



Gender-Sensitive Research on Dissemination of Labour Market Information through Media in Albania

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Executive Summary

This study analyses the constraints, interests and opportunities to support the dissemination of Labour Market Information (LMI) by the media in Albania. Currently, the Albanian media disseminates LMI on sporadic basis, and even though there are some LMI providers, none of the sources contain information specifically related to youth and as such the information disseminated by media is only partial and gender-blind.

Our research findings indicate that there is an interest from the Albanian media to disseminate or produce LMI. This study determines the need for gender aspects to be considered in LMI dissemination by media, analyses the needs of young women and men and the potential impact LMI on youth. Media, however, faces different challenges in disseminating LMI.

So far, the media has focused only on political and crime themes since these topics attract the highest audience. However, recent changes in government administration have shifted the focus of the government towards education and employment and as such the media has started to take an interest in these topics. In order for media to play a key role in LMI dissemination, an intervention focused on media is necessary to understand and create different LMI media products in order to have consistent and reliable distribution of information available to young women and men. On the other hand, the media faces several constraints, some of which are: restricted budget, lack of human resources, lack of infrastructure for production of content related to LMI or any other media content, which does not have a stable sponsorship support, lack of expertise and data interpretation. Moreover, due to economic slowdown, the focus of media has been to increment viewership and direct advertising in order to increase profit margins. Currently, media is not welcoming any new initiative or platform that does not bring financial gain in the short term.

According to our findings, the Albanian youth prefers media formats that provide not only informative content, insights on professions and career paths, but that also contain entertainment elements as well. There are only few media formats that have the above-mentioned characteristics, mostly TV formats that are produced in Albania today. Still, there remains high unawareness about how profitable these TV formats could be for the media and what their LMI potential is. If adapted by Albanian media as sustainable business models, these TV shows could potentially incorporate LMI, increase media ratings and as a result increase profits.

Our findings suggest that the youth prefer using Internet sites for information on LMI subjects. But online portals do not have specific sections on LMI and the information is not published on regular basis. This situation is similar for print media. On the other hand, there is a lack of preference for print media by young women and men. There are some youth magazines that publish LMI, but these articles are mostly translated from foreign media and do not refer to the Albanian situation. Some print media such as “Shqiptarja”, “Paloma” expressed interest in, suggesting that some of the articles can be published online in their web sites. Still, online portals and print media do not consider LMI as a source upon which they can build potential strategies that would generate income.

On the other hand, government institutions such as the Ministry of Youth and Social Welfare, National Employment Service and INSTAT have shown interest in collaborating with the media and possibly offering support. Collaboration might take place if these institutions will see a possibility to promote their work and make their information more popular, available and understandable for the audiences

and if this collaboration will help in decreasing unemployment level. Training and help from the above-mentioned governmental institutions to generate and disseminate information will be needed as well. A more modern approach, in terms of PR and Media relation offices, will be needed. This can be achieved through training.

Finding the right platform or form of collaboration between LMI sources, media, the youth and sponsors is essential in order for LMI to reach out successfully to Albanian youth. Among the youth the Internet and TV remain the preferred channels for finding LMI. The Internet is more preferable, mainly because of its accessibility and because it contains more LMI compared to other media. Gender differences show that young women trust official LMI disseminated by state institutions (e.g. the labour office) and visit state's websites more than young men. The second most preferred media is TV, which is also the most trusted media.

Parents play a key role in career decisions and professional choices amongst youth; however, parents' knowledge is based on informal channels such as word of mouth, personal experiences and social perceptions. Parents seem to have more influence on the career decisions of young women than young men. Therefore, there is a need for an LMI model that will also be inclusive of parents and will inform them about labour market.

In order to build a sustainable source of media-disseminated LMI that specifically targets youth, a new type of platform is needed. This platform can either be part of specific media company or media group or act independently as media service provider, which, in collaboration with media, will produce and disseminate LMI content and at the same time connect the media with potential sponsors to ensure sustainability.

1. Introduction

Albania has seen yearly economic growth from 1998 until present day. Even during the European financial crisis, the country experienced economic growth although at a slower pace. However, the unemployment rate, especially for young people has frequently been a problematic issue. Labour market information is provided by different stakeholders, but it is not produced or disseminated properly according to the needs of Albanian youth. Even when this information reaches young men and women it is not tailored for their specific needs and therefore not easily absorbed by this group.

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of LMI with regards to specific professions for young women and men such as: qualities and skills required for a certain job, jobs in demand on the market, average salaries for jobs etc. In general, LMI dissemination for job seekers, students, employers, and employment service providers, is sporadic and limited. Consequently, youth lacks easy access to information that would allow them to make informed decisions about their career paths, fields of study, or which schools to attend. As a result, these decisions are usually based on general social perceptions rather than thorough analysis without taking into consideration gender specifics in the labour market.

Currently, media disseminates information regarding education, careers and occupations, but only on a sporadic basis. In addition, even though the existing LMI provided by official sources such as INSTAT, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is based on data disaggregated by gender and age, the final product (information) is not structured in order to contain information targeted specifically to youth. In order to tackle the main problems and explore the opportunities to produce and disseminate the right Labour Market Information by the media, three key topics have been used to structure the report: media, youth and stakeholders.

2. Methodology

Our research started with a desk research, analyzing existing data and reports and relevant literature related to LMI, media and youth, and a qualitative monitoring of TV, radio, print and online media in Albania. Media plays a key intermediary role in connecting supply and labour demand information for youth. The dissemination of labour market information through media can reach urban and rural youth. Our study analyzed TV, Print, WEB, and Radio for the year 2013, in order to understand which media is the most influential among young men and women, measuring ratings¹ and reach². In order to cover youth in rural areas we have taken into consideration the coverage that each media has throughout the Albanian territory. Furthermore, interviews have taken place with representatives of distinguished media channels that have potential and interest in disseminating LMI: Top-Channel, Vizion Plus, Agon Channel, AS TV, A1 Report TV, "Paloma" Magazine, and "Shqiptarja" Newspaper. During the first phase, all data and information have been disaggregated by, in order to identify gender differences, specific needs in labour market and possible ways to disseminate it to young men and women.

¹ "Ratings" is the percentage of total youth population audience (704,297) age 15-29 that view a media in a certain period of time

² "Reach" is the total number of different young people exposed at least once to a media during a given period of time.

The first phase included the following media market data:

- Media market overview, main players and media outlets characteristics
- Audience collection data for each media outlets focusing in best rated media content for youth (age 15-29, young women and young men)
- Advertising collection data focusing in the profile of sponsors targeting youth (age 15-29, young women and young men) and estimation on budgets
- Information about advertising agencies and their clients targeting youth (age 15-29, young women and young men)
- Media content providers and service providers focusing on youth-related content (age 15-29, young women and young men)
- How the media monetizes content in relation to youth (age 15-29, young women and young men)

The second phase included a series of interviews, focus groups and an online survey in order to gather first hand data on youth habits, regarding the labour market, career decisions, the role of media, education and family, as well as preferred sources of LMI. In order to understand youth habits and attitudes towards the media, an online survey was distributed to 3055 young women and men, which was completed by 1021, 470 female and 551 male. The survey collected information about age, gender, education, hometown, employment status, preferred media channels, role of parents in decision-making, youth career orientation, and current channels of LMI that the youth utilizes. Furthermore, 10 focus groups were conducted in Tirana, Kukes, Pogradec, Orikum, Dukat and Durres in order to evaluate differences between rural and urban areas and between men and women. Results were similar to the online survey, however we noticed a correlation between the answers of participants and their geographical location.

The second phase included the following field activities:

- Online survey. Created and launched online survey targeted to youth through social media. The survey aimed to target urban and rural youth.
- Compiled a questionnaire and organized focus groups (age 15-29, young women and young men in rural and urban areas) in order to understand:
 - What media, formats, broadcast times young women and men would prefer
 - How they would like to receive information about LMI, their career orientation and job perspectives and opportunities via media channels
 - How they decide on their career path and the impact that the media has in their decision
 - Their income level, educational level, regional location, behavioural habits, and products and services that they use more often
 - The role that parents play in their decision-making process
- Contacted media outlets that target youth in order to evaluate potential restrictions and interests in producing and disseminating LMI, while at the same time focusing on productions targeted to youth that are not just pure entertainment
- Contacted current or potential sponsors and request information to understand their plans, budgets and activities targeting youths
- Contacted advertising agencies, media planning and buying organizations that advertise services and products to youth to understand their plans, budgets and activities targeting youths

The third and final phase was dedicated to analyse all current stakeholders that could participate and contribute in creating a sustainable long-term system for disseminating LMI for young people. An understanding of key stakeholders, their potential to influence LMI and their involvement is essential to build a self-sustainable infrastructure model that produces and disseminates LMI to youth. Strategic stakeholders identified are Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, National Employment Service, INSTAT, Online Portals and private companies such as Eagle Mobile, Vodafone, AMC, Plus, Raiffeisen Bank, Intesa San Paolo, Agna Group, Ama caffe, Pespì, and Coca-Cola.

