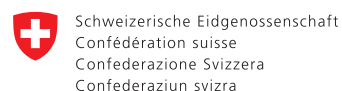


RisiAlbania is a project of the
Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

INSPIRING AND INFLUENCING THE YOUNG JOB SEEKERS OF ALBANIA

WORKING WITH THE MASS MEDIA
TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL
AND EMPLOYMENT CHOICES
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALBANIA

Updated version
October 2025

In partnership with:



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HELVETAS



PARTNERSALBANIA
FOR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT



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Tirana, 21 October 2025



NOTE ON THE UPDATED 2025 CASE STUDY

This case study was originally published in November 2016, shortly after the media intervention that the paper describes was implemented. As the RisiAlbania closes after 12 years over 3 phases, the impact of this intervention was revisited. In 2025, the media professionals that were involved in the programs, publications, online platforms etc. were interviewed to assess the longer-term impact of the employment-related media products that RisiAlbania supported had on the media market. In addition, a qualitative survey of the audience had also been undertaken in 2021 which verified the findings of the survey undertaken in 2016. This updated case study therefore builds on the 2016 case study to provide a longer-term perspective of this intervention and builds on the lessons that were emerging earlier on in the implementation.

RisiAlbania aimed to act as a catalyst with the Albanian media sector, to stimulate improved coverage of youth employment issues within the media sector. Returning to assess this intervention after 9 years provides an important and rare opportunity to understand what this intervention achieved. This update of the 2016 paper leaves much of the original text, but statistics have been updated to provide perspective of the youth employment situation since 2016, sections have been added to provide information on the media products that were supported, the influence these products had in the wider media, and on the findings of 2021 audience survey. The Lessons and conclusions have also been revised to include the longer-term perspective.





Executive summary

There are few development interventions that attempt to work with the commercial mass media in a sustainable way. Most development projects buy media space to deliver predefined information and the resulting spots, programmes and publications cease once funding stops. This case study explores a media intervention initiated under the RisiAlbania Project that took an innovative approach to improving information on youth employment by working to stimulate the launch and growth of profitable employment-oriented radio and TV programmes, print media supplements and online websites.

The RisiAlbania project was established to respond to the significant problem of **youth unemployment** in Albania. In 2016, almost one in three (33%) of young people aged between 15 and 29 are unemployed. This is leading to increasing emigration from Albania with Albanians being the 5th largest nationality seeking asylum in the European Union. By 2024, shortly before this case study was updated, youth unemployment had reduced to 18.9% but it was still a major issue with young people 3 times more likely to be unemployed compared to those over 30 years of age.

The **overall objective of the project** was therefore on i) job creation and ii) improving labour market information and intermediation services with a particular focus on youth. As part of this second component, the project embarked on working with the independent commercial mass media sector in Albania to develop and launch informative media products focused on employment information.

The **intervention rationale** was not to use mass media as a short-term tool to disseminate information, but aimed to change the way that media reports on employment in a sustainable way and therefore focused on change within the mass media system. It was envisaged that the improvement in information would influence the choices that young people make about employment and tertiary and vocational education (labour market system change) and therefore impact on the ability of young people to find employment (employment change). Sustainable change in media was therefore built into the overall intervention strategy of the project and became a core focus for the project despite its overall goal on employment.

The **RisiAlbania approach** was to offer support to media houses to develop and launch pilot radio programmes, TV programmes, print media and online media. This support was in the form of cost sharing, technical support and information on audience perceptions to the new and emerging media products. This support was provided on a rapidly diminishing basis over 3 seasons (years) to reduce the potential for dependency which would undermine sustainability. There were effectively 3 rounds of support to media companies and professional, 2 in the first phase of the project (2014-2016) and 1 in the second phase of the project (2017-2021). The project then only monitored the supported media up until the project closed in October 2025 (when this updated report has been written).

From mid-2014 to mid-2016 RisiAlbania directly supported the launch of 6 **pilot media products**. The intervention resulted in the successful launch of 2 TV programmes, 1 radio programme and 1 newspaper supplement with online presence and an online portal. These pioneering products were the first ever TV programmes, radio programmes and supplements that have focused on employment in Albania. The RisiAlbania intervention also resulted in the planned launch for 2017 of 2 additional TV programmes and the expansion of 2 online portals to include employment and training information, all without direct financial support from the project. By 2021 RisiAlbania had expanded the support to have included 11 media products: 6 TV programmes, 2 radio programmes and 3 online/print media products. The large majority of these were new products (8 of the 11) with the other 3 being existing online platforms that were oriented more towards employment

A survey was undertaken in 2016 to understand reach and impact of the media products, with a second survey undertaken in 2021. In 2025 the 6 senior media professionals involved in the products were interviewed to explore their perceptions of sustainability replication and impact. This 2021 survey and the 2025 interviews, support and reinforce the finding on impact from the 2016 survey and provide a good insight into sustainability and longer-term impact on this intervention on the media sector in Albania.

The media intervention was seen to have impact at three levels (media, labour market and employment):

Media level Impact: In 2016, Independent media ratings information and studies undertaken by RisiAlbania showed a high level of audience interest for these employment programmes, publications and websites. The employment programme on the leading Top TV station, Ti Mundesh, captured on average 22% of all TV viewers for each episode in its first series. RisiAlbania research showed that 80% of young people had watched a least 4 programmes and almost 30% had watched between 5 and 10 programmes. Other media products supported by RisiAlbania also showed strong, but slightly lower, audience. The survey undertaken in 2021 on 6 media products, showed similar high levels of interest and audience 67% were interested in the employment media products with listenership / viewership / readership between 50% for the most popular TV programme, 30% for a radio

programme, and 20% for a supplement/online platform. In an ever more competitive and fragmented media market, with many audiences accessing international and social media content, these audience figures are impressive. While a small number of media products lasted only one or two years, many others had impressive longevity with one TV programme broadcasting for 10 years and 3 online platforms still operating and providing employment information. Furthermore, the TV and radio programmes show clear evidence that they have impacted on how the media reports employment information. New programmes have been launched that appear to have been influenced by the initial products and broadcasters have integrated employment issues into their programming having witnessed the audience interest levels.

Labour level impact: The surveys undertaken by RisiAlbania and subsequent interviews with viewers, listeners and readers also show that these media products have a significant impact on the perceptions and behavior of audiences, 71% of the audience stated that the media products have changed their perception around employment – this means more than 78'000 people. These changes were particularly strong in improving understanding and awareness of vocational training, promoting self employment and in changing perceptions around desirability of careers and skills that are in demand from employers. The studies also showed that it was not just the youth, potential employees and employers that were being influenced by these media products but parents and family members who can influence the educational and career choices of the young. The surveys also showed the impact of media information on training service providers and improving their understanding of training demand and needs.

Employment level impact: The 2016 survey highlighted that almost one third (32%) of all the young people who watched, listened to or read the employment related media reported that they had directly influenced their behavior. Investigations into this showed that the audience had changed decisions around education and training, changed the way they looked for a job or had embarked on establishing their own business. For Ti Mundesh, the flagship TV programme on Top TV, alone this would mean that over 51,000 young people had changed their behavior around employment as a result of watching the programme

Longer term sustainability and influence of these programmes on the media: The review in 2025 appraised the sustainability of the media products supported and the influence and replication that they achieved. In almost every case, the media professionals cited examples of how the employment oriented programmes and publications influenced both their media houses and the wider media. RisiAlbania's role was highlighted in reducing negative preconceptions that employment information may not attract audiences or become sustainable.

The RisiAlbania intervention therefore highlights the potential high impact of a media focused intervention in employment. It illustrates the opportunity to achieve such impact in a way that is a win-win-win for commercial media, the audience and the development project itself. The approach that was adopted by the project has promoted sustainability and replication within the media industry ensuring that impacts are ongoing and not short term.

