales and provided advanced vocational training to thousands of women, contributing to business metrics such as increased productivity and market expansion. **Shehu** significantly enhanced the employment prospects of young people in the wood processing sector, leading to improved operational efficiency, production capacity, and product quality. **ELING Group** has started to support the growth of the solar energy sector by setting up a training centre for solar technicians, contributing to better installation quality, customer satisfaction, and an expanded client base.

Key findings from the input-supplier model highlight several benefits. Firstly, **training programs provided by the input suppliers have enhanced workforce skill sets**, making employees more competitive and productive. **Businesses that integrated these training programs have experienced notable improvements in operational efficiency and product quality**, resulting in increased business productivity and efficiency. Moreover, **training initiatives have helped businesses expand their market presence and increase revenue**, with companies reporting substantial increases in annual revenue post-model implementation.

Despite these successes, several challenges were encountered during the implementation of the model. **Securing sufficient funds for training infrastructure** and resources was a common challenge among all beneficiaries. **Attracting and retaining trainees** also posed difficulties. Additionally, **adapting training programs to fit the local context** was an obstacle for all companies involved.

Opportunities for Improvement and Expansion

To address these, future implementations should include **targeted outreach and tailored training programs** to engage all communities in Kosovo, ensuring a more diverse participant base. Initiatives to increase **female participation in technical fields**, such as flexible training schedules and childcare support, can further enhance inclusivity. Additionally, **strengthening financial and regulatory support** is crucial. Exploring partnerships with financial institutions to offer low-interest loans or grants for training programs and introducing tax incentives or subsidies for companies investing in employee training, could encourage broader participation. Implementing policies to ensure trained employees stay with their companies post-training can mitigate concerns about employee turnover.

Expanding Industry-Led Training

The **crowding-in effect** within industries occurs when new training programs spark further interest and investment in similar initiatives. This leads to increased competition and broader benefits as more entities adopt effective training models, resulting in a more skilled workforce. Increased competition among training providers drives improvements in quality and innovation. This phenomenon is evident in Kosovo, where businesses like Korabi in the pastry sector and Shehu in wood processing have pioneered effective training models, encouraging broader participation and significant advancements.

The successful implementation of these models has inspired other businesses to follow suit. For example, Sweet Vesa and LB Group have launched training programs in the pastry and bakery sector, recognizing the benefits of equipping their workforce with industry-specific skills. Companies like PNC, Loni Dekor, and Dekoriti have embraced these practices in wood processing, further validating the effectiveness of the input-supplier model.

Furthermore, the input-supplier model has significant potential for expansion into other sectors, such as metalwork. By adapting the existing successful framework, new industries can benefit from improved training and employment opportunities, enhancing the model's resilience and sustainability. Expanding into sectors like metalwork can leverage the established framework, ensuring that training programs remain relevant and aligned with industry needs. This diversification can also enhance the model's resilience, ensuring continued benefits for a wider audience and contributing to sustainable economic development.

In conclusion, the input-supplier model has demonstrated significant potential in driving economic growth and workforce development in Kosovo. **By addressing the skills gap and providing business-relevant vocational training**, the model has the potential to transform non-formal vocational training and create a more inclusive and skilled workforce. With targeted improvements and strategic support, the input-supplier model can continue to deliver substantial benefits to businesses and the broader economy in Kosovo.

Annex I: Methodology

The methodology for this study was designed to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis through a combination of desk research and qualitative analysis. It encompassed several key components to ensure a thorough understanding of the input supplier model and its impact.

The study started with a review of reports provided by the EYE Project. This involved examining all relevant documents and existing data shared by EYE to gather baseline information and context about the input supplier model and its implementation. Additionally, a literature review of similar vocational training models from other countries was conducted to draw comparisons and identify best practices.

Following the desk study, the research included designing a semi-structured questionnaire, which was administered to three businesses that had implemented the input-supplier model created by the EYE Project. The questionnaire aimed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data on various aspects such as the effectiveness of the training models, challenges faced, and measurable impacts on business metrics. It was designed to capture a broad spectrum of business experiences and insights, including:

- The advantages and benefits experienced by the companies.
- The obstacles and challenges encountered during implementation.
- Key business metrics impacted by the model, such as sales growth, productivity, and market expansion.
- Recommendations for improvement and scalability of the model.

The interviews conducted using the designed questionnaire were crucial for gaining insights and understanding the experiences of the companies involved. These interviews explored the benefits and challenges encountered, the perceived value of the training models, and any suggestions for improvement.

Throughout the entire process, there was ongoing support and interaction with the EYE project team. This collaboration was essential to guide the study, address any emerging challenges, and ensure a high response rate from businesses. The EYE Project's involvement helped in refining the research instruments, providing additional context, and facilitating connections with relevant stakeholders.

By combining these methodologies, the study presents a well-rounded analysis that highlights the strengths and areas for improvement in the vocational training models supported by the EYE Project.

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