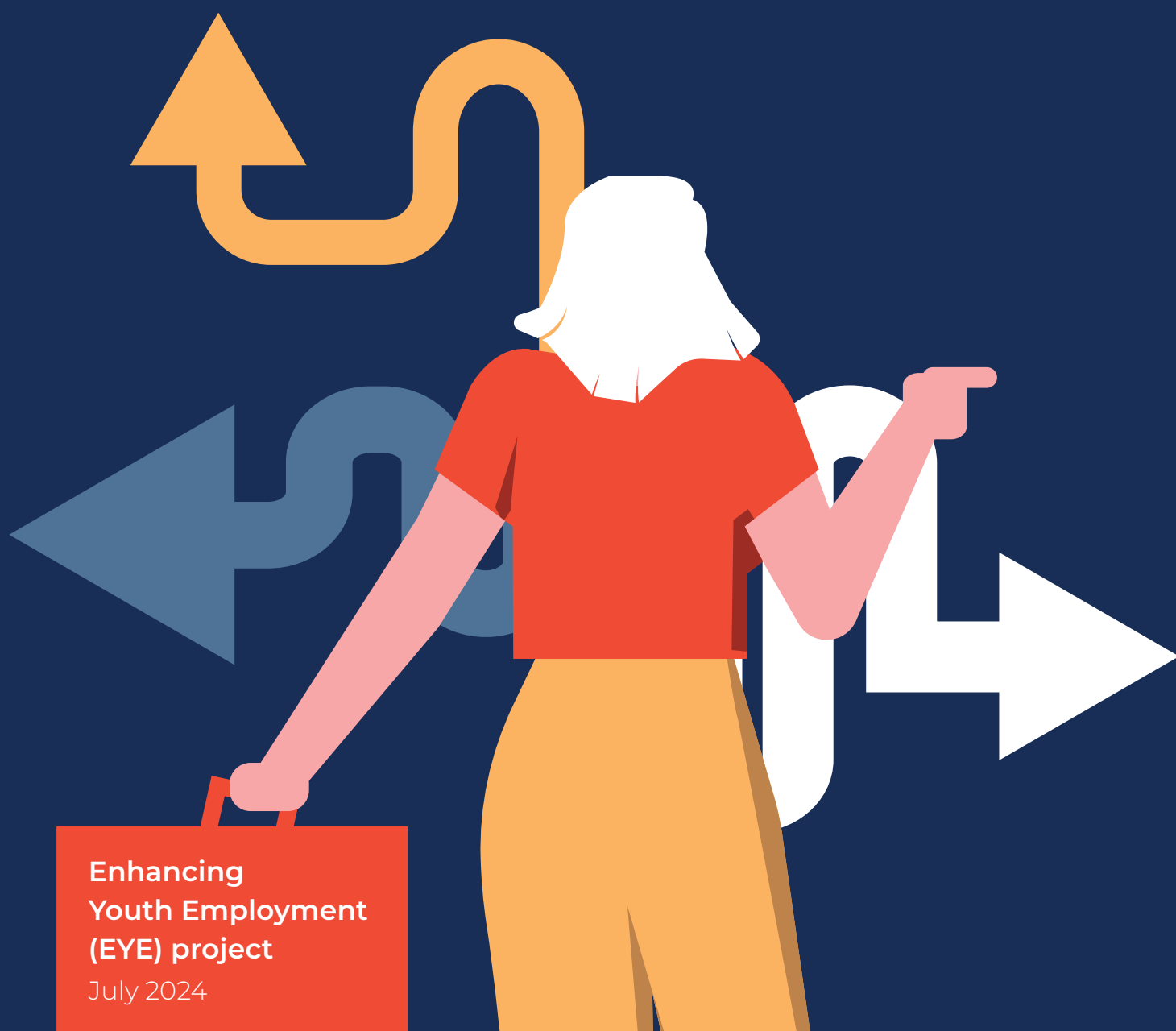


Navigating Labor Markets Through School-Based Career Guidance in VET Institutions in Kosovo

A Case Study on Results, Lessons, and Future Directions

Part 2



Enhancing
Youth Employment
(EYE) project

July 2024



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



HELVETAS

Management
Development
Associates





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Acronym

AI	Administrative Instruction
AVETAE	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education
CHF	Swiss Franc
CoP	Community of Practice
CVETA	Council for VET and Adults
EYE	Enhancing Youth Employment
MDA	Management Development Associates
MBCC	Municipality-Based Career Center
MED	Municipal Education Directorate
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation
MSD	Market Systems Development
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQA	National Qualification Authority
SBCC	School-Based Career Center
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
CoC	Center of Competence
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transactions
EARK	Employment Agency of Republic of Kosovo

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Zenebe Uraguchi
Prishtina and Bern
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Executive Summary



Introduction and overview

In the bustling streets of Prishtina, Kosovo, the struggles and aspirations of its youth are vividly embodied in their stories. These journeys reflect the broader narrative of balancing educational aspirations with the harsh realities of employment. Against a backdrop of tradition, evolving peer dynamics, economic challenges, and technological shifts, these stories highlight the complexities within Kosovo's youth labor market.

This case study shows how the Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) project supported young women and men to get the benefits of career guidance. Through extensive interviews and secondary data, the case study presents how the EYE project's facilitator (the Intervention Manager) worked to achieve this aim. The case study answers questions such as what the project did and why, if the project's actions worked or not, and how key stakeholders were engaged and how they responded.

Challenges in Kosovo's Youth Labor Market

Kosovo's youth face obstacles in securing decent employment opportunities. The country's youth unemployment rate was at a staggering 21% as of 2022. Despite efforts to modernize the economy, persistent mismatches between educational offerings and job market demands have worsened employment prospects. Temporary and informal job opportunities further deepen the issue, leaving many young Kosovars to navigate a labor market full of uncertainties. Social media influence and rising living costs add more layers of complexity, forcing young people to seek alternative ways for skill acquisition and entrepreneurial pursuits.

EYE Kosovo: Addressing the Challenges

In response to the above challenges, the EYE project, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by HELVETAS and Management Development Associates (MDA), has facilitated bridging the gap between education and employment since its inception in 2013, continuing until its mandate ends in 2024. By integrating standardized career guidance into Kosovo's vocational education and training (VET) institutions, EYE facilitated reducing the disconnect between educational offerings and industry demands.

Key pillars of EYE's strategy for career guidance in VET institutions include:

- The provision of effective career services through the School-Based Career Center (SBCC) and qualified career advisors,
- The empowerment of municipal leadership to support the sustainability of career services,
- The establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms, and
- The alignment of educational curricula with the evolving needs of the job market.

The Case Study

The case study looks into the EYE project's performance. The study is structured and presented as a two-part series. Part One covers the objective of the case study and its methodology. It also details the research (diagnosis), vision/strategy, and interventions of the EYE project in career guidance in VET institutions.¹ Part Two discusses the results, lessons, and recommendations, as well as the future directions of career guidance in Kosovo.

The case study reveals notable successes in addressing challenges related to career decision-making, mobilizing stakeholder support, and institutionalizing career services within Kosovo's VET system.

¹ VET institutions in Kosovo consist of 63 VET schools that are managed by municipalities and 6 Competence Centers (CoCs) managed by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adults Education (AVETAEE).

While acknowledging potential biases inherent in the case study process (e.g., sampling bias, focus only “before-after” rather than “with” or “without” career guidance services), the findings underline the tangible impact of EYE’s interventions and provide valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at enhancing youth employment opportunities.

The achievements in career guidance services in VET institutions have been impressive, especially during the period 2021-2024 when the institutionalization of career services in the VET system has been achieved. The number of financially sustainable SBCCs established has reached 19 in EYE’s partner VET schools which have

around 12,000 students, while another 6 SBCCs have been established by other donors, copying the SBCC model supported by EYE.

Since the first SBCC started operating in 2016, around 150,000 career services have been provided to VET students and 9th graders. 41% of users are women, while 2% are minorities.

The number of businesses involved in the activities of VET schools through SBCCs has reached over 2,300, offering

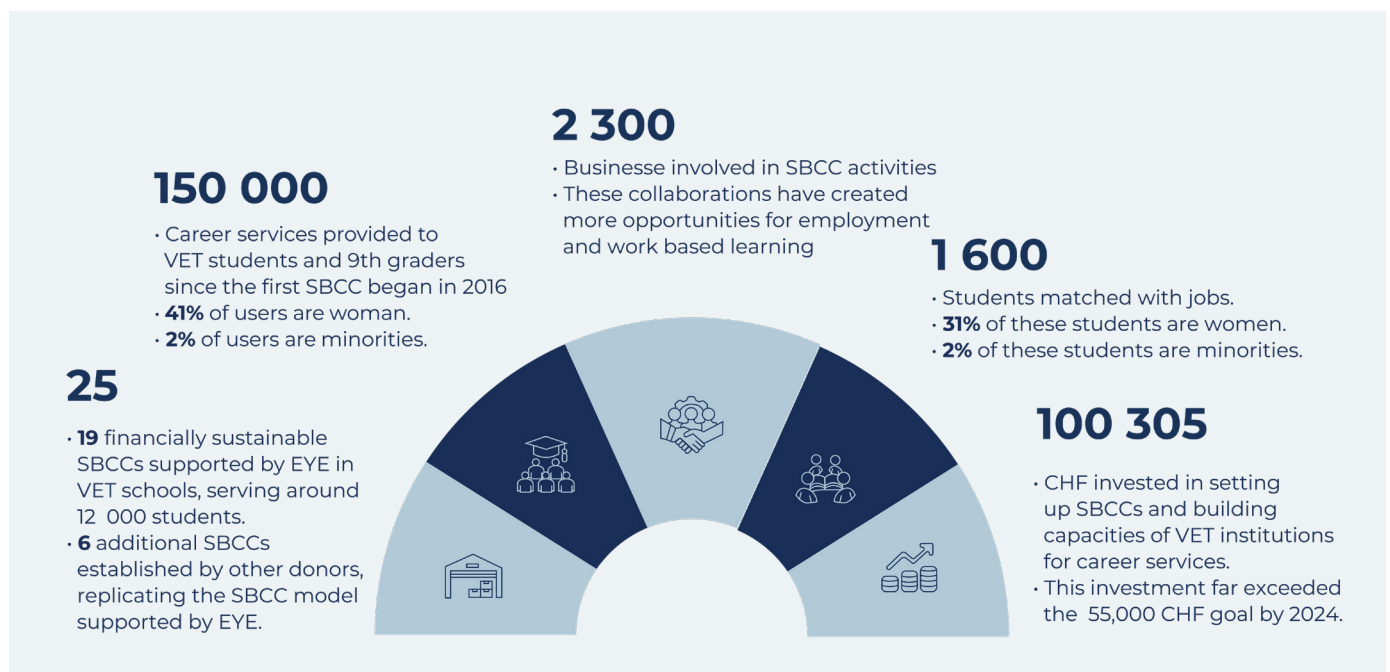


Figure 1: Key achievements of the EYE project

VET students more opportunities for employment and work-based learning. This collaboration with businesses has resulted in approximately 1,600 students being matched with jobs. 31% of participants are women, while 2% are minorities.