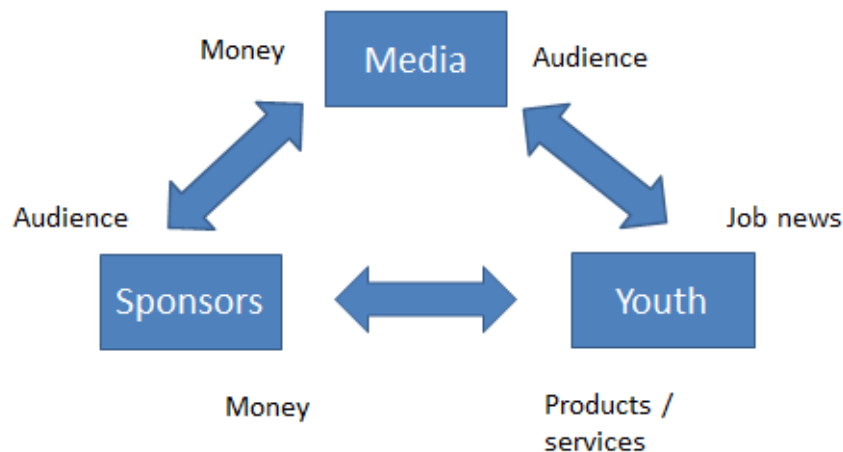
3. Main findings

As previously stated, LMI is provided by different stakeholders but it is not generated and disseminated according to the needs of young women and men. Media is considered the best tool for the purpose of producing and disseminating reliable and easily-accessible LMI to all young women and men on a national level. That is due to its existing distribution channels of information, its large reach and the impact it has on youth. Although not all media disseminate LMI information, some show more social responsibility. Vizion Plus TV, openly discussed the issue of educating audiences on the different topics, and they showed an interest on LMI programming. Other media that would consider producing and disseminating LMI information are specific programs of Top Channel TV, A1 report, and the print papers “Paloma” magazine and “Shqiptarja” newspaper.

Media in Albania has certain weaknesses, due to a lack of resources and qualified staff. While most journalists are overloaded with work, the fact that the media has not had an opportunity to make profit from disseminating LMI is rather discouraging. According to our interviews, the only way management prefers to make profit is through paid advertisements that appear during popular humour, music or reality shows. These managers have not been able to attract advertisers for media products that contain LMI. Furthermore, they have not considered developing a strategy to attract viewers and for that matter advertisers for such media products. In order to generate a sustainable flow of LMI, the media should develop a profitable business model.

The research shows that the young woman and men would like to get informed on LMI subjects. Their preferred media is TV and Internet. The research shows that their parents are influencing them a lot when they make decisions regarding their career. The parents use TV rather than other media and therefore a TV program would successfully target not only young women and men, but the parents as well. The media format that the young people would like the most are the entertaining programs. Therefore, reality shows or innovative programs that have an entertaining content might be used to disseminate LMI. The new term for this program is Edu-tainment; education through entertainment. Most of the programs that are watched by young women and men are prime-time programs. This fact makes it easier to attract sponsors, but on the other hand the challenge is to produce high quality content that will deserve to be broadcasted around prime time.

According to our research, in order to produce and disseminate LMI it is necessary to create a link between media and interested sponsors that can advertise media products that disseminate LMI to youth. The following chapters will explain in detail the capacities and interests of each of the key players presented in the chart below.



3.1 Media

This section of the report gives an overview of the Media situation in Albania and their interest in creating, producing and disseminating LMI.

3.1.1 Current Media situation

According to statistics from Keshilli Kombetar i Radios dhe Televizionit (KKRT - National Council of Radio and Television), in Albania today four national television stations are in operation, 65 local stations, 33 cable television stations, three national radios stations and 47 local radio stations. During the years of 1991-1997, almost all of the newspapers and magazines controlled by the communist state disappeared and they were replaced by new newspapers, which functioned primarily as private businesses. These new media businesses fundamentally transformed the landscape of the Albanian media. Before 1990, only two daily national papers were printed: *Zëri i Popullit* and *Bashkimi*. In 1991 four daily papers were printed, and in 1994 that number doubled. Today 28 national dailies are printed – a considerable figure compared to the number of print media publications that exist in countries with populations larger than Albania. The same pattern occurred in the audiovisual market, where the only state radio-television outlet, RTSH during communism, is dominated by a large number of private television and radio stations that have taken over the Albanian-speaking media.

With a population of roughly 3 million inhabitants, Albania remains a small and hostile market for the media. Small markets hinder the consolidation of media businesses, as the cost of their products is practically the same as those produced by media operating in larger markets, while the profits remain much smaller. The difficulties of a small market are not only reflected in the low circulation of Albanian papers, but also in the minimal amount of advertising in electronic media. For this reason the current Albanian media lacks investment and is understaffed, while the economic decline causes the media owners to put pressure on media channel management to increase profit. Most of the Albanian media started as an extension of a non-media related business that current owners had. Now they are regarded as separate entities and therefore the pressure is higher to be self-sustainable. The daily

circulation of all Albanian newspapers and magazines is smaller than 70,000 copies. The most important newspapers are *Panorama*, *Shekulli*, *Shqip*, *Shqiptarja*, *Gazeta Shqiptare*. The best-selling daily has circulation of around 20.000. The print media faces the issue of poor infrastructure and an almost nonexistent subscription system.³

The development of TV in Albania has been remarkable. There are 65 local TV and 75 Cable TV stations. Two private national and two satellite TV stations and two channels broadcasted by public TV. Some of the TV stations depend on advertisement, while other stations are financially supported by private owners. This situation is changing due to the economic decline. Nowadays, private owners want their media channels to also generate income.⁴ The most important TV are *Top Channel*, *Klan*, *Vizion Plus*, *TVSH*, *Agon Channel* (new TV with huge investment that is up and rising), *Ora News*, *News 24*, *A1 Report*.

Most of the traditional media have their own online sites. There are some online portals, but due to the fact that Internet is not accessible everywhere, the traditional media is still more popular. According to our study, this will change because young people like to receive information via the Internet. The large number of media in Albania makes it difficult for them to rely solely on the income generated through advertisements.

3.1.2 Media interest for LMI

The nature of media is largely defined by the nature of media owners. As a result of the radical liberalizing reforms since the 1990s, the Albanian media market has quickly become dominated by the private market.⁵ As a result, the media have become business-oriented. The main source of revenue for the media comes from advertising. However, advertising is not distributed equally, as the most powerful media receive the majority of advertisements from businesses and the government, while smaller media companies experience ongoing financial difficulties, which then are reflected in unpaid staff salaries. There must be an intervention to inform media and private businesses about the benefits they can have from disseminating and supporting LMI. This intervention can result in increased support of private businesses towards media in order to disseminate LMI.

Furthermore, media companies have shown an overall interest to disseminate LMI and the ones that are most interested to do so are: *Vizion Plus*, *Top-Channel*, *A1 Report TV*, *Shqiptarja.com*, *Paloma magazine*, online employment portal www.duapune.al and www.puna.gov.al. On the other hand, due to the current economic crisis all media shareholders put pressure on media management to reduce costs and increase profit. This situation does not allow for investment in program development and the creation of new programs. The best solution is to keep the number of staff small and produce low-budget programs, which typically are talk shows, music and entertainment programs. The Albanian media does not have a long-term strategy and instead it is focused on short-term profits, mostly achieved through advertising.