The intervention approach and outcomes provides a number of lessons for working with the mass media not only in employment related projects but also more widely in development. These include the project's approach to financial, technical and marketing support and the monitoring and measurement of impact in a media related intervention. It also provides a useful assessment of the relevance of mass media at a time when online and social media is growing and traditional national mass media faces challenges in profitability and sustaining audience levels.





Introduction

Fjonalda Sh. aged 27 and Eno H. aged 24 were two of Albania's huge number of youth unemployed. In a country with almost a third of 15-29 year olds officially unemployed (in 2016), Albania had one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Europe. While in 2025 this has reduced from 2016, youth unemployment remains a significant problem. If you walk around the streets of Tirana, the country's capital city, or any other large town in Albania, you will find school leavers and youths gathered in cafes and squares talking and whiling away the hours. Many of these youths will have good school qualifications and many have university educations. What they don't have is a job that attracts them and provides them with quality employment.

Many commentators and employers have suggested that the problem lies not only in the lack of jobs but also in a mismatch between skills and job vacancies. During a workshop on employment in early 2016, the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, asserted that *"Albania has jobs, but no professionals"*. But the experience of Fjonalda and Eno show that there is also a gap between understanding, aspiration and the realities of the Albanian job market. Both had their perceptions changed by exposure to information about opportunities for employment in areas that they had never considered working in previously.

The programmes which Fjonalda and Eno refer to are radio and TV programmes that, along with print and online publications, are the result of an intervention of the RisiAlbania project, a Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) project implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania. These media products



"The programme has changed my perception for the professions which were not regarded as interesting or beneficial before, especially traditional familiar professions and businesses. My mother is a good tailor and she is running her own business. Now I am working together with her and I find this profession interesting and beneficial."

Fjonalda Sh.

were supported by the project as a strategy to change perceptions and improve understanding around the labour market in Albania. Rather than just funding or paying for these media products to be broadcast or featured, RisiAlbania worked to show the commercial media in Albania that reporting on youth related employment can gain large audiences and be attractive to advertisers and therefore profitable. In short, the project worked to embed employment issues within the mainstream media industry.



“The programme with different examples of young people working in different jobs, changed my attitude towards working. These are not bad jobs. So I decided to work in a car wash business. And I would like to have my car wash business in the future.”

Eno H.

This case study explores and explains the RisiAlbania media intervention which aimed to make mass media an ongoing provider of information on employment issues. This is one of the first times that media has been used in a sustainable way in a development project focusing on addressing youth unemployment. The experience of the project has application not only to employment interventions but also more widely in development projects which have a focus and ambition for sustainability and creating scale through replication within the market. This case study explains an intervention where mass media is not merely a paid messenger, but a stakeholder that can provide the information that is essential to the effective operation of industries, markets and sectors.

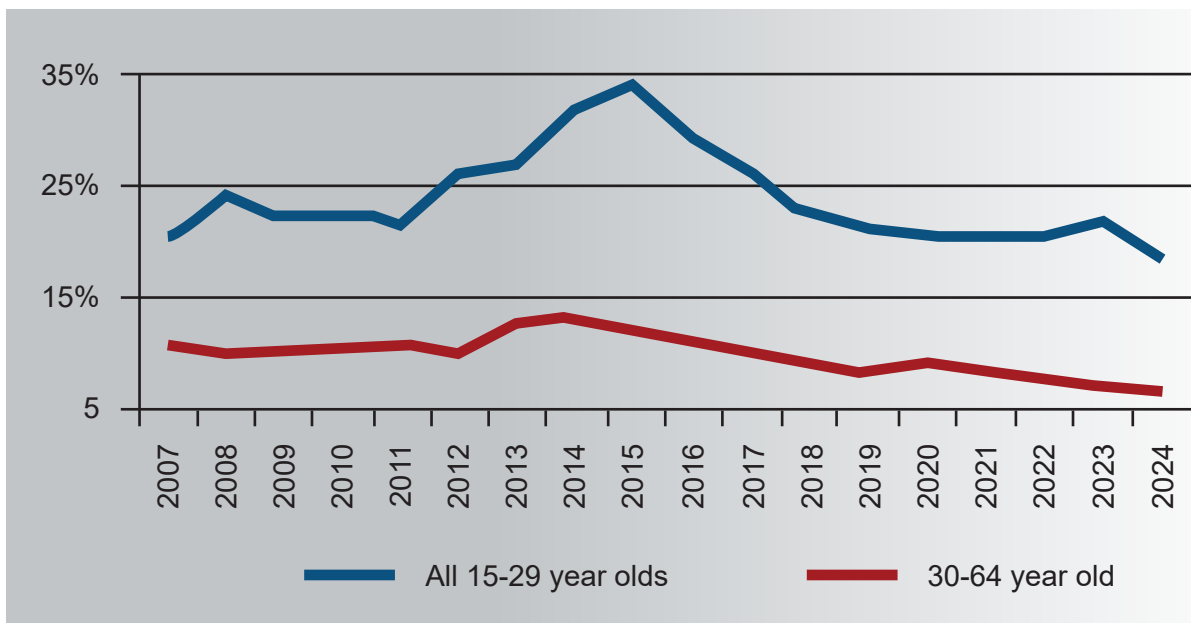


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Background

2.1 Youth unemployment in Albania – A continuing problem

In 2015, Albania's youth unemployment (those aged between 15 and 29) peaked and was recognized as a major area of concern within the government of Albania and the nation as a whole. Despite the reduction after 2015, youth unemployment has remained a significant problem and in 2024 youth were almost three times more likely to be unemployed than older people (18.9% of 15-29 year olds compared to 7.0% of 30 to 64%)



Unemployment rates in Albania by age. Source: INSTAT, 2015

Albania has the second youngest population in Europe after Kosovo with a median population of 36.3 years, almost 8 years younger than Switzerland (44.2 years) and more than 10 years younger than Germany (46.8 years)¹. Youth unemployment is therefore a greater issue in a country with a younger population. But this youth unemployment is a factor that has led to an ongoing migration from the country and Albania has had a continuously reducing population since 1990 with an overall reduction in population of over 27% in the last 35 years. Albania historically has had particularly high migration to Europe. In 2015, Albanians were the 5th largest nationality seeking asylum in EU countries after Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo. The number of asylum applications made by Albanian citizens to EU countries soared from 16,950 in 2014 to 67,735 in 2015². These rates have reduced recently with increased European controls on migration and return agreements with Albania, but the reducing population and the continuing youth unemployment remain significant problems for the country.

The root causes of youth unemployment are varied and complicated, but some factors are clear:

- low economic performance both nationally and regionally,
- a mismatch between supply and demand in the employment market
- and a mismatch between values and aspiration for employment and the reality of the job market

Before exploring these factors, it is useful to briefly explain Albania's recent history which has inevitably impacted on economic growth and the perceptions and values of the nation. Albania was a communist country with a centrally controlled economy up until the early nineties when wider political changes within the USSR and Eastern Europe heralded a transition towards democracy and a market economy. In the 25 years since the early nineties the country has faced huge economic, social and political change and transition. Some key aspects that are relevant to today's youth unemployment problem are:

Economic performance both nationally and regionally: Albania's economy crashed in the early nineties. GDP per capita reduced from the already low levels of the eighties (around US\$700) to a mere \$218 in 1990. The economy then grew with increased stability and economic reform with GDP per capita rising to over \$4000 in 2008. Since this point GDP and economic growth have faltered, hit by the wider global recession, European recession and the impact of the economic turmoil of Greece, Albania's important geographic neighbour. This shorter term economic impact explains to a degree the increasing youth unemployment since 2007 but it does not fully explain why the impact has been felt so heavily on the young while the older generation remains relatively immune. Youth unemployment increased by over 13% from 2007 to 2015 but unemployment in the over 30s only by 2%. Despite reducing over the last 10 years, youth unemployment in 2024 was almost the same as it was in 2007 (from 19.8% to 18.9%) but has reduced by more than a third among 30- to 64-year-olds (from 10.7% to 7.0%) over the same period.