Public funds invested for setting up SBCCs and building capacities of VET institutions for the provision of career services reached 100,305 CHF surpassing the 55,000 CHF goal by 2024. These achievements highlight the project's impact on labor market access and support for youth and businesses in Kosovo.

Vision, Findings, and Recommendations

The project's vision is for all VET institutions to provide career guidance services that would support all students find a job. There is a strong emphasis on social inclusion, institutional sustainability, and employer participation. Through a long, patient, facilitated journey, the foundations for this vision have been laid.

The case study's findings highlight systemic deficiencies within Kosovo's career guidance infrastructure, necessitating targeted interventions to address disparities among vulnerable groups.

Through the SBCC model, the project facilitated the effective integration of career guidance into Kosovo's VET institutions. It

championed operational excellence, quality assurance, and stakeholder engagement as cornerstones of its implementation strategy. EYE's facilitation, based on strong local ownership, contributed to significant advancements. The European Training Foundation recognized these efforts as shown in the performance monitoring report of the VET system in Kosovo within the Turin Process (2023). This has led to inclusive, accessible, and high-quality career guidance in Kosovo. To date, this is possible across 25 VET institutions in different municipalities in Kosovo.

Improving career guidance in Kosovo's 69 VET institutions (63 VET schools and 6 Competence Centers) requires a systemic approach. This approach should leverage current progress to address present challenges and future aspirations of Kosovar youth. It involves sustainable funding through public-private partnerships and government investment. Ensuring standardized quality across schools is essential. Engaging the private sector for practical experiences is also crucial. Strategic partnerships, parental engagement, and tailored interventions for youth migration are important. Overcoming challenges like gender norms and funding sustainability necessitates ongoing dedication.

Key system changes

The EYE project facilitated system changes through shifts in behaviors and practices, improvements in norms and values, and structural changes. By embedding career centers in schools, it transformed career guidance into an integral part of education, encouraging the use of updated tools, digital platforms, and industry engagement in career workshops.

Incentives played a crucial role in motivating the adoption of new career guidance practices. Professional development for career advisors, financial rewards for schools, and participation incentives for students were key measures that improved the quality and accessibility of career guidance.

Changing societal norms and values, particularly concerning gender roles and vocational training, significantly influenced career guidance practices. The project promoted gender equality and greater community involvement, redefining societal views on vocational training.

The EYE project redefined relationships between educational institutions and employers, altered the dynamics between advisors and students, and integrated career guidance into national education policies. This was achieved through formal partnerships and networks that connected students with potential employers and career development resources.

The EYE project's success is attributed to

its inclusive approach, aligning with the “leaving no one behind” objective of the Sustainable Development Goals. The project engaged with target groups through a comprehensive process of identifying needs, choosing relevant sectors, and promoting gender and social inclusion.

EYE's sustainability strategy included the institutionalization of career guidance within VET systems, supported by municipal funding and stakeholder collaboration. The project emphasized additionality, encouraging investments and engagements that otherwise might not occur. EYE also promoted green skills in sectors like automotive and energy, supporting the green transition.

The project's strategies ensured the scalability and sustainability of career guidance services across Kosovo. Documenting best practices, standardizing processes, engaging stakeholders, integrating policies, and building capacity through training programs created a robust framework for replicating the SBCC model nationally.

Future Directions and Conclusions

Looking ahead, the trajectory of Kosovo's career guidance system depends on proactive measures. These measures should anticipate labor market trends, promote entrepreneurship, and enhance

stakeholder engagement. By leveraging lessons learned from the EYE project, Kosovo is well-positioned to embrace a collaborative approach to youth empowerment. This puts the country on course toward a more vibrant and inclusive economy.

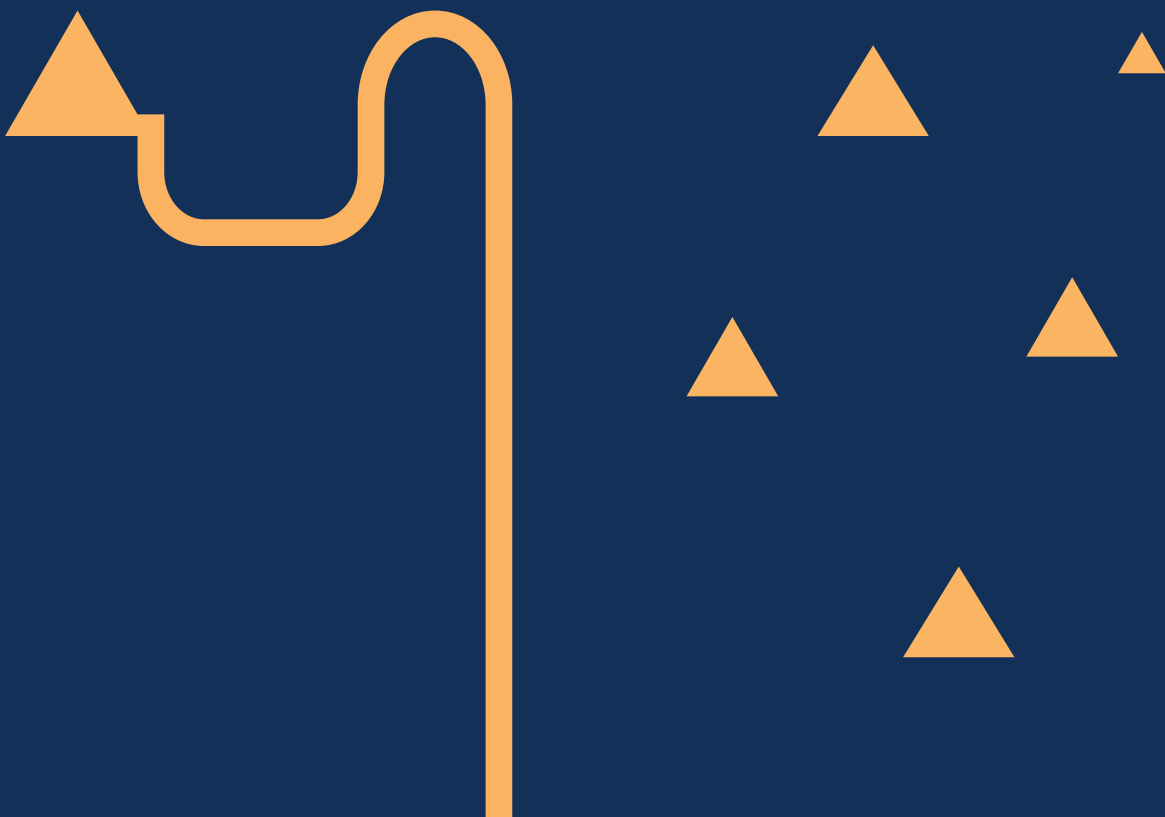
As young people continue their journey through the bustling streets of Prishtina, their stories serve as a reminder, highlighting the resilience and determination embedded within Kosovo's youth. The work of EYE is one of the efforts in Kosovo that gives hope that young people are poised to shape the future of the country's labor market landscape through relevant, functional, and sustainable career guidance.

The EYE project's career guidance intervention in Kosovo has led to system changes in several key areas. This executive summary highlights the project's achievements, strategies, and future directions to ensure the sustainability and scalability of career guidance services across Kosovo's vocational education and training (VET) institutions.





Section 1:
ACHIEVING LASTING,
LARGE-SCALE RESULTS:
STORIES OF SYSTEM CHANGE



1.1 Understanding System Change

This case study has identified three key areas of systems change as related to the career guidance intervention of the EYE project.

The first form of system change constitutes shifts in behaviors and practices. Incentives play a crucial role in shaping behaviors and practices by providing motivation and rewards for desired actions. In the context of the EYE project, incentives encouraged the adoption of new career guidance practices.

For instance, offering professional development opportunities for career advisors motivated them to utilize updated career assessment tools and digital platforms. Financial incentives or recognition programs for schools and educators who successfully engage industry experts in career workshops also drove the integration of these practices. Additionally, incentives for students, such as certificates or internship opportunities through mentorship programs, enhanced their participation and skill development, ultimately improving their employability.

The second type of system change signals improvements in norms and values. These norms and values are collectively held/perceived to be “right”, are based on historical background, and invoke strong emotions among community members. For instance, challenging traditional gender roles that limit career choices for women, or shifting societal perceptions about the importance of vocational training versus

academic education, significantly impacted how career guidance is perceived and practiced.

The last type of system change is about structures and processes. Changes in structures and processes include power dynamics, relationships/networks, and institutionalization. In the context of the EYE project, this involved redefining the relationships between educational institutions and employers, changing the dynamics between career advisors and students, and institutionalizing career guidance programs within the educational system. The career guidance intervention brought about the establishment of formal partnerships between schools and industries, integrating career guidance into the national education policy, and creating networks that connect students with potential employers and career development resources.