³ Linda Londo, (2012), Major Trends of Media Development During Post-Communist Transition

⁴ Linda Londo, (2012), Major Trends of Media Development During Post-Communist Transition

⁵ Dr. Mark Marku, (2012), Albanian Media and the Local Market

3.1.3 Constraints

There is a general interest in producing and disseminating LMI, but currently there exist no LMI programs and as a result LMI is only disseminated sporadically. The overall situation in the media industry makes it hard to invest in new media products, especially on topics that are not proven to be successful (even though there is interest by the public on burning issues like unemployment). As a result, the media will not invest in the necessary infrastructure for production and dissemination of LMI, unless an initial investment is made by a third party.

Creating interesting programs and media products requires an in-depth analysis. This is considered almost an impossible thing for journalists, who according to staff and middle management sometimes cover up to 4 stories a day, so they will never have sufficient time to create and produce innovative products on LMI. On the other hand, themes that involve LMI often require an in-depth analysis. None of the media have qualified staff or editorial office that would treat LMI issues on a regular basis. There has been LMI in all media channels, including Top-Channel, Vizion Plus, Paloma and Shqiptarja.com, on issues such as unemployment and career guidance, yet never on a regular basis.

3.1.4 Needs

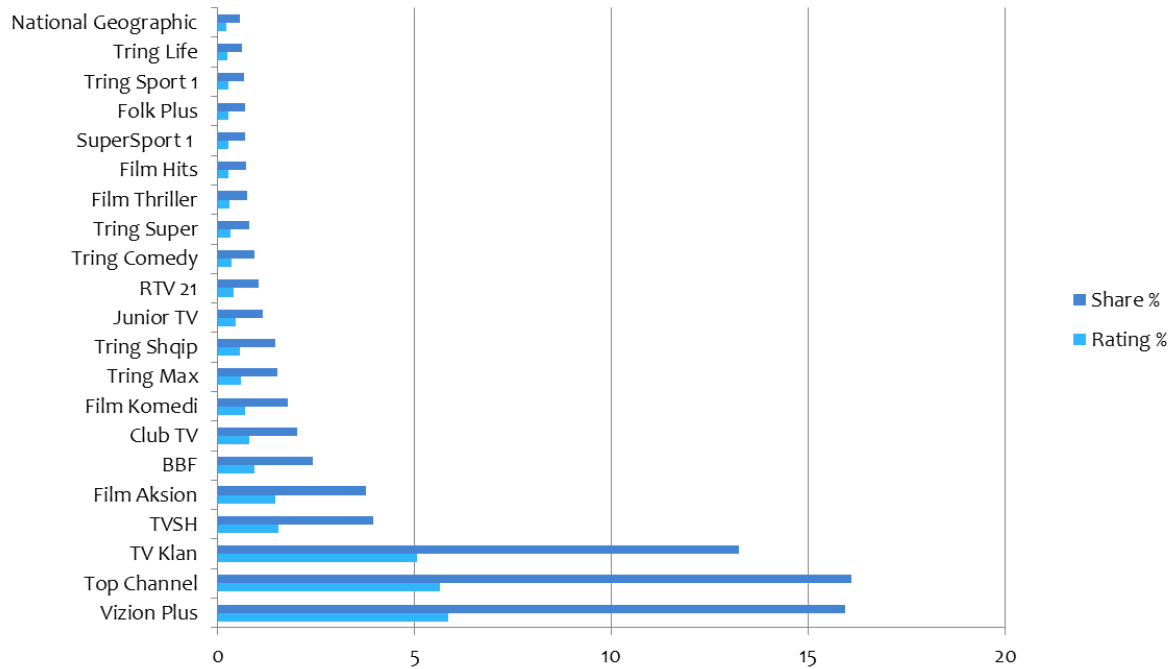
The basic needs discovered are training of staff, including the most basic training such as interpreting specific reports, statistics, analysing topics, and developing content for different media programs. Expertise is needed to create media products that attract the public. Shareholders are open to any new alternatives as long as it is financially profitable, but they and the media workers must be educated on the profits they can have from LMI generation and dissemination which directly increases public interest. Anyhow, they are open to developing platforms if they are provided with technology, human resources and technical skills. All media have shown interest in broadcasting LMI programs, however production of LMI is considered highly risky since it requires investment. Program development training can be an asset in the long run. None of the media uses experts to analyse constantly the trends of the market. Information for LMI is gathered from outside sources such as government institutions and other actors. Although most of the interviewed media representatives expressed interest and openness to initiate practices that disseminate LMI in a more structured and organized way, they lack resources and ideas on how to do this.

3.1.5 Media ratings for young women and men

TV

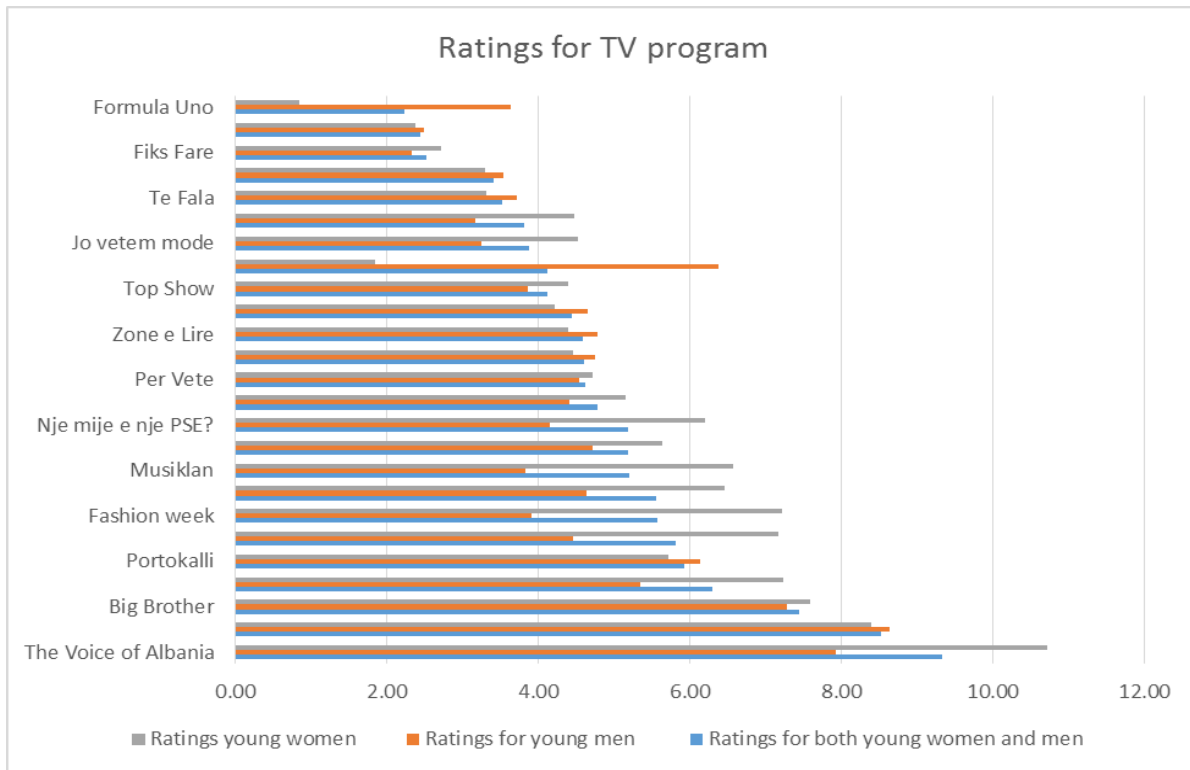
According to the data analyzed for the period January – December 2013, television is the dominant media in Albania in regard to reach levels and ratings by youth. The main TV media players are represented in the graph below, where the 'share %' indicates the market share a certain media has among young people and 'rating%' shows how each media is ranked by this target audience.

TV ratings and share for young men and women



The top four main media players: Vizion Plus, Top-Channel, TV Klan, and TVSH are national TV stations that cover 90% of the Albanian territory.

The top audiovisual programs for young men and women are mostly in-house productions from three media players: Top-Channel, TV Klan and Vizion Plus. The most followed audiovisual programs are ranked accordingly in the table below for year 2013.