¹ The World Factbook 2024 <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/median-age/country-comparison/>

² Eurostat 2025

Mismatch between skills supply and demand within the labour market: As Prime Minister Edi Rama highlighted, there is clearly a mismatch between the skills of those seeking jobs and the jobs available. This problem is less about lack of training and education and more about the nature of training and further education in Albania. An analysis of the employment market in 2014³ highlighted that many of the skills in demand from employers are specific, technical and practical. They are skills demanded by new types of IT, engineering and service industries that are competing on a regional, European and international level. A high proportion of school graduates attend further education in Albania, but most are attending traditional university courses that have not adapted to economic realities or are theoretical in nature. In 2015, more than 20 times the number of students were enrolled in university (103,000) compared to those graduating from official vocational education (a mere 3136 students)⁴. The number of graduates from vocational schools had not increased since the early nineties.

Mismatch between values and aspiration for employment and the reality of the job market: While the economy and the supply of vocational education are clearly impacting on youth unemployment, perception and values play a huge role also. It plays a role in defining the educational paths of the young and in the way they seek employment. This can be seen as partly a legacy of the past, when university education and white-collar jobs were the prerequisites for success and where self employment was not an option. This legacy impacts on the young through parental influence and inherited values. But aspirations and values are also formed within wider society – in the interaction we have with media, the video clips and films we watch, the blogs and articles we read and the interaction we have with peers and those we respect. “No job” can often be perceived as better than a ‘bad job’ by young people. But is this perception of job quality one that is valid and based on reality? The experience of Fjona and Eno show that often perceptions are often based on poor information and understanding.

2.2 RisiAlbania: Working to address labour market issues

It is the premise of the RisiAlbania project that information is key to both reducing the mismatch between supply and demand within the Albanian labour market and also in changing values and perceptions around jobs and careers.

RisiAlbania was set up in 2013 to address the problem of youth unemployment in Albania. The project was established by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and was implemented by a consortium of partners consisting of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and Partners Albania. The 4 year project had two main pillars. The first focuses on job creation through growth in specific sectors (tourism, agriculture and

³ For example: Skill Needs Analyses 2014, National Employment Service, International Labour Organisation, December 2014.

⁴ INSTAT, 2015

ICT) and the second focuses on improved labour market information and intermediation services. The project ran for 12 years completing three 4-year phases and closing in late 2025.

RisiAlbania's work with mass media sat under this second component. The project design recognised the importance of formal intermediation (organisations, companies and platforms that match job seekers with employers) and labour market data, but also recognised the potentially dynamic and catalytic role that mass media, TV and radio broadcasting, print and online, can have in reaching and influencing large numbers of people.

2.3 Mass media in Albania: Focused on 'black news', politics and entertainment

The mass media around the world plays an important role in employment markets. Many newspapers have traditionally included sections on employment and employment adverts. These sections have often linked news around sectors, commercial or public, with information on career, training and employment opportunities. Online platforms have to a degree taken over some of the traditional media's role in job advertisements, but conventional print media continues to deliver information both in print and through their allied online services.

Broadcast media also plays a very important role in profiling and exploring sectors of employment and self employment. While often not overtly 'employment' programmes, shows on setting up and running a business as well as programmes focusing on business sectors such as IT and computing, tourism, agriculture and the environment influence viewers and highlight career and business opportunities. A new genre of ultra-popular shows have also emerged and been syndicated across the world – for example The Apprentice (employment), Dragons' Den UK / Shark Tank US (entrepreneurship) – and been a success among audiences and highly successful commercially.

An analysis of the Albanian media sector undertaken by RisiAlbania in early 2014 showed that very little existed that would give insight into employment opportunities. There was a lack of content that focused explicitly on employment, entrepreneurship or more generally on business sectors. Despite unemployment being a hot political and social topic, the mass media in Albania focused predominantly on entertainment, mainstream politics and, as one senior editor at the Shqiptarja.com Newspaper put it, "black news" (reporting negative and controversial events and topics).



"Albanian media is more focussed on black [negative] news, but this [our new employment] supplement covers positive issues of young people"

Editor, Shqiptarja.com

There is a lack of diversity in media content in Albania – particularly in content which is locally produced, informative, factual and therefore effectively investigated and sourced. When the intervention began, the Albanian media comprised around 61 TV stations, 25 daily newspapers and 75 radio stations⁵ which were predominantly commercial and rely on advertisements and commercially oriented sponsorship. For the Albanian media, focusing on entertainment, mainstream news and foreign rebroadcasted or reprinted content appeared a safer route to audience ratings and commercial advertisement. In contrast, investing in informative and factual programmes and content, produced at relatively high cost by teams of journalists, editors and producers can appear a less attractive and riskier option.

For media content to be a success in a commercial industry the content needs to firstly attract sizeable audiences and secondly be able to attract advertisers seeking to reach this audience. To the Albanian media, employment focused programmes on the face of it did not appear to be a winning formula for commercial media success.

The media in Albania changed between 2015 (early in the RisiAlbania intervention) and 2025. While television remains the dominant media (commanding 72% of advertising revenues and reaching over 80% of viewers), radio has faced significant decline and print media has transitioned predominantly to online platforms. Online platforms play a particularly strong role in providing information on employment and platforms for employers and potential employees.⁶



⁵ Authority of Audio-visual Media, in charge of licensing the media

⁶ Monitoring the media landscape in Albania related with the dissemination of career orientation focused content RisiAlbania, October 2025

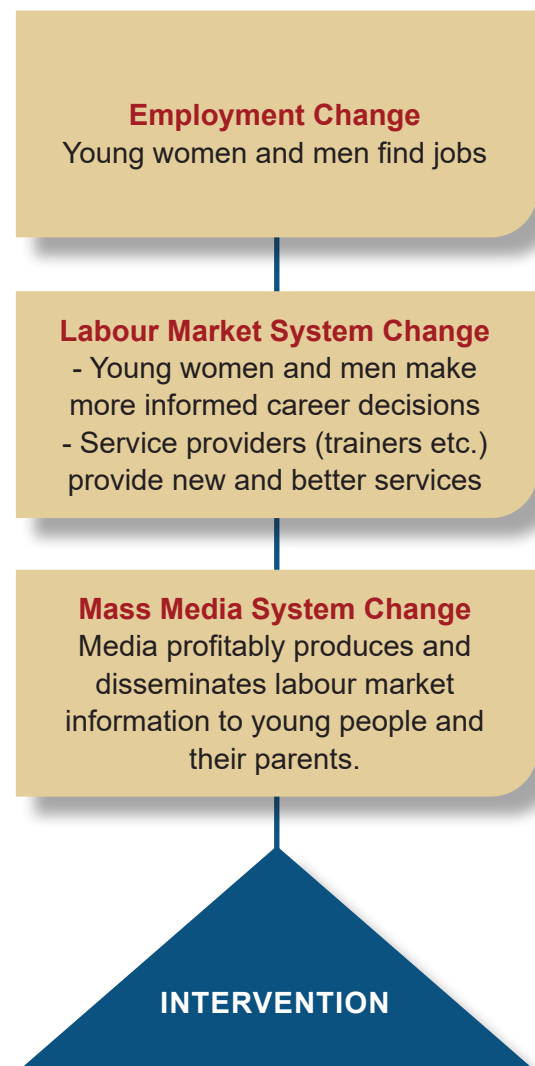
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The RisiAlbania media intervention: Acting as a catalyst

It is important to contrast RisiAlbania's ambition and approach to working with the mass media to that of the vast majority of international development projects. Using the mass media to inform and change perceptions and behaviour is hardly new in international development. Interventions in health, education, private sector development and governance have tapped into the power of mass media to inform mass audiences, stimulate debate and influence. What is different about the RisiAlbania intervention is that they focused on creating sustainable change within the media industry and in-so-doing aimed to stimulate media to play an ongoing role in information on employment.