Based on the above understanding of system change in career guidance, the next section discusses the role of EYE in facilitating system change.

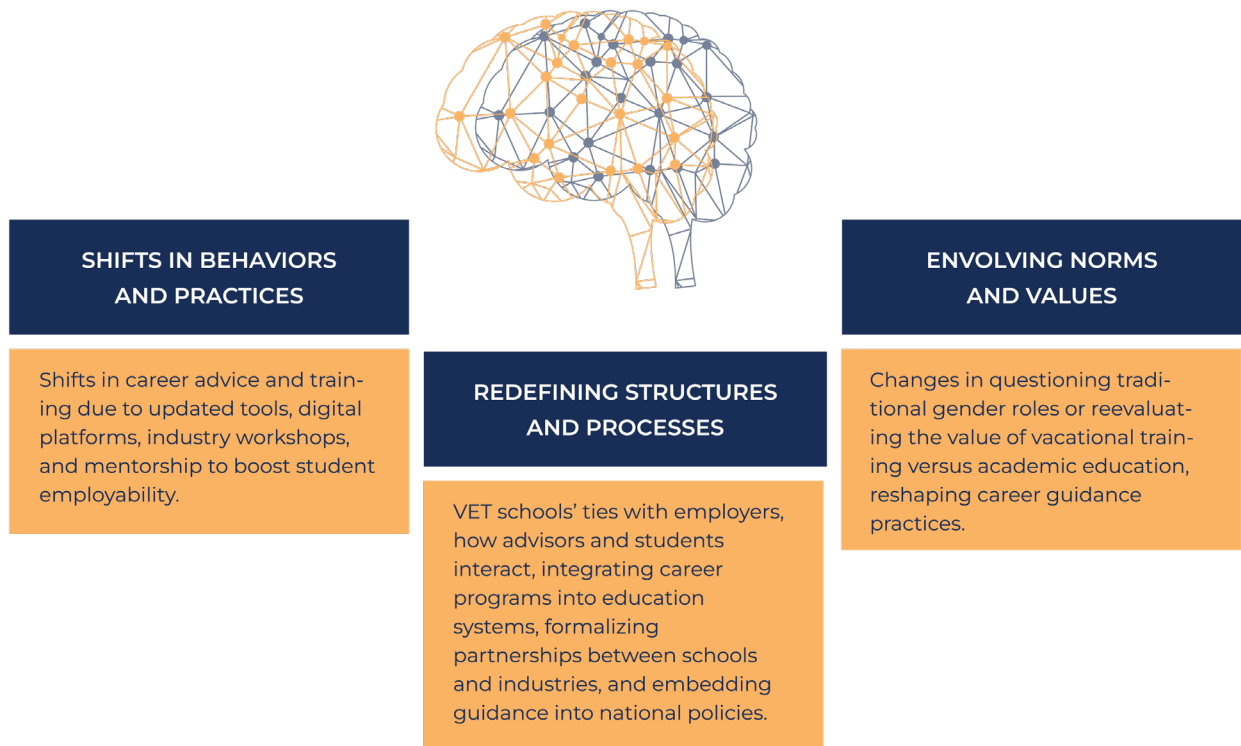


Figure 2: Understanding of systems change

1.2 Role of EYE in System Change

1.2.1 Behavioral and Practical Shifts

Adoption of new career guidance practices:

The implementation of the SBCC model in Kosovo's VET institutions marked a clear shift in career guidance practices. By embedding career centers and career advisers directly within schools, the EYE project facilitated the integration of career guidance into students' educational journeys by supporting the actors of career guidance, rather than treating it as an external service mainly carried out by donor-funded organizations.

Testimonials from students show the impact: "The inclusion of career guidance within our

school program has been important. With the establishment of career centers and expert advisors, we feel more empowered to make informed career decisions. Some of us even secured internships through the connections built by the career guidance program with local businesses."

A former director of a Center of Competence (CoC) in Prizren remarked, "I remember when the EYE project came knocking; I was dead set against it. "To me, it felt like just another project funded by outsiders meddling with Kosovo's education system," he says, shaking his

head at his past stubbornness around 2020. “How about now?” we asked. With a grin, he replied, “I see the fruits now. That is why I eventually agreed to collaborate with the project.”

Improved standards and training for career advisors: This was at the heart of the creation and accreditation of qualification programs for career advisors. The EYE project supported career guidance provided by capable professionals. Vocational school career advisors lauded the initiative, confirming, “The resources and training facilitated by the EYE project have been invaluable. We now possess standardized methodologies and tools to effectively guide students. Additionally, the incorporation of digital platforms has significantly enhanced the

efficiency and accessibility of our services.”

Strengthened engagement with employers: The interventions of EYE facilitated the connections between VET institutions and businesses, resulting in increased opportunities for internships, mentorship programs, and real-world experience for students. The director of VET School “A. Ramaj” highlighted the project’s impact, stating, “With the EYE project, career guidance has become a cornerstone of our educational offerings, better preparing our students for their future.”

Piloting and expansion of SBCC: The successful pilot program in Vushtri



demonstrated the effectiveness of this innovative approach of EYE, leading to the establishment of 25 SBCCs across Kosovo. This pioneering effort represented a systemic shift in the VET system's approach to career guidance, providing students with better resources, industry connections, and enhanced career support. As a first mover, EYE provided extensive support to the VET school in Vushtri to demonstrate the model's effectiveness.

1.2.2 Normative and Value Improvements

Redefining perceptions of VET: The interventions of EYE challenged entrenched societal views on vocational training, positioning it as a valuable and respectable career path. This was particularly crucial in

a context where vocational education often took a backseat to academic pursuits. A parent shared his perspective, stating, "As a parent, I have witnessed a significant shift in my child's attitude towards their future career. Career guidance has opened up new possibilities and instilled them with the confidence to pursue their passions. I now feel more engaged in their career journey."

Gender equality efforts: The interventions of EYE contributed to facilitating the shift to traditional gender roles that restricted career choices for girls and women. By advocating for inclusivity and encouraging diverse participation in VET programs, the interventions contributed to changing societal norms surrounding gender and career options. However, the finding of the case study also confirmed the need for further efforts, particularly in addressing



gendered profile selections within VET institutions.

Community engagement: Through strategic partnerships and community involvement, the interventions of EYE encouraged a culture where career guidance and vocational training were viewed as essential components of personal and professional growth. This included regular collaboration with parents to involve them in the career development process of students.

1.2.3 Structural and Procedural Changes

Institutionalization of career guidance: EYE's advocacy efforts led to the formal integration of career guidance into the VET system, supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI). This included the accreditation of the career advisor qualifications program by the NQA, ensuring that career guidance became a recognized and institutionalized aspect of education.

A municipal education department director highlighted the impact, stating, "By institutionalizing career guidance and standardizing advisor training, we are setting a new benchmark for vocational education in Kosovo. The project's influence is evident in increased engagement and improved career outcomes for our students."

Standardization and decentralization: The

project focused on standardizing career guidance processes and services across VET schools, facilitating replication nationally through operational manuals, infrastructure plans, and training programs. A career guidance advisor reflected, "Thanks to EYE, career guidance has transitioned from being overlooked to being a fundamental pillar of our education system."

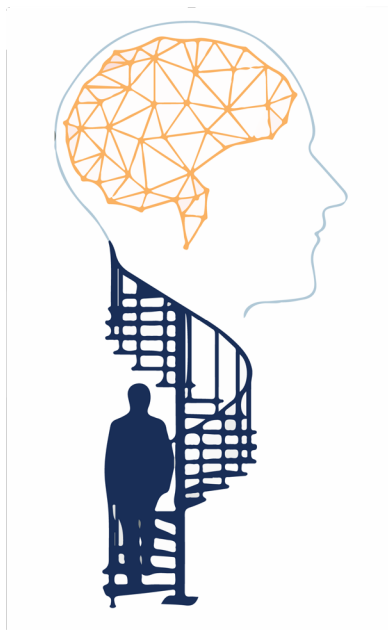
Sustainable funding models: By advocating for municipal investment in capacitating VET schools for the provision of career services through school-based career centers, the intervention facilitated the establishment of a sustainable funding model, reducing to some extent dependency on donor support. This decentralized approach has empowered local authorities and ensured the financial stability of career centers and services provided.

A municipal education director noted, "Through the EYE project, we have witnessed tangible improvements in career guidance delivery at the municipal level. The establishment of career centers and sustainable funding models have enabled us to play a more proactive role in shaping our students' future careers."

Partnerships and collaboration: EYE substantially contributed to the partnerships between VET institutions, municipalities, businesses, and national agencies, creating a supportive network that strengthened the delivery and sustainability of career guidance services. Representatives from various sectors expressed enthusiasm,

stating, “The involvement facilitated by the EYE project has provided an excellent platform to share our expertise with students and contribute to aligning the VET system

with industry demands. Without Valbona [the Intervention Manager], no one could manage to move the needle.”



Behavioral and practical shifts: Adoption of new career guidance practices; improved standards and training for career advisors; strengthened engagement with employers; and piloting and expansion of SBCC

Normative and value improvements: Redefining perceptions of VET; gender equality efforts challenging restricted career choices for women; and community engagement that included collaboration with parents to involve them in the career development.

Structural and procedural changes: Institutionalization of career guidance; standardization and decentralization; sustainable funding models; and partnerships and collaboration.

Figure 3: Role of the EYE project in systems change

1.3. Overall Assessment of the Results

1.3.1 What do the numbers tell us?

The results of the EYE project highlight its significant impact on improving employment opportunities for young women and men and SBCCs at VET institutions have made a significant contribution by providing tailored advice to young people regarding career paths aligned with their skills. This impact is especially emphasized in the period 2021-2024 when the institutionalization of

career services in the VET system has been achieved.

The number of financially sustainable school-based career centers (SBCCs) established has reached 19 in EYE's partner VET schools that have around 12,000 students, while another 6 SBCCs have been established by other donors, copying the SBCC model developed by EYE.