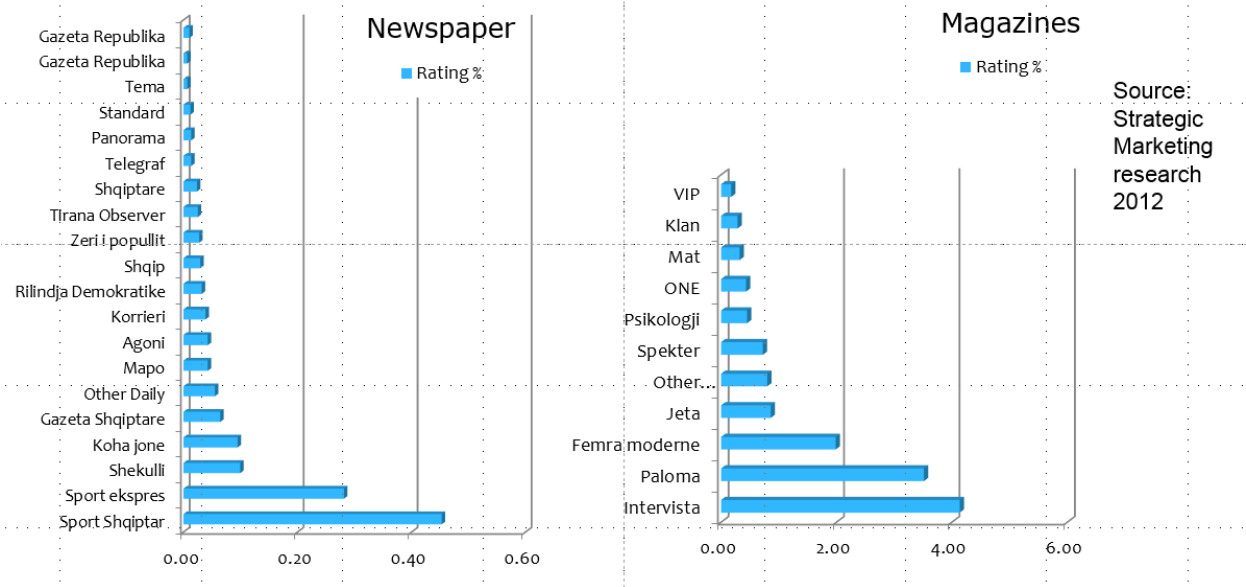
These audiovisual programs do not provide LMI. The genre of audiovisual programs is humour, music, fashion, sports and entertainment shows. Young women are most interested in music, followed by humour and fashion programs while young men are interested in humour, music and sports programs. There is a discrepancy between the TV programs and shows that youth watches and the likelihood that during this shows LMI will be disseminated.

Print

According to the most recent data for Albania⁶, Print Media has a relatively small youth audience where magazines have the highest audience of youth, especially gossip magazines compared to newspapers. Print media has a larger audience of youth in the summer season, due to the fact that they spend most of the vocation at the beach. The charts below rank the most read magazines and newspaper by youth.

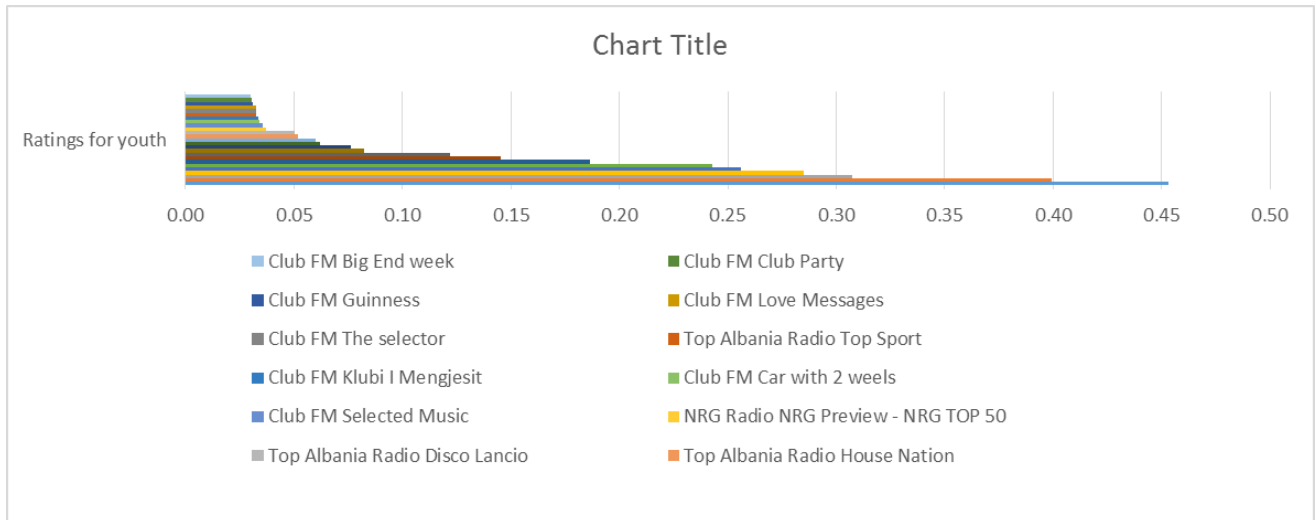
⁶ Strategic Marketing Research 2012

PRINT Audience for Youth



Radio

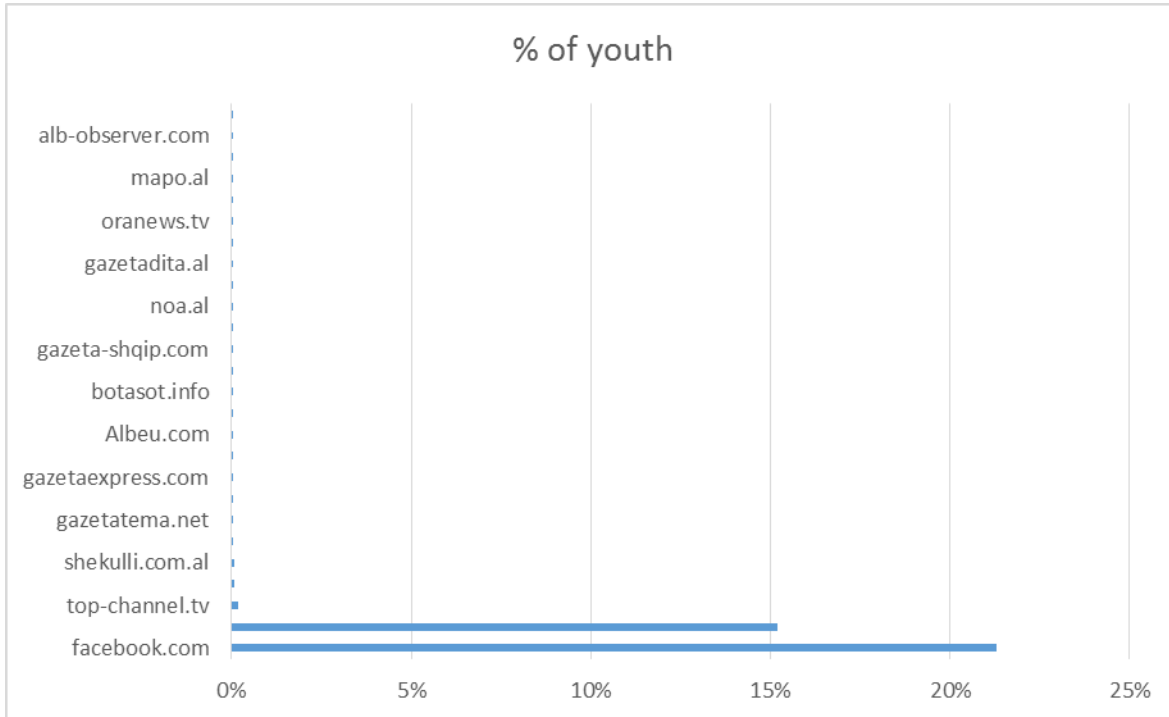
The most popular Radio station is Top Albania Radio, which has the largest audience and most preferred audio programs, followed by Club FM and Radio +2. Top Albania Radio and Radio +2 have national coverage and are thus able to reach more young men and women. The table below presents the most listened audio programs for youth for year 2013.



*Percentage of youth population that listens to audio programs for Jan-Dec 2013

Internet

Albanian websites have extremely low visitors compared to international social websites such as Facebook.com and Youtube.com. Please find below the ranked websites according to the average daily young visitors for the year 2013.



3.1.6 LMI in existing media products

There has been LMI in all media including Top-Channel, Vizion Plus, Paloma and Shqiptarja.com whether about unemployment, career guidance but not on a regular basis. The talk show magazines have talked about issues related to LMI sporadically (e.g. “Pasdite ne Top Channel” or other morning programs of almost all major TV channels.) However, this is not done frequently and not for the purpose of benefiting from it.