The vast majority of development projects use media as a tool and sponsor or pay for media airtime and space to deliver information. In those cases, mass media is therefore an unsustainable means towards a project end and the relationship between the project and the media is a commercial and transactional one - when the payment for airtime or space ceases, so does the media coverage.

RisiAlbania, on the other hand, intervened with an explicit goal of changing the way the mass media system operates. The ambition for media system change was to embed employment into the mainstream media content – programme line-ups, reporting and online portals. To achieve this RisiAlbania needed



*Risi Albania Strategic Framework
for the media intervention*

first to prove the popularity and profitability of such content and to therefore build the commercial incentives around such content. Employment issues needed to be proved to be interesting and popular, and this popularity could then become more mainstreamed into the Albanian media.

The implementation approach

Development projects which purchase media space often cite the lack of resources, both human resources and finance, as a key reason for not attempting to work in a more sustainable way. A more sustainable approach is perceived to be more time-consuming and costly. It is therefore interesting to note that RisiAlbania intervened in the media market with surprisingly limited resources and, as this case study will explore, with quite substantial impact, some of which can be seen to have lasted within the media sector for almost 10 years after direct financial support ceased.

Human resources: Risi Albania did not have a team or even a dedicated staff member working full-time on the media component. One senior staff member allocated about 60% of her time to this intervention in phase 1 of the project and substantially less in phase 2. This staff member did not have prior experience of the media or journalism, but did have an extensive experience in employment and career orientation.

Finance: In total RisiAlbania invested 183,000 Euro over two years in the media intervention (not including project staff costs). This finance was allocated on a reducing basis with € 103,000 in spent in the first season and €80,000 spent in the second season.



Overall funding support provided by RisiAlbania to media partners

Nevertheless, it should be noted that one lesson learnt from the project was that the time commitment projected for the media intervention was originally underestimated by RisiAlbania. Also, the cost of working with the largest and potentially most influential TV stations was higher than originally anticipated.

At the outset, the approach appeared relatively simple. RisiAlbania would raise awareness of the media to the opportunity of developing employment focused content (programmes, publications and online platforms) and then open competitive calls for proposals for new innovative media products. The winning proposals would receive cost sharing and capacity building support to pilot and launch the new media products. The aim was to reduce entry barriers to launching new approaches to content while avoiding any reliance on the finance from the project. RisiAlbania advocated strong cost sharing and leveraging commercial sponsorship and advertising. During the period when RisiAlbania cost shared to support pilots and new products, only 29% of funding originated from RisiAlbania while 45% came from media partners and 25% came from external advertising and sponsorship.

The intervention since 2014 had seven main stages.

STAGE 1: INITIAL MEDIA SECTOR RESEARCH AND BASELINE DATA COLLECTION:

A baseline study was commissioned in early 2014. The baseline mapped the Albanian media industry and assessed current levels of employment relevant content. The study was undertaken by media experts as a consultancy assignment. In addition, an international study was undertaken to identify and analyse the best international/regional practices of dissemination of Labour Market Information through media and to assess their applicability in the Albanian context.

STAGE 2: AWARENESS RAISING AND CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

The findings of the research were presented at a national workshop in July 2014, entitled 'Labour Market –a new business for media', with a strong focus on the commercial aspects of employment focused reporting. RisiAlbania invited a senior editor of a German newspaper (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) as well as other regional media to present at this workshop. This presentation focused on highlighting both the approaches adopted by German media outlets in covering employment and the commercial benefits of such coverage. A call for proposals for new and innovative media products relating to youth unemployment was launched at this workshop.

STAGE 3 - PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT:

RisiAlbania vetted the proposals and worked with a shortlist of applicants to fine tune these into fundable plans. 4 media partners were chosen and budgets developed for co-funding and capacity building for the first season (approximately 10 months).

STAGE 4 - SUPPORT TO A PILOT SEASON (SEASON 1):

The initial winning 4 media (one radio station, two TV stations and one print and online newspaper) were chosen in September 2014. Each winner received financial support to pilot test and launch a media product and capacity building from the international expert from Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. The financial support was carefully targeted to ensure that the partner was significantly co-investing since it was important that the financial support was not construed as sponsorship, but support to reduce entry barriers to test a new approach/programme that the media partners believed could be popular and financially viable. At this stage, the anticipated budget for support was €75,000 but this was raised to €103,000. This increase was the result

of the support to the largest and most popular TV channel – Top Channel TV that could act as an example and model for other media. In order to make sure that the programmes and their content was of high quality, a monitoring process took place. For this purpose, an audience feedback group comprising young people from different backgrounds, under the supervision of a consultant, was established to monitor the programmes and give feedback for the first five months of the pilot programmes and supplement.

STAGE 5 – AWARENESS RAISING FOR SEASON 2:

It was decided to undertake a second awareness raising workshop which was organised in July 2015 at the end of the first season of pilot programmes. The experience of the pilot media products was presented and another senior editor from Germany was invited to present at this workshop, this time from a public TV broadcaster (RBB-TV Randfunk Berlin-Brandenburg television). It was recognised at this stage in the media intervention that it was too early for crowding-in (competitors entering the market) and there was a need to create a larger critical mass of employment focused media to influence the industry. A second call for media proposals was therefore invited.

STAGE 6 – SECOND ROUND OF SUPPORT TO MEDIA PRODUCTS:

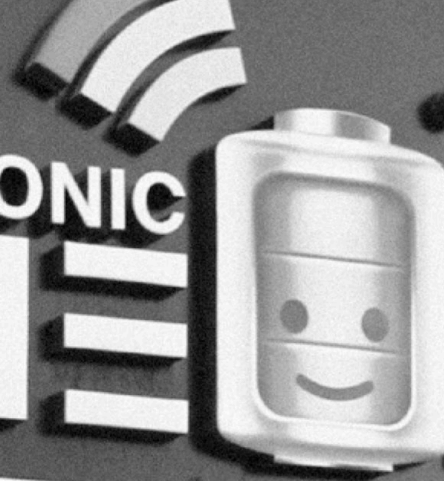
Two additional potential media partners were chosen to receive support: one TV station and one online platform. It was also decided to provide a continuing, but significantly diminished, support to three of the existing partners. The level of financial support to the TV station (Top TV) for example was halved for season 2 from €60'000 to €30'000. RisiAlbania also embarked on a separate but complimentary activity to work with the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana and develop a module on labour market reporting. This activity was supported by a trainer from the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle. The activity had a longer term objective of bringing a new generation of journalists into the Albanian media who understand labour market issues.

STAGE 7 – THIRD SUPPORT TO MEDIA PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON CAREER ORIENTATION

During the first two years of its second phase, the RisiAlbania project, supported five new media initiatives three TV program and one online media outlet and one new radio program developed by an existing radio partner, with an estimated budget of 135.000 Euro. The focus gradually shifted toward career orientation for young people, with collaboration involving two media outlets and three media producers who developed branded programs that were broadcast across various platforms.

Then RisiAlbania reduced its work with media and focused on carer orientation and platforms for youth employment. Unusually for a development project, this was not due to the intervention not being successful, but the opposite. The media intervention had fulfilled its objectives within a short period of time and continued significant support would potentially undermine sustainability. RisiAlbania therefore moved into a phase of monitoring the media products, providing informal inputs and networking resource people into the media products.

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The media products that emerged from the support of RisiAlbania

Over the period of two years, from mid-2014 to mid-2016, RisiAlbania directly supported 6 media products, 4 products in season 1 (2014-15) and an additional two in season 2 (2015-16). In addition, the awareness raising activities and the success of directly supported products resulted in a number of additional employment related media products emerging. From 2018-2020, in phase 2 of the project (2017 to 2021) RisiAlbania supported 5 new media products.