The number of businesses involved in the activities of VET schools through SBCCs has reached over 2,300, offering VET students

more opportunities for employment and work-based learning. This collaboration with businesses has resulted in approximately 1,600 students being matched with jobs. 31% of participants are women, while 2% are minorities.

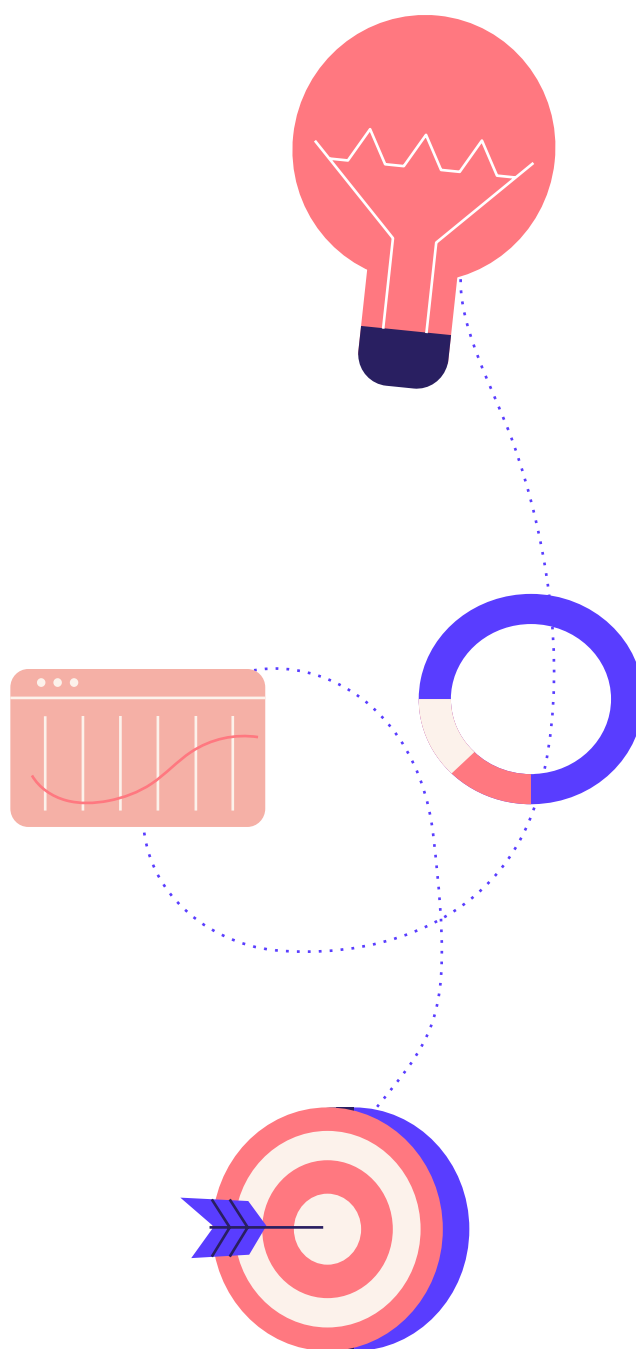
Furthermore, the project contributed to the significant expansion of access to career guidance information and services among students. Since the first SBCC started operating in 2016, around 150,000 career services were provided to VET students and 9th graders. 41% of users are women, while 2% are minorities.

These achievements underscore the project's success in fostering employment opportunities and economic growth through improved and inclusive career guidance information and services in Kosovo.

Furthermore, the percentage of students expressing satisfaction with career guidance services started at 0% as baseline, to come to 95% in 2024 by exceeding the target satisfaction rate of 75%. This high level of satisfaction among students utilizing career guidance services reflects ongoing improvements in service delivery and support to students navigating their career options.

Lastly, the commitment of public funds invested for setting up school-based career centers and building capacities of VET institutions for provision of career services on a national level reflects the recognition and endorsement of the project's impact

by governmental authorities. The public funding reached 100,305 CHF surpassing the 55,000 CHF goal by 2024. These figures highlight the success in securing increased financial support for expanding career center initiatives nationally, facilitating broader access to career guidance and employment opportunities across Kosovo.



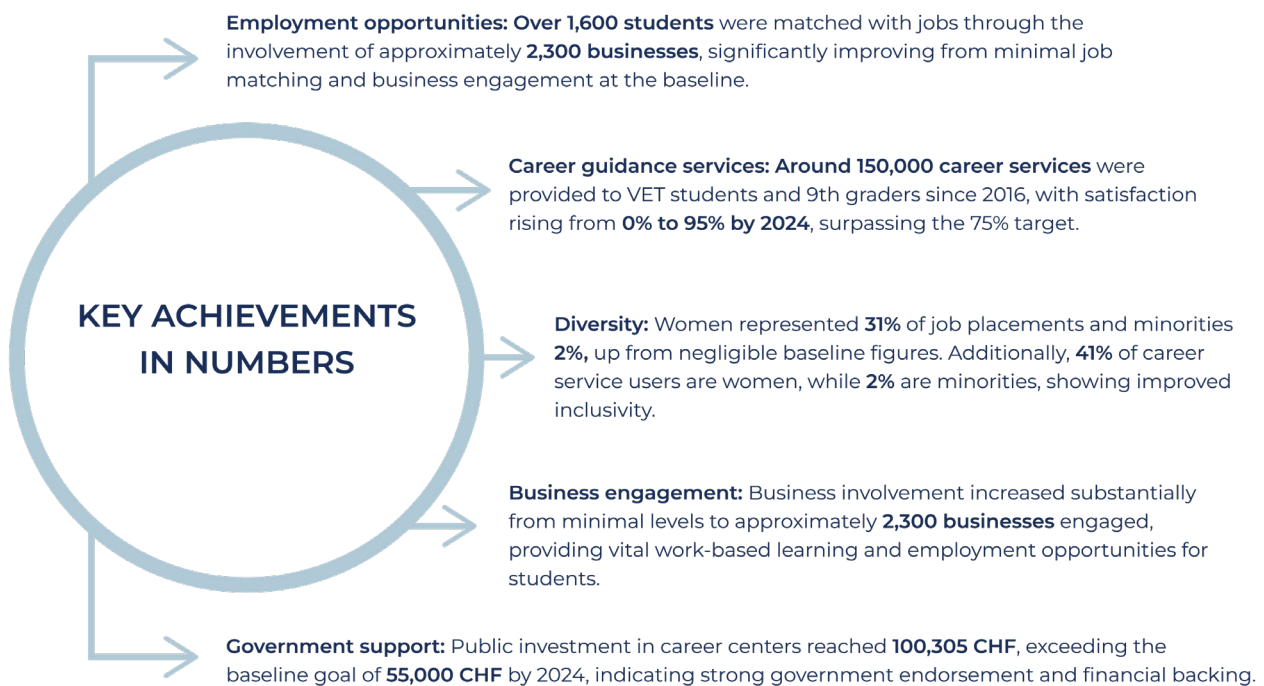


Figure 4: Key achievements in numbers

1.3.2 Reasons for the success of the model

Inclusion

In Kosovo, efforts to enhance the VET system aim to address challenges such as uninformed career choices, unemployment, low productivity, and the exclusion of marginalized groups. Various career services and guidance programs support all students, including women, girls, and minorities, in making informed career choices and accessing lifelong learning and employment opportunities.

In the context of the EYE project's work in career guidance within VET institutions, the

project was to a higher extent guided by the objective of "leaving no one behind," which is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To ensure that its interventions were demand-driven, inclusive, and relevant, the EYE project engaged in consultation with its target groups. The project used three key processes to involve the target groups:

(a) Identifying, defining, and reaching:

This involved identifying the needs and aspirations of the target groups, defining the scope of intervention, and reaching out to them through various channels to ensure their voices are heard.

(b) Choosing relevant sectors: The EYE project supported VET schools to adjust their career guidance system to sectors that offered opportunities and were feasible for the target groups. This selection process considered the interests and capabilities of the students, aligning with their career goals and the demands of the job market.

(c) Facilitating gender and social inclusion: The project placed a clear focus on gender and social inclusion, ensuring that all students, regardless of gender or

background, had equal access to career guidance services. This involved actively reaching out to those with power and leverage, including public and private sector stakeholders, civil society organizations, and community leaders. Partner selection and engagement were aligned with the project's vision and strategy on gender and social inclusion.



Overall, the targeting strategy of the EYE project recognized the importance of engaging both formal and informal institutions, including the legal system and societal norms, in addressing disparities and promoting inclusion. This includes challenging traditional gender roles that may limit career choices for certain groups. The project also acknowledged the impact of discrimination on individuals' self-esteem and confidence (minority groups, women), striving to provide support and guidance to build their confidence and empower them to pursue their career aspirations.

Sustainability

Law No 04/L 138 on VET, passed in 2013, mandates career development support as part of lifelong learning. School-based career centers in VET institutions, funded by municipal budgets, ensure ongoing support and sustainable career services for students. These centers provide crucial career advice and are integrated with teaching methodologies, supporting students' aspirations sustainably.

The SBCC model within VET institutions operated by responding directly to the demands of the key stakeholders. By prioritizing such an approach, the project tried to ensure that the commitment and ownership of key stakeholders (VET institutions, private sector enterprises, public sector agencies, and students) were maximized, while minimizing the project's

financial and operational inputs. This approach emphasized that the project did not replace the funding or responsibilities of other parties, but rather worked collaboratively with them.

Additionally, the project, to the extent possible, considered the concept of additionality² throughout its lifecycle. It tried to stimulate engagements or investments that private and public sector players might not otherwise pursue or to accelerate these actions on a larger scale for greater developmental impact. Through ongoing monitoring and assessment, the project evaluated the results of its interventions, adjusting strategies as needed to maintain long-term effectiveness. This included regular sustainability checks to assess the institutional incentives and capacities of all involved actors, ensuring the project's interventions remained aligned with the evolving needs of the stakeholders.