Some print media have published some LMI information. “Shqiptarja” has specifically mentioned an article on the most wanted profession for the future. But this was a translated article from a foreign media. This newspaper has an online version that creates a space for publications of more social responsible topics. But this space is not easily accessible and not very popular. Another print media, “Paloma” magazine, mentioned some LMI material on how to write a CV or how to dress for a job interview. All these articles are translated from an online or other foreign media, i.e. not the result of research of an Albanian institution or market needs.

For the Albanian media to cover LMI issues it needs extra staff that it cannot afford and it will need support for staff training, program developing, developing a business model, continuous communication with advertisers, constant observation of the labour market. All of this is very hard to achieve when all the media outlets are understaffed.

3.2 Young women and men

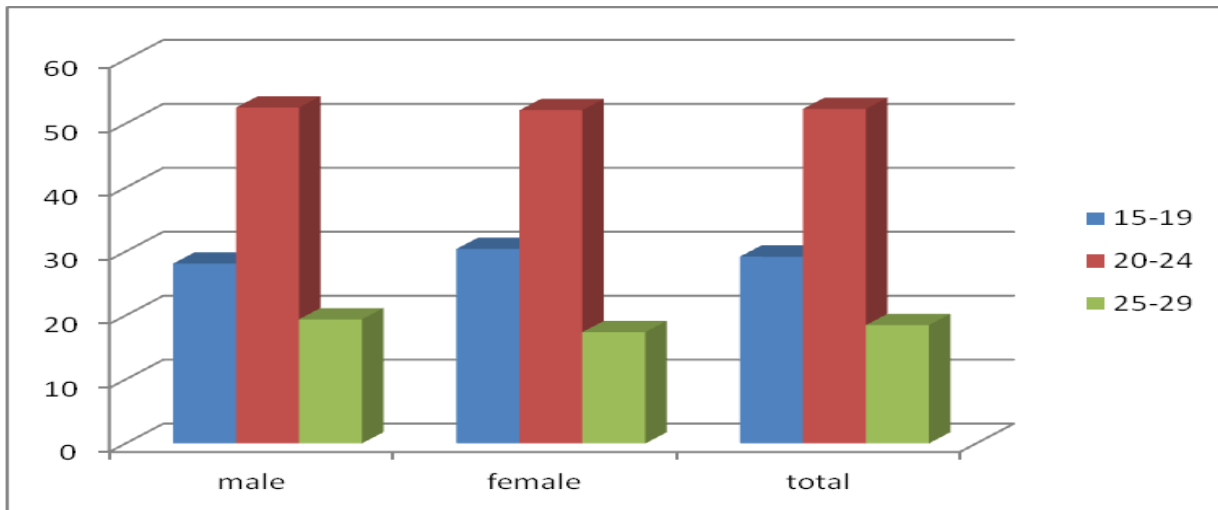
This section of the report explores the key components that are essential for young men and women to make career decisions and future plans. It focuses primarily on the role of media, but also on family and educational institutions. Furthermore, this section explains how labour market information disseminated by media is used by young men and women, what are the most popular channels used by youth to make career decisions and how information on job opportunities is made available to them.

3.2.1 Youth habit on carrier decisions and job perspectives

Our research was conducted in two forms, quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research was conducted through an online survey of the group-age 15-29 years old selected through one popular social media tool: Facebook. The total number of respondents is 1,021 (470 female and 551 male), where around 11% of respondents were located in rural areas. The qualitative research was conducted through focus groups (FG), while taking into consideration the results of quantitative research for the stratification. The total number of FG was ten, including both rural and urban areas, and gender and age (15-29) were taken into consideration.

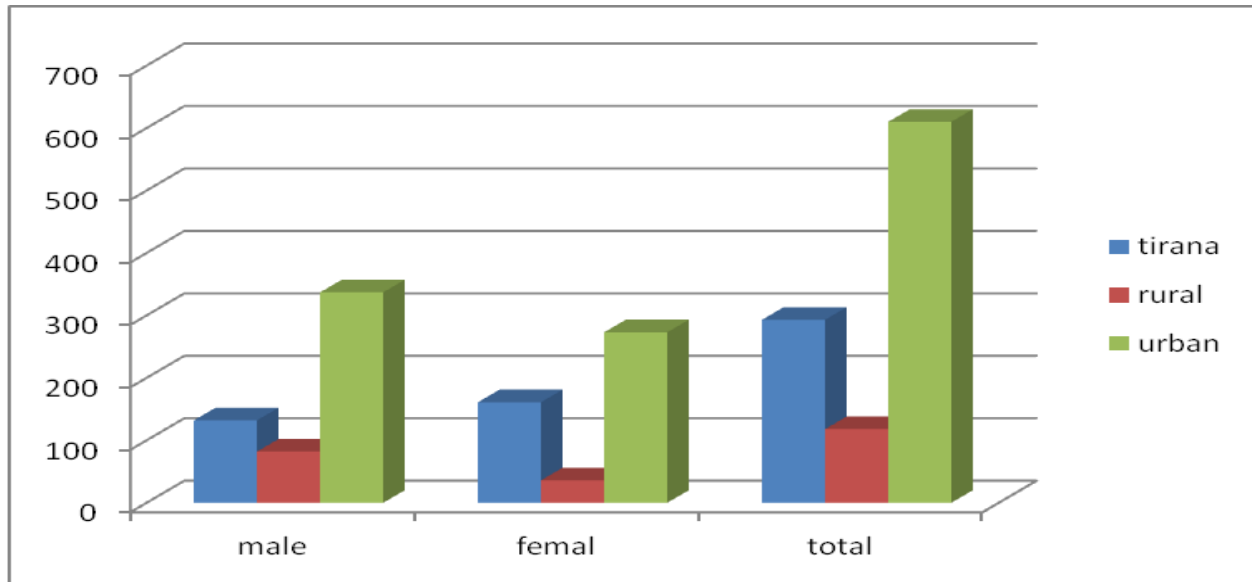
Demographic characteristics of respondent. The online survey circulated for two weeks on Facebook and it was targeted to young women and men. From a total of 3055 survey clicks, 1,021 completed the survey. Out of 1,021 respondents, 551 or 54% were male and 470 or 46% were female. Respondents in the group age of 20-24 years old are around 50%, with an equal participation of both genders.

Graph 1: Percentage of respondents by age and sex



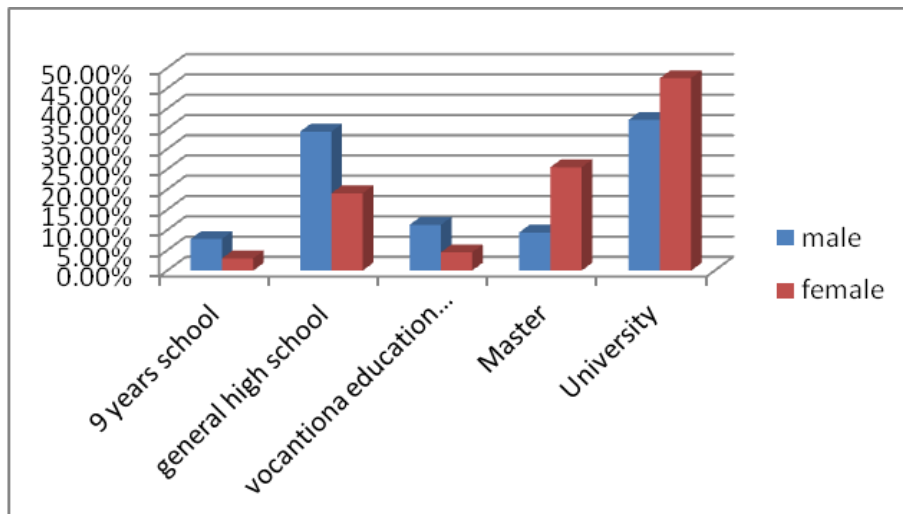
Based on their responses, we categorized them in three location areas: 253 respondents from Tirana, about 600 from other urban areas and 112 from rural villages. In Tirana, female respondents were more than male respondents, while in rural areas there was the opposite scenario.