As the following list highlights, the emerging portfolio of media products span a spectrum of different focuses from those that are much more employment market focused (e.g. Drejt Punes in Shqiptarja.com) through to those that are more entrepreneur focused (e.g. Have you got an Idea on Vizion Plus) as well as those which cover formal employment as well as self-employment and entrepreneurship (Ti Mundesh on top TV). The portfolio also aims not just at youth (through radio, TV and internet) but also at reaching their parents with print media (Shqiptarja.com supplement) and media that attracts older audiences (Report TV).

Ti Mundesh (You can do it) on Top TV

Top TV is the leading TV station in Albania consistently commanding the highest audience. The station is commercial and reliant primarily on advertising. Ti Mundesh was perceived by RisiAlbania as a flagship media product. The station was an industry leader with the potential to influence an industry as well as ensure large outreach was a reason for RisiAlbania revising their initial budget to allow them to support the piloting of the programme Ti Mundesh. Ti Mundesh combined field-based filming and interviews with studio panel discussions with experts and practitioners. Each programme focused on an industry or sector and explored both formal employment and self-employment. Topics included tourism, agriculture, beekeeping, IT and fashion. The programmes were 40 minutes long in season 1 increasing to 50 minutes in season 2 and were broadcast in the early evening as well as being put up online. Ti Mundesh is the first locally produced TV programme in Albania that focused on employment issues.

Update in 2025:

Ti Mundesh was broadcast for 2 seasons for 2 years (season 1 from November 2014 to June 2015, and season 2 from October 2015 to January 2016), but due to management changes and restructuring the programme then came off air. Nevertheless, the TV continued to address the topic of carer and employment through short programs. In 2023 producer Kristi Kongo launched a programme called Pune pa Teka (Work without Fuss) broadcast on Top TV television and immediately uploaded on YouTube and social media. Pune pa Teka is therefore a direct offshoot of Ti Mundesh.

Ora e Punes (Working Hour) on Club FM radio

Club FM Radio is a leading Tirana based station that has a particular focus on youth. With RisiAlbania support, the station initiated a one-hour programme that mixed music and entertainment with discussions on employment issues. The studio-based programme used panels of experts, employers and practitioners to explore a variety of topics and sectors focusing on both employment and self-employment. A major part of Ora e Punes's success was due to the dynamic host who was able to enliven discussions in a way that was attractive to the youth. The Ore e Punes format was atypical for Club FM which was primarily a music and entertainment station with short spots for news and information. The media group also broadcast a TV version of the programme on their Club TV digital channel without RisiAlbania support and also placed the programme online on YouTube and their website. In season 2, Club FM reverted to a different, and more typical, format for covering employment issues and began developing and broadcasting short 2 to 5 minute spots which focused on employment information and news.



Update in 2025:

Ora e Punes subsequently influenced the launch of another programme on Club FM called *Rruga Drejt Suksesit* (The Path to Success) focused on career orientation which ran from 2018 to 2019. After 2019, Club FM perceived employment issues as important to their audiences and began to introduce employment related sections into other mainstream programmes, particularly morning programs.

Drejt Punes (Towards the work) in Shqiptarja.com newspaper and online

The Drejt Punes weekly supplement emerged as the first employment oriented supplement in an Albanian newspaper running from November 2014. The supplement provided a variety of news, interviews, job adverts and information on training opportunities. Shqiptarja.com has been transforming itself from a primarily print media into an online and print media outlet and the articles and information from Drejt Punes also featured on Shqiptarja.com's online news service.

Update in 2025:

Drejt Punes continues to run but has moved from print to become totally online responding to changes in media consumption. The publication is reliant on sponsorship and advertising and while this is often challenging, it is operating profitably and sustainably. Shqiptarja.com believes that their publications and online posts influence other major media in the country.

Drejt Punes (Toward the work) on A1 report

Early in season 1, Shqiptarja.com collaborated with the TV station A1 Report to develop a weekly documentary programme that was also supported by RisiAlbania. Due to an ownership split A1 Report TV was closed in mid 2015. The station reopened as Report TV later in 2015 and despite not receiving subsequent support from RisiAlbania, the Drejt Punes programme was restarted and ran for a second series.

Update in 2025:

The "Drejt Punes" TV programme stopped in 2018 as Shqiptarja.com's focus became primarily dissemination online and clips on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram etc.

Have You Got an Idea - Vizion Plus TV

Vizion Plus approached RisiAlbania at this second call for proposals stage with a concept of purchasing a license of Endemol for an Entrepreneur TV Programme, after a successful show in Turkey called 'Have you got an idea'. This programme invites innovators and inventors to present new products and business ideas to a panel of experts and businesspeople. The programme takes winning ideas through a series of support stages towards a conclusion where the winners are provided with loans and support to take the

concept to market. As such, 'Have you got an idea' is an entrepreneurial programme promoting new product and service development and start up business. Vizion Plus purchased the programme license in 2015 but struggled to initiate a process of identifying and short-listing innovations for the launch of the 2015 season. The programme finally launched and ran for a season from October 2016.

Update in 2025:

'Have You Got an Idea' was broadcast under license for only 1 season but was not repeated due to cost. Internationally licensed programmes must perform extremely well, in terms of audience and commercial revenue, to become sustainable and this experience perhaps highlights that locally developed and innovated programming has lower barriers for success.

Gjej Pune (Find a job) on Droni.AI online news portal

RisiAlbania provided a small amount of cost sharing support (€5,000) for this online news portal to develop a dedicated newspaper section on employment opportunities. The section was created in June 2016 and comprised of 2 to 3 informative articles a week on employment related issues. These articles have provided information on job seeking and interviewing as well as exploring job opportunities and entrepreneurship.

Update in 2025:

Gjej Pune continues to run as a section of the Droni.al online news portal.

Me Miri ne Vend (The Best in the Country) broadcast on RTSH and MCN

An innovative TV programme that combined entertainment, information and education and included structured competitions between contestants, mentorship from professionals and business promotion. Me I miri ne vend had run before RisiAlbania support for 2 years with a general focus on artisanal professions, but RisiAlbania's support significantly enhanced the scope and approach of the programme and focused it more on employment. The programmes later became focused on employment within tourism as a substantially growing sector in Albania. The programme proved highly popular, capturing 20 to 25% of the total viewership in the country at that time and was seen as influential withing the broadcasters RTSH and MCN.

Update in 2025:

The programme ran for 4 seasons with RisiAlbania supporting just 2 seasons and is seen to have influenced other media products focusing on tourism and employment. The producer (Iva Mera) remains active and aims to launch a similar programme in future.

Think Big, Business Magazine Albania

Think Big was the first online platform in Albania that was dedicated to entrepreneurship, innovation and personal/professional development. It was a pure digital and print platform, but with the support from RisiAlbania in 2018 and 2019 it transformed into a multi-media platform including text, video, podcast and print.

Update in 2025:

Think Big continues successfully financed through paid advertisements and sponsorship from private companies. The company has a steady demand and interest and plans to expand its operations with a potential in-house studio for audio-visual production.

Puna qe Dua (The job I want): on INTV, Euronews and RTSH

A 20 to 30 minute TV programme that first aired with RisiAlbania support in 2020 to 2021. Puna qe Dua was an innovative reality TV concept where 2 young contestants were placed into a company for one day to learn a trade and be shadowed by professionals. At the end of the programme the employer would decide whether to employ the contestants. For viewers, the format provided lessons on being effective employees and the opportunities and challenges in various sectors. The programme was produced by an independent producer Rezarta Nika (and first aired on IN TV and Euronews and later moved to RTSH TV station and was posted online and shared on social media platforms.