Through tailored career guidance sessions, the EYE project highlighted the importance of green skills in emerging industries such as automotive and energy. Students were provided with information about the growing demand for professionals with expertise in areas like electric vehicle technology, renewable energy systems, and energy efficiency. By showcasing the potential career opportunities and the importance of sustainability in these sectors, the project encouraged VET schools to consider providing students with training in fields aligned with the green transition.

² Additionality refers to the additional impact or benefits that EYE has brought beyond what would have occurred without its intervention. It assesses whether the project has generated outcomes that would not have happened otherwise, such as increased job opportunities to young women and men.

Scalability

Kosovo has seen the rise of several career services due to the demand for a skilled workforce and practical job market skills. Services like municipality-level career services, youth career centers, school career clubs, and the national platform Busulla.com offer diverse advantages. The SBCC model of EYE, praised for its innovation by

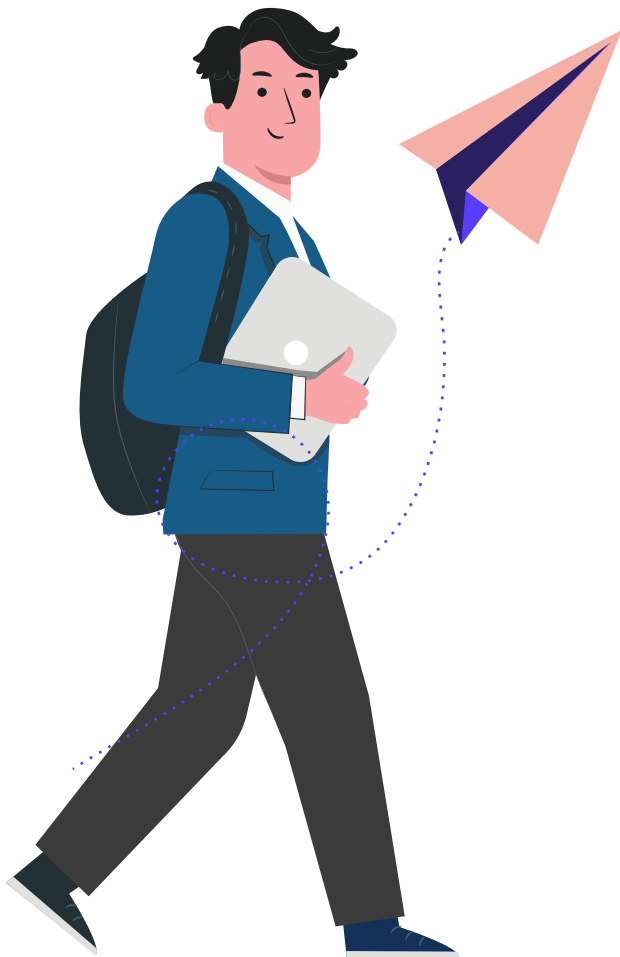
the stakeholders, effectively addresses VET school challenges, ensuring scalable career guidance integrated into VET institutions.

Assessing the scalability of the results of the EYE project involves evaluating the extent to which the results of the interventions can be scaled up and sustained across Kosovo. Several factors contributed to deeper and broader scalability.

DOCUMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES	
What: The project has documented its successes, challenges, and lessons learned.	How: By compiling reports, case studies, and impact assessments, the project has created a valuable repository of knowledge. This documentation served as a guide for replicating successful strategies and approaches in other settings.
STANDARDIZATION OF PROCESSES	
What: The project has standardized career guidance processes, training programs, and service delivery across VET schools.	How: Developing operational manuals, guidelines, and training modules ensured that these standardized practices could be easily replicated and adapted in different regions. This standardization maintained consistency and quality in service delivery.
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
What: The project has built strong partnerships with various stakeholders.	How: By involving government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations in planning, implementation, and evaluation, the project has created a supportive network. This network provided the necessary resources, expertise, and infrastructure to facilitate scalability.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION THROUGH POLICY INTEGRATION	
What: The project has integrated career guidance into national education policies and systems.	How: Securing formal recognition and support for the changes from government agencies like MESTI has led to leadership within the education system. This institutionalization ensured the sustainability and scalability of the project's results.
CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING	
What: The project has invested in capacity building and training programs.	How: Training career advisors, educators, and other stakeholders involved in vocational education equipped them with the skills, knowledge, and resources to replicate and sustain the project's results. This capacity-building effort created a cascading effect, extending the project's impact throughout the vocational education ecosystem

Table 1: EYE's strategy for scalability





Key Messages of Section 1

Understanding system change in career guidance: The EYE project identified three types of system change: behavioral shifts driven by incentives, normative improvements challenging traditional roles, and structural changes institutionalizing career guidance.

Role of EYE in facilitating system change: EYE played a crucial role in Kosovo's career centers by facilitating the embedding of career guidance in VET institutions, enhancing advisor training, and fostering partnerships with employers, thus catalyzing systemic shifts towards effective career guidance.

Assessment of EYE project results: EYE significantly contributed to the increased employment opportunities for youth, particularly women and minorities, through enhanced career services, job placements, and expanded access to career guidance and labor market information.

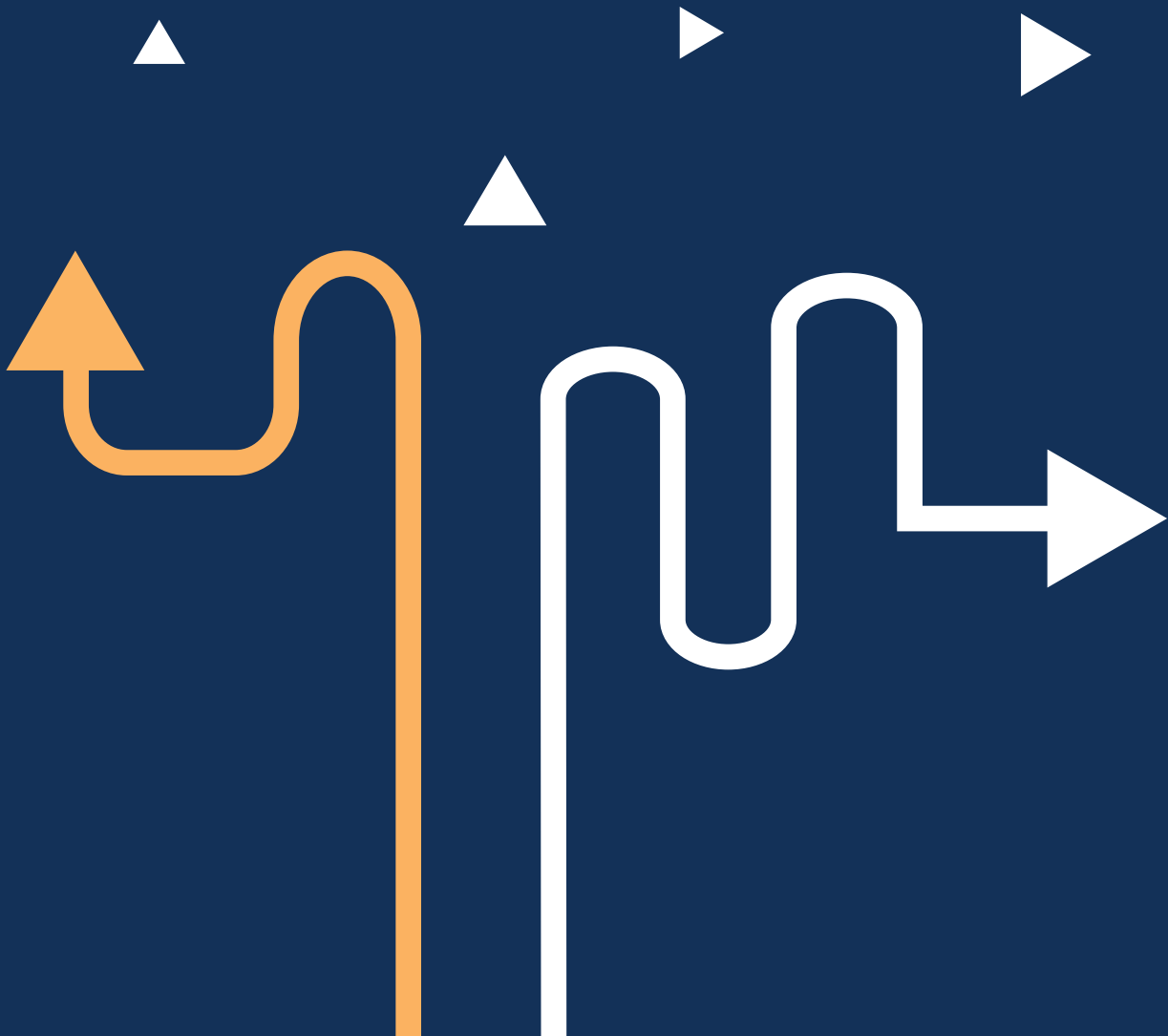
Factors contributing to the success of the EYE Model: Inclusive targeting strategies, stakeholder engagement, institutionalization of career guidance, and sustainable funding models were crucial in EYE's success, ensuring broad impact and long-term effectiveness.

Ensuring sustainability of career guidance intervention: By facilitating the integration of career guidance into national education policies, building local capacity, and promoting green skills, EYE laid foundations for sustainable career services that empower students and align with economic needs.

Scalability of SBCC model across Kosovo: Documented best practices, standardized processes, stakeholder engagement, policy integration, and capacity building enabled EYE to facilitate the scaling up of the successful career guidance model across Kosovo, ensuring replicability and broader impact.



Section 2:
CONCLUSIONS AND
KEY LESSONS



2.1 Main Conclusions

2.1.1 Context: Challenges and the EYE initiative

Young people in Kosovo, both women and men, have long faced challenges in navigating education and employment opportunities. The shift towards vocational training reflects a response to employer demands, yet youth unemployment remains a significant issue.

Initiatives like EYE aim to integrate career guidance into vocational education, addressing the gap between skills and job market needs. Despite progress, challenges persist, including outdated curricula and communication gaps between policymakers and businesses.