Graph 2: Number of respondents by location and gender

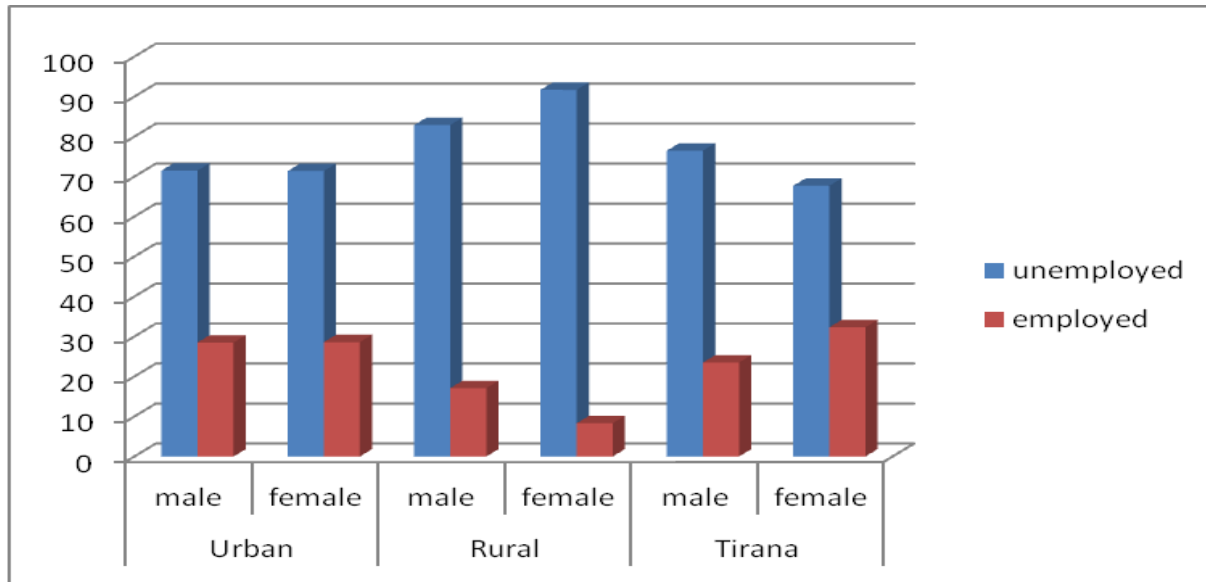


Considering their level of education, the results are: university degree (42%), high school education (27%) and a graduate degree (17%). We noticed that our female respondents are on the tertiary and graduate education more than male respondents, meanwhile male respondents reported to be enrolled in general high schools and vocational schools more than female respondents.

Graph 3: Percentage of respondents by education and gender

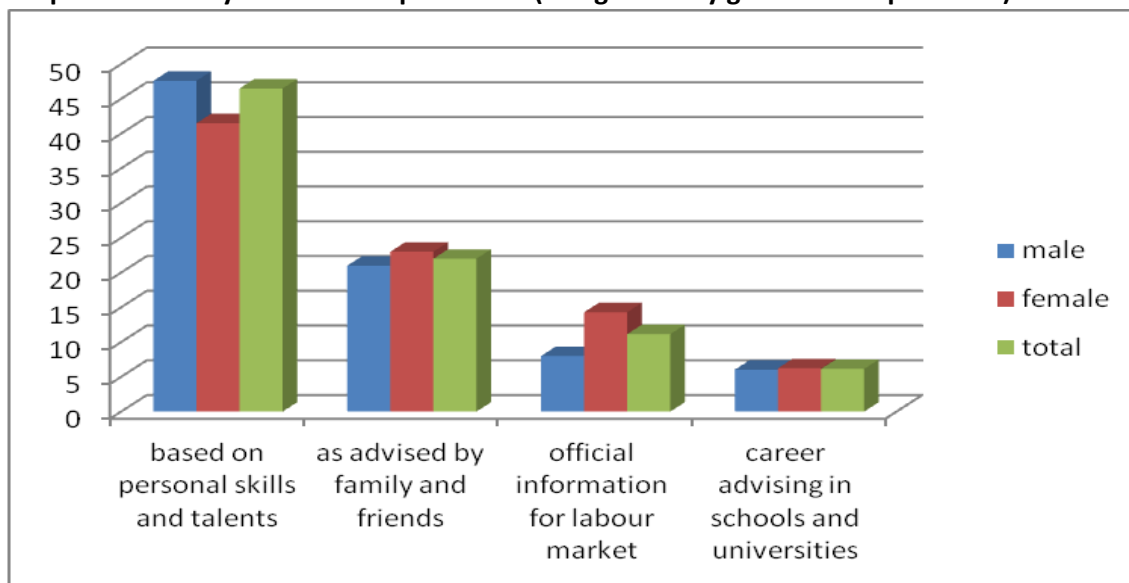


Graph 4: Percentage of unemployed and employed based on location area and gender



73% of those that participated in our online survey reported to be unemployed whereas 23% were employed. From the respondents answers results that in Tirana, more female respondents are employed compared to male respondents. The opposite applies to respondents in rural areas; where female report to be more unemployed than male. These results reflect the overall trends in the Albanian labour market.

Graph 5: How they choose their profession (categorized by gender of respondents)



When asked how they choose their profession, the majority (47 %) answered “based on personal skills and talents” with male (48 %) respondents being more in favour of this notion than young women

(42%). 22% answered “as advised by family and friends” without any gender differences. Female respondents reported to trust more official information for labour market (14 % of them), while only 8% of male respondents reported to trust this information. Information on labour market played a tertiary role (14 %), whereas career advising centres in schools and universities seems to be the least informing source. Only 6% claimed they used educational institutions for career guidance.

To further analyze the findings from the online survey, we proceeded with a more analytical approach: focus groups. The result was similar. Professions are chosen mainly based on personal skills and talents, usually relying on affinities during high school. Parent’s suggestions and advice represent the second most influential reason in choosing a profession. It’s important to mention that young women seem to be more influenced by their parents’ opinion than young men. Expected salary also seems to be an essential factor in decision-making for both genders, mainly for young men than young women.

Regarding job seeking, the majority of those that participated in focus groups claim that they find employment through family and personal connections, rather than through job agencies or employment offices. The preferred media to search for jobs for both rural and urban area respondents are the tools provided by the internet: Google search, social media, employment agency portals and government employment websites. There is no research conducted from the young women and men or from their parents about labour market demands prior to choosing career paths; existing statistical data such as INSTAT are generally not used. Most of the participants in the focus groups claim that they would change their preferred profession for another one if they are assured that this would secure a job for them. Young women prefer more professions on social fields even though the salary is not very high. There seems to be a need for more guidance and information about different professions and career decisions in high schools and universities. Under these circumstances, the media can play a supportive role. Internships are highly preferred, but there is a general impression that there are very few internship opportunities.

3.2.2 Young generation’s relationship with media. How do they use media?

When asked in the online survey what channels they would prefer to use in order to get information on job offers and opportunities, 30 % answered internet. Men (27%) prefer this alternative more than women (18%) respondents. Job portals came as a second alternative with 16 %, whereas newspapers, government institutions, friends and acquaintances, social media television and radio followed in descending order.

Only 17 % were satisfied with the amount and the content of labour market information that they currently receive through media. Female (13%) respondents are less satisfied than male (21%), while 49 % are somewhat unsatisfied (47% male and 52% female), 34% are unsatisfied (35 % female and 32 % male). Except from media, 29% of our informants are unsatisfied (31% male and 25% female) with the information they get from employment offices, job portals and job agencies. 55% are somewhat satisfied (61% female and 50 male) and 16% are unsatisfied (18 % male and 13 % female).

The findings from the online survey confronted during the focus groups showed that television is the most trustworthy source of information. The importance of the television is high for another reason: it is

used more often by parents. As parents are important for the young women and men, TV programs should also target them. On the other hand, according to both online and focus groups results, young women and men consider the internet as a less reliable educative channel, yet they prefer this media, due to the large information it contains on job opportunities. The analyses show that there is an overall distrust of youth towards media, including government employment offices.

3.2.3 Most attractive media for youth

According to our study, television and internet are the most used media among all young people. However, this is more the case in urban areas. Youth in rural areas utilizes these media less and they rely more on family connections. There is a positive sentiment towards having a reliable and credible source that provides information about job opportunities; preferably by the internet as it contains more information and is easier to access. On the other hand, most of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of labour market information in the media. When asked what platform would they like to use to get labour market information, majority answered that they would like a media platform that is both informational and attractive to follow.