Update in 2025:

Puna qe Dua ran for 2 years, stopping in 2021 in TV format – and continued online. This was a programme produced by an independent production company/ producer and in 2025 they have continued interest to restart the programme.

Rreze gruaje (A Woman's Ray), Report TV

16 episodes focused on empowerment of the role of women in labour market. The program advocated for decent employment and aimed to orient young women towards entrepreneurship through the success stories of women entrepreneurs. The program was on air for one season from 15 July to 22 November 2021

COMPLIMENTARY INITIATIVE: FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA

The RisiAlbania intervention also resulted in the design, launch and running of a module on labour market reporting at the Faculty of Journalism and Communication. This optional module is aimed at orienting future journalists on the importance and methods of reporting on the labour market and was the first of its type in Albania. This initiative was successful in establishing a module on employment within the journalism curriculum and in 2025 the module continues to be offered and has been studied by an estimated 240 journalism students.



Impact – what has been achieved through media development?

As the strategic framework for the RisiAlbania media intervention shows (figure 1), the intervention aimed to impact at three levels. The direct focus was on changing the way that the media in Albania reports on and covers employment related issues (1: media level change). The objective of this media work was to impact on the audience, in particular young people and their parents, and change their perceptions and behaviour (2: labour market change). The ultimate goal of RisiAlbania's work is to impact on employment and that young women and men find jobs that they would not have found otherwise (3: employment level change).

How did RisiAlbania's work in media perform at these three levels – media, labour market and employment and did this intervention result in sustainable change in the way the media reported on employment issues – both in the shorter term and in the longer term? For the media products that did emerge, did the coverage of the media change the way that those within the labour market (service providers, policy makers etc.) operate, and did the perceptions and behavior of the audience change in the way that they seek and take up jobs in Albania?

To answer these questions RisiAlbania has undertaken a series of studies and interviews to explore the impact of the media intervention:

In 2016 an impact survey to explore the impact of the intervention which was undertaken prior to the writing of the initial case study, involved:

- Interviews with media professionals in the partner media houses.
- Interviews with selected resource people involved in the programmes and articles.
- An analysis of media ratings data to assess the reach and popularity of the specific TV programmes (similar data for radio and print media is not available)
- Survey of a random purposive sample of 700 people (audience) across Albania¹.

¹ The survey had a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 4%

In 2021 RisiAlbania undertook a follow up qualitative study of 6 employment related media products that existed at that time to understand the audience levels and impact on jobseekers, students, parents and advertisers.

In 2025, RisiAlbania interviewed 6 media professional who were running, or recently ran, employment related media products – five who were involved in media products that were supported by RiisAlbania in phase 1 and 2 of the project and one involved in a product that emerged more recently but was linked with a RisiAlbania supported product. The focus of the interviews was to understand how this work has influenced them and their media houses in covering employment issues and to explore whether the initiative continued to have impact internally (internal replication) and external replication (where competitors in the media market launched similar products or been influenced by them).

5.1 Media level change: Has coverage of employment been enhanced in a sustainable way?

Table 1 provides an overview of the media products that were supported by RisiAlbania and those that were directly influenced by RisiAlbania's work. During the project (phases 1 and 2 – from 2014 to 2021) there were 11 media products that emerged – 6 TV programmes, 2 radio programmes and 3 which were print or online (and ultimately became purely online). The table provides an overview of the lifespan of the products and the influence and replication of these within the media market in Albania.



Table: Media products emerging from the RisiAlbania intervention

Product	Lifespan of the product	Influence and replication
Ti Mundesh – Top Channel TV	- Ti Mundesh was a success for 2 seasons over 2 years (2014 to 2016) on one of the top rated TV stations in Albania - It stopped due to management changes and restructuring within the station	TV continued to address the topic of carer and employment through short programs. In 2018 Top TV also ran a programme (4 episodes) called Dita e Pare e Punes – The first day of work. In 2023 producer Kristi Kongo launched a programme called Pune pa Teka (Work without Fuss) broadcast on Top TV television and immediately uploaded on YouTube and social media. Pune pa Teka is therefore a direct offshoot of Ti Mundesh.
Ore e Punes – Club FM	Ran for 2 years from 2014 to 2016 on peak listening times	Employment became mainstreamed into Club FM programmes – particularly the morning programmes. The main programme producer commented in 2025 <i>“The cycle of media requires change. Programmes merge into others but the themes [employment] remain”</i>
Rruga Drejt Suksesit – Club FM	- Ran from 2016 to 2018 - Directly influenced by Ore e Punes	
Drejt Punes- Shqiptarja.com	- Continues to run in 2025 - It moved out of print and has become purely online	The Shqiptarja.com team believe that they were influential on other media in Albania <i>“We were the inspiration for others. After 2 years everyone started doing it [employment-oriented content].”</i> Shqiptarja.com Editor
Have you got an Idea Vizion Plus	- Ran for only 1 year on a license from an international company. - Sustainability more challenging due to licensing and production costs of an internationally licensed product.	Little proven influence – which perhaps reinforces the importance of locally developed and innovated programming rather than that produced under international licenses.
Gjej Pune – Droni.AL	- Only small seed funding provided from RisiAlbania in 2016 - Gjej Pune continues to run as a section of the Droni.al online news portal.	The section is focused in employment opportunities, vacancies available.
Me I Miri ne Vend on RTSH and MCN	- Ran for 2 years without RisiAlbania support but became more focused on career orientation with RisiAlbania inputs. - Ran from 2015 for 4 seasons (with RisiAlbania supporting 2 seasons)	The production team say they saw an increase in tourism related programming. <i>“After the programme I saw other shows about tourism. Gladiola Dona did almost the same programme... Two journalists from Klan TV created similar formats for hotels...”</i> Iva Mera, Programme Producer
Drejt Punes – Report TV	Ran from 2015 to 2018 and then stopped. The Drejt Punes team at shqiptarja.com decided to focus their dissemination online rather than on TV	A programme that was initiated by Shqiptarja.com and supported their ongoing work focusing on employment related issues.
Think Big, Business Magazine Albania	- Support provided in 2018 to 2019 to expand the employment platform to multimedia (text, video, podcast) - The platform continues in 2025 with multimedia elements.	The team believe the media environment on employment has become much more competitive despite them being the pioneer as an online platform dedicated to employment. <i>“Now this kind of content has multiplied – others have taken the model and adapted it”</i> Gerti Boshnjaku, Think Bid editor
Puna qe Dua – NTV, Euronews and RTSH	- First aired in 2014-15 and continued online. - Independent producer remains interested to restart the programme.	The very successful programme was believed to have been influential in the Albanian media and the independent producer (Rezarta Nika) believes it influenced shows on major TV channels.
Rreze gruaje - Report TV	First aired on 15 July 2021 with 16 episodes until 22 November 2021	The program advocated for decent employment and aimed to orient young women towards entrepreneurship through the success stories of women entrepreneurs.



It is difficult to prove and fully track replication and influence within the media environment, but many producers and editors of these 10 media products firmly believe that the RisiAlbania work mainstreamed employment issues into the Albanian media and were picked up by competitors. Interviewed in 2025, the producer of *Puna qe Dua* stated that *“RisiAlbania was the first to bring employment as a media theme. They created a movement that put youth employment on screen”*.