2.1.2 Importance and hurdles of career guidance

This case study highlighted the importance of career guidance in addressing youth unemployment and offered insights into the EYE project's efforts and impact.

The analysis of career guidance services in VET institutions revealed significant challenges and opportunities. Reluctance to allocate public funds has hindered the improvement of career guidance, prolonging ineffective support for VET students, and hampering their educational and professional navigation. This has resulted in low job readiness, poor placement rates, and disinterest in VET enrollment, worsening the transition from school to the workforce. Moreover, the absence of effective guidance has prolonged this transition and limited networking, social inclusion, and community contribution.

2.1.3 EYE project's approach and solutions

In the municipality of Gjakovë, we brought together two groups of students—one from a VET school with SBCC and another without. These students had never met before, and their discussions were intense but full of critical questions and valuable exchanges.

A notable comment came from a medical science student at a school without SBCC:



The absence of career guidance in my school has left me reflecting on missed opportunities, particularly my unfulfilled interest in Political Science. If only someone had guided me, I might have been shaping policies instead of learning medical sciences. Hearing from students who have had support has awakened a different part of me.”

Various groups, including women, minorities, and individuals from low-income families, face socioeconomic disparities in accessing these services, deepened by geographical and health-related barriers.

Key constraints identified included the lack of standardized guidance services and inadequate financing due to multiple stakeholders’ involvement. However, the EYE project presented a compelling solution by proposing the establishment of the SBCC model in VET institutions, financially supported by municipalities, to ensure continuous operation and support for students. These centers prioritize operational excellence, quality, accessibility, and collaboration, promising a holistic approach to career development tailored to the diverse needs of VET students in Kosovo.

In 2014, the project initiated its first pilot in Vushtri municipality, encountering numerous challenges along the way. However, the project’s commitment to maintaining high standards, advancing strategic collaboration, and ensuring the equitable provision of resources proved vital in overcoming these obstacles.

2.1.4 Impact pathways

The impact pathways developed by EYE centered on three key areas: sustainable career advisor training, the institutionalization of SBCCs, and national-level expansion through funding.

The work of EYE suggested how to shape the success of career guidance in vocational education. From the experience of the project, four key ingredients stood out: (a) understanding system change, (b) behavioral and practical shifts, (c) normative and value improvements, and (d) structural and procedural changes.

The case study confirms that system change is complex and often challenging to define and assess, especially within dynamic labor market systems. The EYE project in Kosovo, focusing on career guidance, navigated this complexity by identifying shifts in behaviors, norms, and structures.

For instance, the project promoted the adoption of new practices, such as integrating career guidance into school curricula and improving standards for advisors. It also challenged societal norms, advocating for the value of vocational

training, and promoting gender equality in career choices. EYE facilitated structural changes by institutionalizing career guidance within the VET education system, standardizing processes, and establishing sustainable funding models through municipal investment.

All these efforts were strengthened by partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring a holistic and sustainable approach to career guidance that supports students in transitioning smoothly from school to work.

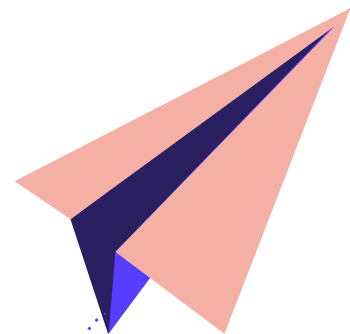
The work of EYE also illustrated an approach to reforming career guidance in VET institutions. The project's interventions were strategically formulated and executed, focusing on sustainable solutions, institutionalization, and scalability.

Interviews with the different partners showed that the project prioritized the accreditation of a qualification program for career advisors, delivered by public educational institutions. This approach aimed to minimize costs for municipalities while quickly equipping teachers with vocational qualifications.

Furthermore, EYE facilitated the institutionalization of SBCCs by formalizing its involvement with MESTI to standardize processes and services in VET institutions.

EYE's strategy emphasized sustainable national-level expansion through partnerships with municipalities, promoting joint investments in VET capacity building.

By engaging diverse stakeholders, including government bodies, private sector enterprises, and community leaders, the project aimed to create a supportive network for career guidance services.



2.2 Key Lessons

- **Sound analysis: seeing what was below the surface:** In Kosovo, assuming that all regions face the same issues is misleading. Yet the EYE project's analysis uncovered a different reality. Rather than applying a blanket solution, the project emphasized understanding the distinct challenges encountered by various groups and municipalities in career guidance. This tailored strategy proved essential for effectively addressing the diverse needs of young people, municipalities, and private-sector enterprises.
- **A vision built on inclusion, sustainability, and scalability:** From the outset, the career guidance intervention had a clear vision supported by sound analysis, promoting a bottom-up, low-cost, participatory model. Unlike direct approaches that can be fragmented and financially unsustainable, the project supported key partners and piloted the relevance, opportunity, and feasibility of the SBCC model before scaling. This approach fostered ownership, reduced dependency on external funding, and ensured a lasting impact on Kosovo's career guidance within VET institutions. Measuring and reporting quantitative impacts of career guidance interventions enhanced accountability and inclusivity. Ensuring that minority groups benefitted equitably from these initiatives strengthened their overall impact on Kosovo's VET landscape. In

the end, the aim of the career guidance intervention was centered on reducing youth unemployment and enhancing vocational education standards nationwide in Kosovo. The intervention underscored the transformative potential of structured, sustainable approaches to career development and education.

- **Incentives as the driving force for behavioral and normative shifts:** the SBCC model ensured the integration of stakeholders' incentives. Building on the incentives of stakeholders and embedding career guidance within the educational framework was critical for promoting shifts in behavior and the adoption of new or improved practices. Professional standards and ongoing training initiatives were decisive in maintaining service consistency and quality across VET institutions. Engaging stakeholders actively promoted vocational training and inclusivity, challenging traditional norms, and fostering a more inclusive approach to career development. Advocacy efforts also played a crucial role in institutionalizing career guidance within national policies for sustained, long-term impact.
- **Clarity of roles of key stakeholders:** The Administrative Instruction by MESTI integrated career advisors and the SBCC framework into Kosovo's VET institutions. It involved collaborative development with stakeholders to refine regulatory frameworks,

ensuring alignment with national educational goals and fostering structured career guidance. Under municipal leadership, particularly MED, Kosovo aligned local and national objectives for career guidance. This included developing unified standards for career centers and advisors and promoting multistakeholder collaboration to enhance services tailored to local needs and national strategies. Engaging businesses shaped Kosovo's VET curricula to meet industry demands through market assessments and work-based learning partnerships. This aimed to prepare students for successful workforce transitions, ensuring graduates meet current and future labor market needs. Efforts to enhance career guidance in Kosovo focused on building a network of career centers and professionals. Strategic partnerships facilitated continuous improvement and access to resources, adapting programs to meet evolving labor market trends and promoting lifelong learning and career development opportunities for all.

- **Strategic partnerships for institutionalization:**

EYE's success was boosted by strategic partnerships forged with municipalities, VET institutions, businesses, and national agencies in Kosovo. By tailoring global best practices to local contexts through initiatives like the SBCC model, the project facilitated widespread institutionalization of effective career guidance practices. EYE's value proposition focused on

delivering a high-quality, well-funded solution by leveraging decentralized governance and empowering local municipal authorities. Guiding partners through patience and evidence-based decision-making was crucial. Formally integrating career guidance into Kosovo's VET system was pivotal, supported by significant municipal investments and accreditation programs. This structured approach aimed to strengthen the linkages between VET institutions and employers, thereby increasing enrollment rates and fostering personal development among students. Without such an approach, career guidance in Kosovo's VET institutions would risk fragmentation and financial unsustainability.

- **Multiple factors for the success of the SBCC model:** The success of the career guidance intervention was driven by not only the strategic partnerships with government agencies, schools, private enterprises, and community leaders but also the availability and commitment of career guidance advisors selected for their dedication to youth empowerment, delivered flexible services through both in-person and online platforms. In addition, integrating global best practices with Kosovo's economic and cultural contexts encouraged innovative career guidance solutions that met evolving national needs. Collaborative efforts with partners facilitated efficient

coordination and avoided duplication of efforts. This unified approach created a cohesive network that maximized resources and extended the reach of career guidance initiatives throughout Kosovo.

- **Facilitation in practice supported by dedicated and experienced leadership:**

Valbona Rraci, as the Intervention Manager of the EYE project, exemplified resilience and tenacity of the EYE career guidance intervention. Her unyielding resolve and optimistic approach inspired all those around her. Valbona's leadership illustrated that every challenge was not merely a hurdle but a chance for personal and collective growth. Her proactive approach and innovative thinking played a crucial role in instilling a culture of resilience within the team and the key stakeholders of career guidance in Kosovo.

- By overcoming obstacles with creativity and determination, she reinforced the project's core mission to empower VET schools and their stakeholders. The project's facilitation in practice involved on-the-ground interactions with stakeholders across various VET schools. Through piloting, learning, and adjustment, EYE refined the SBCC model and expanded its implementation to additional schools.

- **Promising large-scale impact and outreach:** Despite the successes, the project faced complexities in steering and maintaining partnerships within

Kosovo's broader VET system. However, the project adopted inclusive targeting strategies and sustainability efforts guided by a combined bottom-up (from VET institution upward) and top-down (engagement of national stakeholders) approaches. The scalability of the project's results relied on documenting best practices, standardizing processes, engaging stakeholders, integrating interventions into policies, and building the capacity of educators and advisors. Advocating for municipal investment in career guidance initiatives ensured sustainability beyond the initial project phases. EYE's facilitation, based on strong local ownership, has contributed to significant advancements, as recognized by the European Training Foundation, to the inclusive, accessible, and high-quality career guidance in Kosovo. To date, this is possible across 25 VET institutions in different municipalities in Kosovo.



Key Messages of Section 2

Importance of career guidance: Effective career guidance is essential in enhancing job readiness and promoting social inclusion among VET students. Financial reluctance and institutional barriers hinder improvements, affecting students' transition to employment.