Parents play a decisive role for youth in choosing a profession. Although the majority of attendants in focus groups answered “based on personal skills and talents”, when asked in-depth questions the majority seemed highly influenced by the perception of parents and what they think are the most attractive professions. As such, it is important to emphasize that LMI for parents needs to be disseminated more through TV rather than internet or social media, but more detail research is needed. Parents influence young men and young women decision for their future professional since they are 16 years old. Therefore, successful stories should be disseminated also by interactive programs on TV.

3.2.4 Primary source of information in rural areas

According to our findings young women and men in the rural areas have less job opportunities and therefore they have a tendency to seek employment in urban areas. Still, there is a slight differentiation between the rural parts in the south and north of the country. According to the analysis, there are less employment possibilities in the northern parts, while in the south the tourism industry creates some part-time job opportunities during the summer. Having in mind this situation, the local sources of information are inexistent. The local media, like the ones in Kukës, do not provide any LMI. In rare occasion there are some job advertisements. In the south this changes, as there is some LMI shared, yet they are mostly linked to job vacancies.

For more detailed and educative information on LMI the primary source are national TVs. TV is the most used medium in the rural areas, both in the north and south of the country. The tendency to use internet is growing, this is due to mobile phones. Previously, the shortcuts in electricity and the lack of internet connections made it difficult to use the internet. Young women and men from rural areas mostly have the same attitude towards internet, although TV remains the more preferred and used channel for information.

3.2.5 Information young woman and man want from the media

According to the analysis, young women and men would like to receive more LMI through the media and not just information about job vacancies. Their preferred channel of information is the internet, but they also like TV Shows that are innovative and attractive to watch. They indicated that print media and some TV programs sporadically have published or aired some LMI, but this is not constant and the information is not fully based on the Albanian findings. They refer, for example, to print articles or talk shows that may have had as a subject LMI, but often that information is superficial or information refers to foreign examples and studies. For example, articles that suggest professions of the future, usually are based on studies done abroad and not necessarily refer to the Albanian reality.

The subjects young people want to be covered by media:

More info on professions

According to online and focus groups they have chosen a profession without in-depth knowledge of what their work will be like after graduation, nor what the possibilities for employment are. Therefore, articles and TV programs that could explain the trends of professions that the market needs, or give job descriptions about different professions will be important to them.

Profession of the future

Young women and men, especially the ones that have graduated and are unemployed say that they would have liked to have known more about what profession to choose. In one case, one girl that had studied social sciences, after graduation started studying engineering because from the research she conducted, she concluded that there would be more job opportunities for her after finishing this major. Articles and TV programs based on the studies made in Albania, or real cases from the country will be of high interest to them.

More information on schools and training possibilities

Young women and men would like more information on development possibilities. According to analysis they would like to know more about universities and what they offer, but they want to know more about courses offered and possibilities for further professional development. This is with interest to both young women and men that have university degrees, and also for those that are part of the labour market but do not have a degree.

More information on institutions

Young women and men would like to have information from media on official institutions, on what information they produce, how credible this information is. According to respondents, information from official institutions does not reach them and they distrust this information.

3.3 Labor Market Information in Albania

LMI system is important because it serves as a basis for evaluating and developing active employment policies, and for better planning and use of budget, human resources, and for building bridges between development policies and the labour market.⁷ A sustainable and well-functioning LMI system can help both the employer and the job seekers.

In order to have a better understanding of the current LMI system in Albania, we have assessed the existing research data and conducted interviews with official government representatives of the following institutions: Ministry of Youth and Social Welfare, Directorate of National Service for Employment, and INSTAT officials. Our focus was in understanding the current relationship and potential collaboration between media, government and other relevant institutions in disseminating labour market information.

Currently there is labour market information available in Albania, and the main providers are INSTAT, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and Ministry of Education and Science. However, there is no mechanism that separates the labour market information that specifically addresses young men and women needs. There is no tailoring or consolidation of the existing data in the national or local level in order to have a final product that analyzes data and could be used to better plan career choices or employment strategies.

Moreover, the available LMI is disseminated sporadically and in a decentralized form, from various data providers. The advantages of having a consolidated a system would be an advantage for all interested groups. Media could play an important role in disseminating data however, there must be some kind of system in place that allows media to disseminate filtered data targeted to young women and men.

3.3.1 Official Institutions producing LMI

Key government agencies involved in generating Labour Market Information are the national statistical offices; ministries of Youth and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and public employment services.

National Statistical Agency (INSTAT) – is the only agency in the country for data gathering, based on ILO standard and EUROSTAT for all data on labour market. According to INSTAT data, the official unemployment rate in Albania is around 13 %, while youth unemployment is twice as high. In fact, in the fourth trimester of 2013, the unemployment rate of youth age 15-29 is 18 %.⁸ Accordingly, young people are disproportionably affected by unemployment compared to older age groups. Since 2007 INSTAT conducts Labour Force Survey and reports data on Labour Market according to international standards and provides the data disaggregated by age, sex, location and other characteristics. INSTAT has a periodic bulletin that publishes the data, but it lacks the data analysis of this information for labour

⁷“Developing a Labour Market Information System in Albania” Policy Paper, July 2012, pg.5

⁸ INSTAT, ATFP 2014 (retrieved April 21st):

http://www.instat.gov.al/media/230786/rezultate_t__afp_tr_4_2013.pdf

market. INSTAT has two types of data on LMI: administrative data collected by all state institutions and data collected from social surveys.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth – has recently adopted the new “National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020”. The new strategy aims to improve the employment programs and services, to improve the quality of education and professional qualifications; it aims to be inclusive of special interest groups, such as rural population and people with special needs, and to make employment system functional by investing in vocational training and education.⁹ The Strategy aims to approach the needs of specific groups, including youth and women, by adopting the employment services to their needs.¹⁰ The ministry is responsible for key policy areas in employment and vocational training; and the employment of youth is one of their top priorities. The strategy has specific objectives and indicators for women and men. For the first time this strategy has five objectives out of ten based on the needs of women and men in the labor market and is linked to vocational education and training. The Ministry is opened to any kind of cooperation including media and staff training in order to make LMI more sustainable, organized and accessible to youth.¹¹

National Employment Service – also plays an important role as an intermediate institution providing information, counseling and services to the unemployed. This institution has regular communication with the public and media, at least 3-4 times a month with official press releases and on daily bases through the internet, webpage, social media and email newsletters. There is no press or daily communication that is addressed to youth specifically, however youth is always benefiting from this information. Moreover, youth is the main target in one of the programs for employment incentives, which raises awareness amongst businesses on employing young women and men. Another aim the program has is to increase the employment of young women and simplify tax procedures for enterprise. Media is considered as an important partner and this agency is open to any kind of campaign that would address youth and employment, depending on the format of the campaign and its costs.¹²

Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) – is responsible for all public educational institutions, including higher education and vocational training schools. The educational institutions can play an important role in disseminating LMI and in collaborating with media, however, according to our fieldwork findings, schools and universities remain one of the lowest information source in career guidance and labour market information. Also, the information that is disseminated through media is sporadic and not necessarily youth-oriented. It's important to mention that this ministry has all information disaggregated by sex and published in the annual yearbook.

⁹ Erion Veliaj, Minister of SWY, public statement during the ceremony of official presentation of the Strategy, retrieved April 12th: <http://www.top-channel.tv/artikull.php?id=273410>

¹⁰ Genta Sula, Deputy-Minister of SWY at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, October 2013, Tirane.

¹¹ Leart Kola, advisor of Minister of SWY, interview conducted on

¹² Genci Kojdheli, Director at National Employment Services, interview conducted on April 2013

There are other important institutions aside from the main government agencies, that have a direct interest in labour market issues and are also in a position to contribute to generating LMI. An example would be higher education providers in Albania that are attended by a large number of students. According to a study, 40 % of them have career service offices, carry out labour market research and provide information to support employability of the students. Also, around 60 per cent of them organize informing activities through lectures, workshops and internships in order to bring students closer to potential employers.¹³ Other potential LMI holders that don't pertain to youth are private training organizations, employer organizations, trade unions, private employment agencies and NGOs that deal with disadvantaged social groups.