One key role of RisiAlbania was in proving the popularity of employment-related content since many in the media questioned whether such topics could attract large audiences and attract advertisers. In 2025, the senior producer of the 2 Club FM radio programmes stated that *“honestly, we never thought a programme about employment could succeed on radio. It seemed too social, not attractive. But the feedback proved us wrong, and we even continued ourselves later.”*

Sustainability in media is a factor of: 1) popularity of the content and therefore audience levels 2) profitability and revenue generation and 3) buy-in and ownership among the production teams and management of media houses. How did the intervention perform in these 3 areas:



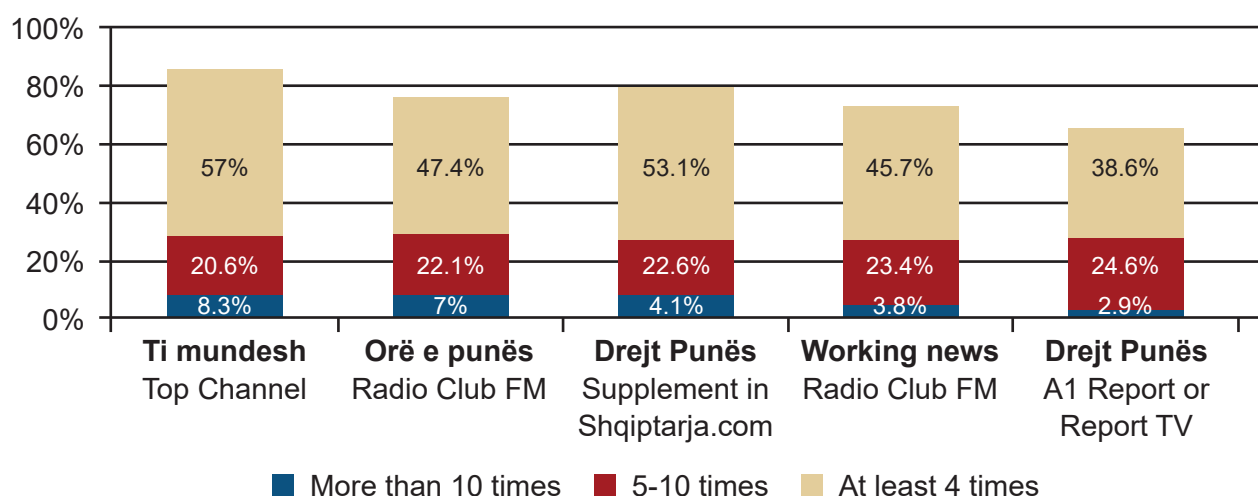
“Before Ora e Punes supported by Risi, honestly, we never thought a programme about employment could succeed on radio. It seemed too social, not attractive. But the feedback proved us wrong, and we even continued ourselves later.”

Club FM radio producer

Popularity and audience ratings

As figure 5 highlights, the media products that emerged in the early stages of RisiAlbania’s intervention attracted very strong audiences. Research undertaken by RisiAlbania in 2016 showed that 86% of the target audience had tuned into the Ti Mundesh TV programme with almost 30% watching more than 5 of the programmes. Independent media ratings data support these findings and showed that an average of 107,500 people watched each programme of Ti Mundesh in its first airing and 52,600 when it was rebroadcast. An average of 22% of all viewers watched Ti Mundesh in the first series. The various programmes have also been watched over 16,000 times online.

Audience viewing/listening/reading frequency Source: RisiAlbania research 2016



Other media products had a lower average audience than Ti Mundesh, but also showed strong audience levels. In interviews undertaken in 2016, both management and production staff (editors, producers, journalists etc.) showed a strong belief in the popularity of the employment focused programmes and supplements. This has been an important driver of the short term continuation of the media products with either reducing or no support from RisiAlbania and it is a key factor in the longer term sustainability of coverage of employment issues.

In 2021, RisiAlbania commissioned a nationwide survey of 6 employment related media products.² This survey showed that two thirds (67.0%) of the audience interviewed showed an average to high interest in media formats that cover employment issues. For the media products surveyed, the TV programme Mi I Miri ne Vend (The Best in the Country) had been watched by

almost half of those interviewed (a random sample of 700 people) with 34% having watched up to 4 of the programmes and 10% 5 to 10 of the programs. Those who had watched Mi I Miri ne Vend were positive about it with almost all (over 98%) rating it good, interesting or very interesting. Other media products, while having lower overall audience numbers, were also highly appreciated by substantial sections of the respondents. For example, Puna qe Dua (The job I want) on INTTV had been watched by half of the respondents and was rated highly for interest with over three quarters (77.4%) rating it interesting or very interesting. The Think Big platform had been read by more than a quarter of the respondents and was found interesting or highly interesting by 86.7% of the readers. The Club FM radio programme, Rruga drejt suksesit (the Path to Success) was listened to by about 30% of those interviewed. The Drejt Punes (Towards Employment) supplement was read by 20.4% of the respondents.

In an increasingly fragmented media landscape, with increasing online and streamed access to international content, these audience figures are impressive and show that employment related media, if done effectively and entertainingly, can command significant audiences who respond very positively to this topic. The audience levels that were seen in 2016 were also prove to be similar in 2021.

Revenue and profitability derived from the media products

RisiAlbania's work did not actively support marketing around the media products, believing that the media houses themselves have the capacity to market these programmes and content to advertisers. While this proved accurate to a degree, the media partners had a varying level of success in attracting advertisers to these unique products. Shqiptarja.com attracted a number of advertisers and developed a marketplace for training opportunities. They also believe that the supplement has increased circulation as a result of the supplement.

Ti Mundesh on the other hand struggled to gain significant advertisement or programme sponsorship despite the programme being highly rated. The Programme editor attributed this to poor marketing within their sales department, but maintained that the programme was highly marketable. Club Fm changed its programme to short spots and attracted



“We have received more profits and much more audience and also a different audience from other days” Q: What is different about the audience? A: “many more younger people”

Owner/manager Club FM

² Me I Miri ne Vend on RTSH, Puna qe dua on in TV. Think Big on BusinessMag, Rruga Drejt Sukesesit on club FM. Drejt Punes on Shqiptarja.com, and Rreze Guaje on Reprt TV.

advertisers to pay for job announcements. In interviews in 2025, media producers stated that securing revenue was the biggest challenge in keeping the programmes, supplements and platforms on air or in publication. But despite this struggle, many of the products survived for long periods and have influenced other products in the media market in Albania.

Marketing and advertising is one of the areas in which the RisiAlbania intervention could be perceived to be weaker. The assumption that the media would be able to sell such products worked for some partners but less so for others. It could also be argued that the 50% cost-sharing with Top TV potentially reduced the need for pro-active marketing. The fact that Top TV brought back an employment related programme in 2023 (Pune pa Teka- Work Without Fuss) shows that the producers and broadcasters continue to see commercial potential in such programmes.

Buy in from production and management staff

Interviews with the production staff of the media houses highlight very strong ownership and buy in for the TV, radio, print and online media early on in the intervention (in 2016) and later in 2025. One programme editor highlighted the *“attraction of a programme that is both interesting but also useful to people and the country”*.



“The programme is about real experience. It’s educational and it is motivational. We should do something for society and our country and this programme does this”

Ti Mundesh programme editor

This attraction of working on programmes that are popular but also useful and contribute to the development of a nation is a recurrent theme highlighted by the teams working on these media products. The importance of this motivational factor cannot be overstated, particularly when relating to a media product that is often more difficult and time consuming to produce.

Media managers in the partner media houses also show a high level of buy-in. Nevertheless, RisiAlbania encountered management upheavals due to ownership disputes which caused two programmes to come off air.