Strategic partnerships: Collaborations with government bodies, educational institutions, and businesses are critical for scaling career guidance initiatives. These partnerships align with national objectives and enhance program effectiveness, as seen in the EYE project's success in Kosovo. Facilitating dialogue among VET institutions, government agencies, parents, and private sector enterprises empowered stakeholders to identify incentives and propose solutions aligned with their needs. The EYE project played a crucial role in fostering these partnerships.

Tailored strategies: Kosovo faces significant youth unemployment challenges despite efforts to align education with market needs. Initiatives like EYE Kosovo aim to integrate career guidance into VET but encounter obstacles such as outdated curricula and funding issues. Successful career guidance requires tailored approaches to address specific challenges across different groups and municipalities. Local interventions can influence national policies, ensuring sustained support for vocational education.

EYE project's approach: The project introduced the SBCCs model, funded municipally, to offer tailored career support to VET students. Strategic partnerships and standardized processes enabled its expansion and impact across municipalities.

Inclusion and sustainability: Inclusive practices and sustainable funding models are essential for lasting impact in vocational education. Addressing diversity enhances educational outcomes and prepares students for successful transitions into the workforce.

Leveraging for scale: Incentives and stakeholder engagement are crucial for promoting behavioral changes in career guidance. Advocacy efforts and institutional integration are vital for embedding career guidance into national policies.



Section 3:
RECOMMENDATION
AND ACTION FOR
ENHANCING CAREER
GUIDANCE IN KOSOVO



Emir, the young aspiring computer programmer we discussed in Part One of this case study, searched for his professional career on his own. As we wrapped up the case study after meeting several stakeholders of career guidance in VET schools, contrasting narratives emerged, each painting a unique portrait of the challenges and successes of career guidance within Kosovo's VET institutions.

On the one hand, we met students from Gjakovë, whose journey echoed a tale of empowerment through personalized guidance. Their story showed the impact of tailored support in aligning career aspirations with educational opportunities. Through dedicated career advice and exploration, students found clarity and direction, paving the way for a future filled with promise.

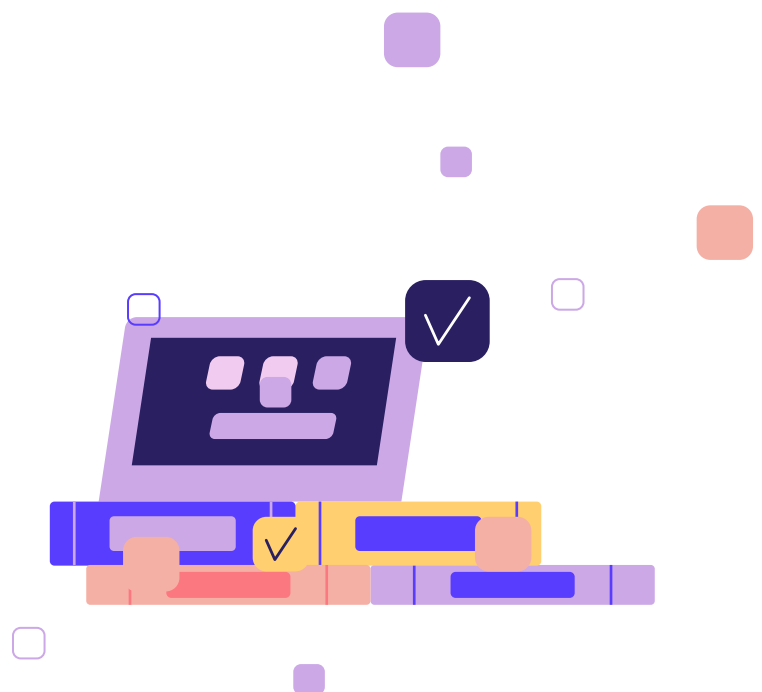
Conversely, we met students from Prizren, whose experience shed light on the pressing need for practical guidance and exposure to real-world industries. For them and other fellow students, theoretical knowledge alone proved insufficient in bridging the gap between education and employment. They advocated passionately for enhanced industry partnerships and internships, recognizing the invaluable role they play in preparing students for the challenges of the workforce.

And then there were students from Vushtri, whose journey showed the importance of mentorship and role models in shaping career aspirations. Through access to career advisors who had excelled in their fields, these students found inspiration

and guidance, instilling within them the confidence to pursue their dreams with firm determination.

Despite the varying perspectives and experiences, there was a common thread—a shared desire for improved career guidance resources and support. Students shared their stories showing the overwhelming complexities of navigating ever-changing career choices. Their voices echoed a strong desire for inclusive and relevant career guidance advice to empower them to make informed decisions about their futures.

Over the course of a decade-long journey, EYE has set Kosovo on the path to significant advancements in career guidance and inclusive youth development by taking a structured and systemic approach to address these issues. This was even recognized by the European Training Foundation's 2023 Torino process system monitoring report:





On a brighter note, with a system performance index (SPI) score of 88, the availability of career guidance opportunities in the country ranks high. This reflects the relative strength and relevance of such services. Furthermore, initiatives are ongoing aimed at promoting work-based learning, and the provision of scholarships for socio-economically disadvantaged students.”³

Improving what has been achieved calls for acknowledging career guidance should address both present challenges and future aspirations. Enhancing career guidance across Kosovo’s 69 VET institutions is a multi-layered and complex process demanding a systemic approach to address various challenges and ensure sustainable improvement. Meeting the mounting demand for career guidance requires careful

resource allocation and infrastructure development. This involves not only providing adequate staffing and material resources but also developing collaboration among stakeholders to ensure a coherent approach. Moving forward, the implications for further actions and improvements include the following.



³ European Training Foundation. (2023). Torino Process System Monitoring Report: Kosovo. Available here.

3.1 Sustainable financing

Focus: The issue is not about access to financial resources – at least for now, many donors are willing to provide funding. Reliance solely on donor funds may not be feasible in the long term. Rather the most important point is having shared and sustainable funding and finding low-cost solutions. The rapidly increasing demand for career guidance services across all 69 VET institutions highlights the necessity for resource allocation and infrastructure development.

Implications and Recommendations

MESTI and municipalities: Exploring alternative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships or revenue-generating initiatives, can diversify funding sources and ensure long-term financial sustainability. One example includes ensuring the availability of national funding as a challenge fund to municipalities that want to have an SBCC and close control of donors creating new models that undermine SBCC. The law allows VET institutions to generate income, but this has not been implemented for a reason that is not clear. Moreover, advocating for government investment and institutionalizing funding mechanisms requires leveraging existing initiatives of advocacy (e.g., potentially by the networks of career professionals) to ease dependency on external donors.

Donors (SDC): Ensure that funding and projects align with the national and local development strategies of Kosovo in career guidance; avoid duplicating efforts by coordinating with other donors and stakeholders; based on the achievements of the EYE project, support initiatives that strengthen local governance and accountability mechanisms; prioritize funding for projects in career guidance that have a strong evidence base and demonstrated impact.

EYE (Helvetas/MDA): Create simple, clear, and visually appealing materials to communicate project findings and recommendations on sustainable financing of career guidance; use evidence from the EYE project to advocate for policy changes and improvements in the education and employment sectors (to be integrated into the community of practice of the regional Advocacy Network in Western Balkans and Eastern Europe); integrate the experience of EYE into project design (e.g., RECONOMY, DEMOS) to address critical issues of sustainable financing of career guidance. Emerging initiatives such as Swisscontact and GIZ (including also Helvetas projects such as RECONOMY and DEMOS) should strategically allocate resources to leverage what EYE has done to enhance capacity through training programs and supporting infrastructure to effectively scale up and meet the growing demand.

Additionally, promoting collaboration among stakeholders is the key to optimizing resource utilization and minimizing fragmentation.

3.2 Standardizing quality

Focus: Standardizing quality across all VET institutions is critical for ensuring consistency and effectiveness in service delivery and training programs. Maintaining consistent quality across all VET schools poses a substantial challenge due to varying capacities and resources. This calls for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and capacity-building efforts to maintain uniform standards and address disparities among schools. Engaging the private sector is essential for providing students with practical experiences and real-world skills, but limited involvement poses a significant obstacle.



Implications and Recommendations

Centre of Competence in Prizren/the National Qualification Authority (NQA): Implementing rigorous quality control measures requires better coordination between the Centre of Competence in Prizren and the NQA (this included the regular exchanges of research on different profiles). With the rapidly changing skills, uniformity in service delivery calls for reskilling and upskilling of career advisors. This goes hand in hand with keeping the culture of continuous improvement through capacity-building initiatives and knowledge-sharing platforms (the networks of professional career advisors and Busulla.com, the official platform of MESTI for occupational orientation, education, and career guidance).

The private sector: Engaging the private sector in VET institutions is not just a strategic investment in the future workforce but also a commitment to community development and economic growth. By partnering with VET institutions, providing resources, and offering practical training opportunities, private enterprises can play a pivotal role in standardizing quality and enhancing the effectiveness of vocational education. While work-based learning has offered opportunities to apply theoretical education practically by establishing mutually beneficial partnerships between employers and the VET institutions, the issue of coverage of insurance in case of injuries of students has been an obstacle. The Municipal Education Directorates should take this issue seriously – it does not cost that much (3 Euros per student per year) but it was not clear why there has been a lack of proactive action.

Networks of Career Guidance Advisors: Despite its infancy since its establishment, the network has the potential to work closely with the Competence Center in Prizren/NQA as well as the private sector to communicate the needs of career guidance advisors for continuous reskilling and upskilling.

3.3 Broader and more sustainable engagement of the private sector

Focus: The limited and sporadic involvement of private sector enterprises significantly hampers the ability to provide students with practical experiences and real-world skills. This issue can be addressed through a multifaceted approach that fosters stronger partnerships between educational institutions and the private sector.