3.3.2 Job portals

1. Privately owned online portals that provide only job opportunities and are mainly supported by advertising through website viewership.
 - The advantages are: 100% dedicated to job openings, good IT infrastructure
 - Disadvantages are: Lack of donations, employer and job seekers fee might lower viewership

Identified portals:

- Online portal: www.duapune.com, www.boulevard.al, www.albapunesim.al, www.gazetacelesi.al/

An appropriate portal for distribution of LMI is www.duapune.com. It contains a large variety of jobs and professions that do not require an education such electrician, receptionist, cook, waiter, construction worker etc. However this online portal is supported only through donations.

- Online premium portal www.linkedin.com/groups/Albania, www.karriera.al

The premium online portal contains more specialized jobs such as engineer, economist, marketing director, sales manager etc. The business model of this portal is based on advertising.

2. Generic online portals such as www.ikubi.al, www.njoftime.com that are financed through advertising and sponsored by private companies.

Advantages: These online portals contain not only job offerings but anything that increases website views such as information, announcements, buying and selling.

Disadvantages: They do not dedicate 100% of their time and resources to LMI. Business model is solely based on advertising.

3. Public online/offline portal such as www.puna.gov.al that is 100% dedicated to employment.

Advantages: It is financed by the government therefore it the most sustainable of all other portals.

Disadvantages: Average IT infrastructure

¹³ Developing a Labour Market Information System in Albania” Policy Paper, July 2012, pg.24

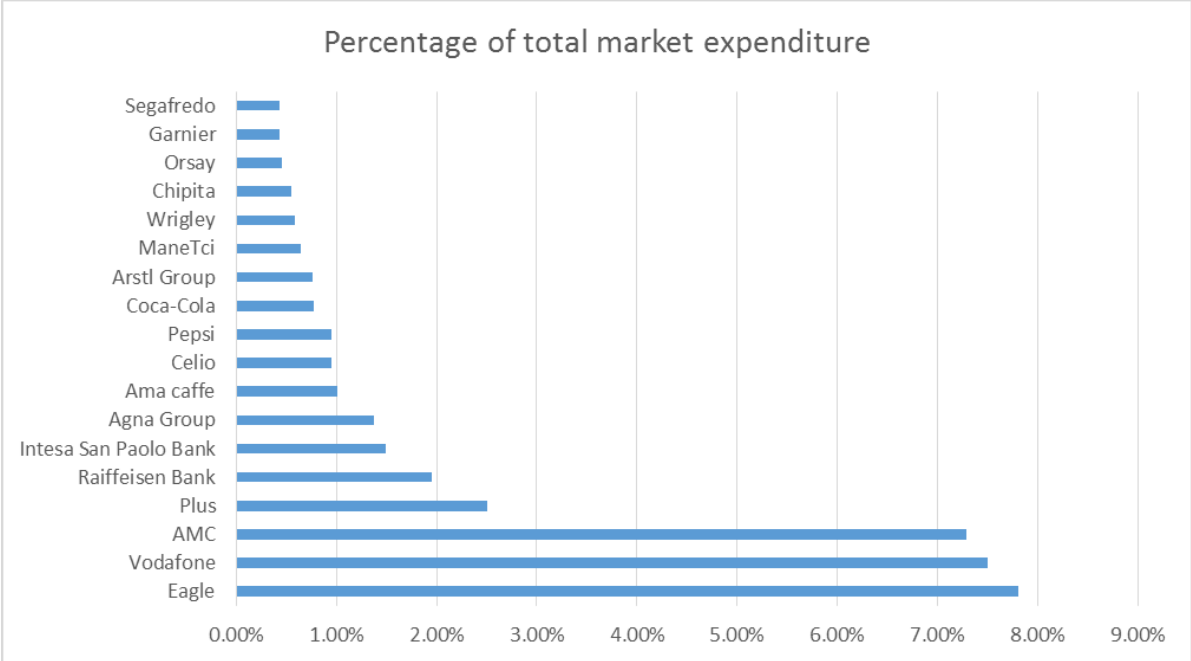
Private Companies

Several private companies hereafter referred to as advertisers have been identified as potential stakeholders that could play a role in sustaining an efficient strategy for dissemination of LMI through media. These private companies or otherwise advertisers that target young men and women have been identified based on their yearly advertising budget they spend in media and the expressed interest to support LMI. The following companies are Eagle Mobile, Vodafone, AGNA Group, Pepsi and Coca-Cola.¹⁴ The markets where these potential sponsors operate are the telecommunication industry and the food and beverages industry.

The advertisers, displayed in the table below, spend approximately 60%-70% of their yearly advertising budget to target youth. As such attracting endorsement or ads in LMI output channels can be extremely beneficial to arouse media awareness for the potential profitability of disseminating LMI through their channels. The preferred advertising media is television, thus LMI should have at least one TV distribution channel to attract LMI. Throughout our research, our findings indicate that media are interested in disseminating LMI, however they require a financial incentive. During the interviews, advertisers were open to endorse informational campaigns and activities in order to raise brand awareness and company image. Key consideration point for endorsement is the amount of funds for contribution, span of campaign or event and how quickly they will benefit from this investment. In addition, they displayed great disposition to advertise their product around LMI media advertising space and even sponsor LMI programs as long as these programs have high ratings.

The majority of advertisers do not interact directly with media, instead they employ local media agencies to plan and buy advertising space in specific media tools. As such, special interest must be given to local media agencies that have direct contact with media. There are few local media agencies, "Optimum Media", "Delta Publicity", "Oglivy", SourceOne, Paper Communications but the trend is for global media agencies to open local offices like "Gray" or the last to do so is "McCann Ericson".

¹⁴ MC Monitoring Yearly reports 2009-2013



*Percentage of advertising expenditures for each company compared to total advertising expenditures in all media channels.

4. Conclusions

There is a considerable amount of LMI that is currently generated in Albania, yet the information is not very well structured, detailed and disseminated. Although most media representatives interviewed during this research expressed their goodwill and openness to be part of the process for disseminating LMI in a more structured and organized way, they lack resources and ideas on how to achieve it by taking into consideration the specific needs of young men and women. The media itself has no capacity to produce LMI, therefore an independent content provider is needed.

The independent LMI content provider, dedicated to LMI media outputs and creating links with media and advertisers would be a good form for disseminating LMI and would have an impact to the public. Secondly, there is a need for qualified human resources or fully trained staff, either within a government institution, non-governmental institution or private enterprise that will collect labour market information, processes it and make it available to the media and specifically for youth. Furthermore, the dedicated producer, in this case independent content provider will be of help to the media, it will ease the burden on the staff, and on the other hand it will attract advertisers due to the quality of the program that contains LMI.

According to our research, especially through focus groups and interviews, it appears that young people make career decisions based on consultations with parents, friends and relatives, whereas educational institutions have a peripheral role. The advice coming from family and friends is generally based on perception and is not well-grounded on relevant labour market information. Therefore, when considering the role of media in LMI dissemination, it is imperative that information on labour market demands should also tackle parents and adults, who generally have a different behaviour towards media.

As internet is the most used and preferred media platform by youth, it is also the primary source of information. TV and printed media are also very important because they represent platforms that are used by all age groups, including parents and youth. An intersection of these three media on an online platform could bring precisely the necessary interaction that will appeal to all age groups and especially youth. For example, a TV show or a newspaper article that contains LMI should also be made available online.

Women attitude towards media. In general, young women seem to be more oriented towards official information outlets when searching for a job, compared to young men, who prefer the internet or other media, especially newspapers. Young women prefer social media more than men, while both genders seem to have no preferences regarding the TV program. When women and men were asked where they found the job, no differences were noticed in terms of their responses and both sides consider internet as the most useful tool. A large number of young men report to find the job based on recommendations and friends, which means that they are benefiting from connections and affiliations. On the other hand, young women apply to jobs mostly through labour offices as they claim to be more satisfied and trust their services more. They also report to be less satisfied with LMI and career information from the media. There are two main missing elements that are crucial to making LMI more frequent to youth through media. Firstly, there is a need for a media mediator that will gather, prepare, produce and disseminate the labour market information in a form that is appealing and interesting to youth. As for

the media, the main constraints remain lack of adequate staff and lack of financial resources. Even if there is good will, LMI specific projects may not continue if they don't generate direct profit.

On the other hand, advertisers can play an important mediating role. Due to the economic crisis advertisers have been going back to more traditional media such as television, but there is also a shift towards the internet. From our interviews resulted that advertisers have an interest to be part of those television, internet or radio programs that disseminate LMI. However, since these are profit-oriented businesses, their participation is contingent on the expected benefits gained, such as increase of sales, increased perception of brand value and positive company image.