Implications and Recommendations

VET institutions-industry platform: While there are several channels and exchanges between VET institutions and industry players, the major gap in acquiring trained human capital by private sector enterprises is still a critical issue. Private sector enterprises have requested for increased frequency of students' availability for work-based learning. They have also asked for the introduction of soft skills (such as the English language). A more efficient way of addressing the demands and improving the engagement of the private sector is to integrate these and other issues into school-industry platforms such as advisory boards.

Municipalities: Offering incentives (e.g., through tax incentives) and raising awareness about the mutual benefits of collaboration are crucial for encouraging greater private-sector engagement. Additionally, addressing challenges related to youth migration requires tailored interventions and cross-sectoral collaboration to support migrant students' career development and mitigate the disruptive effects of migration on their educational pathways. Of course, migrating youth are better off if they leave their country trained and equipped with skills that are required in the countries that they are heading to.

3.4 Addressing parental influence

Focus: Tackling parental influence on students' career choices and educational pathways is another critical aspect of enhancing career guidance. Even though the role of parental influence has shifted and is being replaced by the roles of peers and social media influence, it is still an important force in students' career choices and educational pathways. This involves targeted outreach, parental engagement initiatives, and community-based interventions to address misconceptions and cultural barriers. Leveraging existing good practices, such as integrated career centers, standardized training programs, enhanced employer engagement, and community involvement, serve as models for scalability.

Implications and Recommendations

Networks of Career Guidance Advisors: A lot has been done that needs to be leveraged as part of targeted outreach programs to increase the awareness of parents about the value of

vocational education, addressing cultural biases and misconceptions, and involving parents in career planning processes can garner support and facilitate informed decision-making. Additionally, promoting partnerships with community-based organizations and local leaders, for example through the network of career guidance advisors, has the potential to empower parents to become advocates for vocational training and career development. The network of career advisors so far has not gone well which needs to be enhanced by providing personalized guidance to students while also engaging parents.

Municipal Education Directorate: As part of their engagement with different stakeholders, officials of the directorate hold influence over cultural barriers and misconceptions that influence career choices through programs that work within communities to change perceptions about certain careers.





Key Messages of Section 3

CONTRASTING NARRATIVES IN CAREER GUIDANCE IN KOSOVO'S VET INSTITUTIONS

- Many young people do not have access to relevant and quality career guidance services, forcing them to opt for parental, peer, or individual search for education and career choices.
- Students from Gjakovë benefit from personalized guidance, aligning aspirations with education.
- Students from Prizren highlight the need for practical industry exposure.
- Students from Vushtri find inspiration through mentorship and role models.
- Common desire for enhanced career guidance resources and support.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITION IN CAREER GUIDANCE BY EYE IN KOSOVO

- EYE's facilitative approach is recognized in the European Training Foundation's report.
- High SPI score reflects strong career guidance availability.
- Focus on work-based learning and scholarships for disadvantaged students.
- Need for continued improvement and sustainability in career guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING CAREER GUIDANCE IN KOSOVO

- Sustainable financing is crucial beyond donor dependence, including alternative funding mechanisms and national support.
- Standardizing quality across 69 VET institutions is essential, focusing on consistency and effectiveness.
- Private sector engagement is vital for practical skill development and community growth.
- Parental influence and cultural barriers remain a challenge that requires targeted outreach and community involvement.



Section 4:
FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND
AREAS FOR FURTHER
RESEARCH AND ACTIONS



This case study has identified several areas for additional research and action. Among others, it is worth mentioning five of the main areas.

Future labor market trends and enhancing VET programs:

In anticipation of future shifts in labor market dynamics driven by technological advancements and global trends, it is imperative to adopt a forward-looking approach to VET programs. This involves sound analysis of emerging industry trends (e.g., digitalization, green economic transition) to inform curriculum development and ensure alignment with evolving skill demands. By integrating agile methodologies into educational frameworks, institutions will need to proactively adapt to changing industry needs, equipping students with the requisite skills and competencies for success in dynamic job markets.

The funding of career guidance in VET:

Career guidance presents a dilemma rooted in the crucial need for strong support in an ever-changing economic landscape. The dilemma lies in balancing the necessity for sufficient financial resources with the challenge of allocating funding effectively to ensure comprehensive and accessible guidance for VET students. In career guidance within VET institutions, many different stakeholders are involved in providing financing and benefiting from it. But, figuring out how to handle financing smartly and practically is tricky. A European Union publication from 2018⁴ suggested important ways to finance vocational

education and training. Firstly, it stressed the importance of key partners understanding what is involved in financing. Secondly, it highlighted the need for a clear method to support partners going through the process of analyzing, making decisions, and putting plans into action in this area.

Entrepreneurship and collaboration with the private sector:

To enhance VET institutions' creativity and business relevance, close collaboration with businesses is essential. This involves making lessons more practical and aligned with real-world job requirements. While private enterprises are often criticized for profit motives, the key challenge lies in developing business models that attract investment and foster genuine partnerships. This collaboration creates synergies: VET institutions gain industry expertise, modern technologies, and practical training opportunities, while businesses contribute to curriculum development, mentorship, and internships. It enriches educational experiences and prepares students for the workforce by bridging the gap between theory and industry needs. Furthermore, integrating entrepreneurship education into VET programs encourages students to innovate and create value. This fosters an entrepreneurial mindset, preparing students to drive economic growth and innovation in their communities.

Inclusive career guidance: Simultaneously, breaking down barriers for marginalized communities through tailored support systems and inclusive career guidance is

⁴ Dorléans, M. (2018). Financing Vocational Education and Skills Development: A Policy Area for ETF Support. European Training Foundation.

crucial – by knowing their priorities and segmenting their socio-economic status and barriers. By offering mentorship programs and hands-on learning opportunities, Kosovar educational institutions are making, even though slowly, entrepreneurial mindsets in students from diverse backgrounds, equipping them with the necessary skills to excel in today's fiercely competitive environment.

Strategic partnership: Effecting systemic change calls for strategic partnerships to identify areas for improvement and innovation. Engaging stakeholders

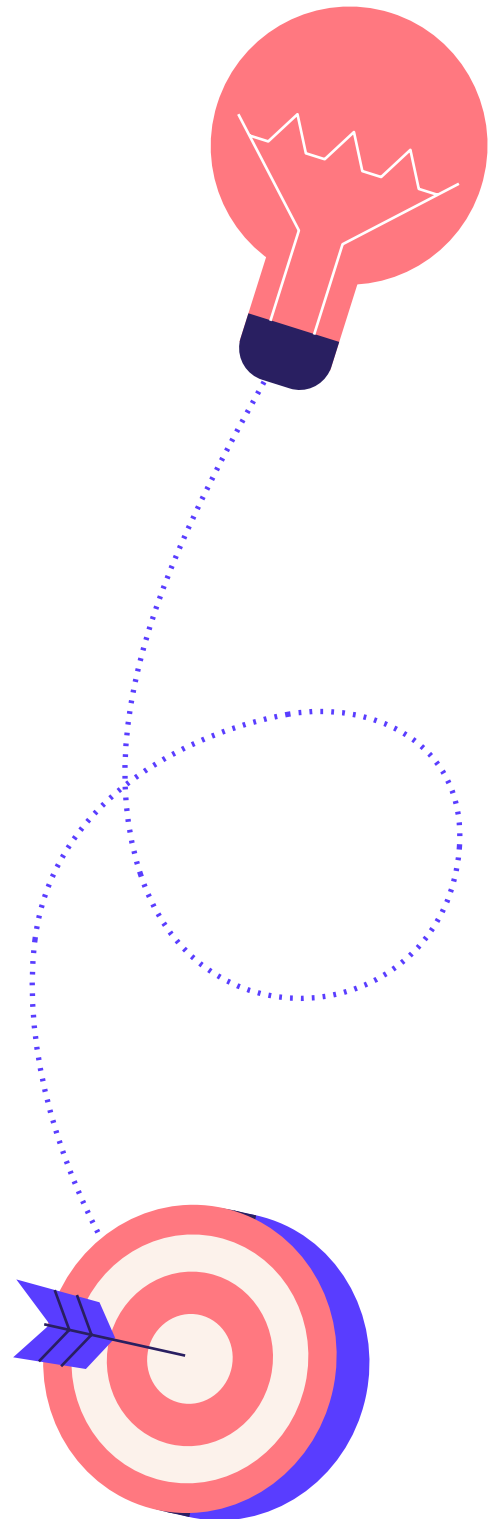
from diverse sectors and backgrounds in meaningful dialogue is essential for informed policy development and program implementation. Through targeted advocacy efforts, policymakers can prioritize investments in education and workforce development, ensuring that career guidance initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of students and employers. By leveraging partnerships and advocating for evidence-based policies, institutions can create an ecosystem conducive to individual empowerment and sustainable economic growth.



Demand-driven capacity building: Demand-driven capacity building in vocational education and career guidance focuses on targeted professional development for educators and career guidance professionals, aligning their skills with current and future job market needs. This approach ensures educators are equipped with updated teaching methods, technological integration skills, and insights into industry trends. It also empowers career guidance professionals to provide timely and relevant information on career pathways and job requirements. By promoting innovation and collaboration with industry partners, these efforts enhance the practicality of vocational education, preparing students more effectively for the workforce. Continuous feedback loops ensure that training programs remain adaptive and responsive, supporting ongoing improvements in educational quality and career readiness.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks in career guidance: How do we know what works and what does not work in career guidance in VET institutions? Functional monitoring and evaluation frameworks are central tools for assessing the impact of career guidance interventions and driving continuous improvement. Emphasizing data-driven decision-making and evidence-based practices enables institutions to optimize student outcomes and adapt to evolving industry demands effectively. By prioritizing capacity building and rigorous evaluation processes, institutions ensure that career guidance services remain aligned with the evolving needs of students and

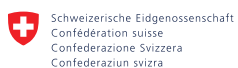
employers, yielding tangible results and fostering long-term success.



Nazim Gafurri str.141 no.2,
10000 Pristina, Kosovo

Enhancing Youth Employment
(EYE) project

+383 38 517 715
eyeinfo@eye-kosovo.org



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