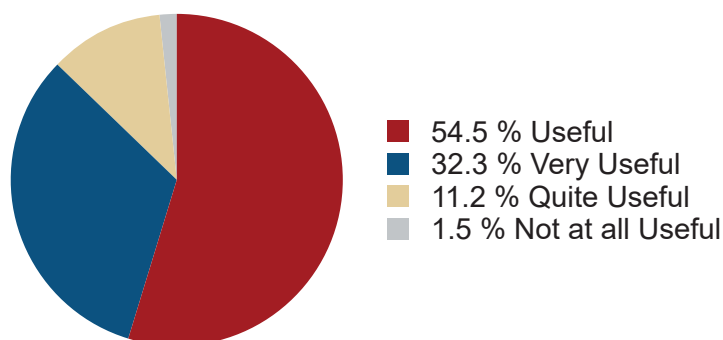
The role of independent producers in product launch and sustainability

One important factor in sustainability identified by RisiAlbania is the role of producers in TV – both those employed within media houses but also those who operate more independently, taking ideas and programme concepts to broadcasters. In the first phase of calls for proposals, RisiAlbania targeted specifically media houses, but in the second round the criteria was opened to independent producers. In the longer term, independent producers have been seen to become strong potential champions of employment issues and a key source of innovation. Independent producers often take a programme from one broadcaster to another, ensuring sustainability. For example, the independent producer

Rezarta Nika took her TV programme (Puna qe Dua – The Job I Want) from INTV and Euronews and began broadcasting on RTSH while maintaining intellectual property and ownership of the programme. The producer Iva Mera did the same with her program Best in the Country (Më i miri në vend)

5.2 Audience level change: To what extent have audiences changed their perceptions and behaviour as a result of listening, watching or reading the media products?

As noted above, audiences value these media products highly and the 2016 RisiAlbania commissioned survey (supported by the survey undertaken in 2021) showed that almost 87% viewed them as being either useful or very useful. 71% of the audience believe that the programmes changed their perception about jobs and careers and almost one in three (32%) stated that this had resulted in them changing their employment seeking behaviour. For the Ti Mundesh programme alone this would mean that over 113,000 people changed their perception around employment and over 51,000 had changed their behaviour³. Overall the impact was almost equal among women and men with 47.7% of those who reported a change in perception and 45.7% of those reporting a behaviour change being women.



So what perceptions and behaviours are these media products changing among the audiences? An analysis of the examples identified of perception and behaviour change among the audience identified 4 key areas of change:

1. Training and employment: undertaking training to open up new employment opportunities
2. Training and self employment: undertaking training to develop skills to establish their own business
3. Self employment: setting up their own business.
4. Employment in new sectors: taking up jobs in sectors which they would not have considered previously

³ This is based on average viewership to Ti Mundesh of 160,000 (107,500 to the first broadcast and 52,600 to the second broadcast)

These changes are effectively illustrated through the numerous real examples identified through the surveys and case studies:

Training and employment

As highlighted by Albania's prime minister with his comment about Albania having jobs but no professionals, there is a mismatch between skills and job opportunities in Albania. Information that highlights the skills in demand and informs audiences about potential training opportunities can open up employment opportunities that were previously left unfilled.

Mentor Shyti is a returned emigrant from Greece with general skills in welding. In 2015 he decided to undertake a training course to formalise and enhance his skills as a welder in a bid to find employment. Mentor explains that one of the key inspirations for this move was his exposure to Drejt Punes on Report TV and reading about job opportunities in the Toward Work Supplement in Shqiptarja.com. The training allowed him to rapidly find employment in a major local beer factory that requires precision welding on plant machinery.



"I would not have got into studying and would not have thought about a diploma in this field if I had not been urged by the interviews with Mr Pirro Jani [Director of the state training centre] in the programme 'Drejt punes' Toward Work' and the frequent information found in Shqiptarja.com...it never crossed my mind [before] to receive training in this profession"

Mentor Sh., welder

Mentor was one of many students that Pirro Jani claims have been encouraged to enrol in training courses to improve their employability. Pirro has contributed as a resource person on TV and in print and their centre has been promoted in the Shqiptarja.com supplement.



" We have noticed an increase in the number of enrolments of young people in different branches of the school after the publications in Shqiptarja.com and on A1 report...These [media]outlets have encouraged many young people to view vocations as the real path to employment in Albania"

Pirro Jani, Director for Regional Public Training Directorate Nr.4 Tirane.

Training and self-employment

Pirro Jani also cites numerous examples where young people had been encouraged by the programmes, supplement and online information to take up training to set up their own business. These include a 19 year old, Pavel N. from the town

of Laç who enrolled in a hairdressing course and then set up his own barber shop in the town and two brothers, Klodian and Arben J., who started their own car servicing centre at a very strategic location on Tirana's ring road after undertaking a course in mechanics.

Pirro also gives an example of Adelina and Firdoze S., a mother and daughter, from the district of Shkodra who regularly watched the daytime shows on A1 Report which encouraged them to approach the labour office for assistance in setting up in business. They were referred to the training institution's tailoring course and immediately following graduation established their own tailoring business.

Not only does the information inspire the likes of Adelina and Firdoze to get into business, but it is also the success stories that are motivational and inspiring. As a student who watches Ti Mundesh, Florjan A., noted when interviewed *"these programmes have been so special and meaningful that they have changed several things in me. [I realise that] I should have more confidence in myself and in my skills and by doing this I can also have a success story like the ones I saw in the TV programme"*. Florjan now has an ambition to establish a tour company to organise tours to natural and historic areas of her city.

Self-employment

Self-employment also does not necessarily require formal training, but a confidence in being able to make it on your own. This confidence has clearly been awoken in some of the audience of the various media products. Rubin Kadiru is one such entrepreneur. Rubin has established an innovative IT service shop which he says focuses on *"servicing the relationship between man and computer"*. He clearly attributes this move to the Club FM program 'The Working Hour' stating that *"there were a lot of people on this show who had taken the plunge and opened their own business and all of a sudden it had become unavoidable for us to"*. Rubin partnered with his brother Alfred and established the shop in 2015. The business grew to employ 5 young people and has an ambition to grow in the future.



"What I got from the programme was that those people who followed their dreams, they made it to wherever their goal was. It is passion that drove them and it is passion that drives us"

Rubin K., founder of the Wilson square electronic Line shop.

Employment in new sectors that were not considered before

Another significant area of change identified was in changing the audience's perception of business sectors that they had not previously known about, not considered as being a potential for employment, or had a poor view of. The examples detailed at the start of this case study of Fjionalda Sh. who began working in her mother's tailoring business which she had previously ignored as an option, and Eno H. who decided to seek employment in a car washing business, are examples of this.

When asked whether her perception had changed as a result of listening to and reading the employment focused media, a university student from Durrës, Jonida H., confirmed the impact on opening her mind to new career possibilities “yes, my perception has changed because occupations which seemed to be less productive are the ones which prevail in the labour market”.



“Through these programmes I have understood the way the world of work functions. Before watching these programmes my information on the labour market was scarce and more generic than specific”

Elio Sh., Upper Secondary School student.

An important aspect of perception change is parental influence. Parents exert a significant influence over the aspiration and choices of their children. Gazmir B., a parent, commented about Ti Mundesh on Top TV that “I have seen that people who master an occupation/vocation are needed in the market, which is why I have told my son to take up learning a profession such as electrician or mechanic”. This parental influence is also highlighted by Florjan N., a student at a local vocational training centre “I was affected by both the programme and my parents who persuaded me to attend the culinary school”. To be effective on employment, media clearly needs to reach not just to the young but also their parents who are the ones that can influence career decisions at pivotal points in education and early job seeking. This supports RisiAlbania’s strategy of working with various media channels, broadcast, print and online, and media houses that reach audiences of all ages and not focusing on one channel alone.



“After watching the TV programme Ti Mundesh and [reading] Djet Punes I have suggested to my son the orientation towards a professional career about which these programmes have provided a lot of information”

Bilbil Z., a parent from Durrës.

Service Level Change

RisiAlbania’s clear objective on embarking on this work with media was specifically on changing perceptions and behaviour among the youth and their parents. Nevertheless, the exploration of impact also highlighted an additional area of influence. In focusing on employment, the media utilised various experts as resource people for the programmes and articles. They engaged with government officials and training experts and providers. Evidence shows that these people also became viewers, listeners and readers of these media products and in some circumstances these programmes had a profound impact on them as well.

One example of this is Gladiola Dona who was a listener to Club FM’s Ore e Punes programmes on hospitality and later became a participant and expert on the programme. Gladiola had returned to Albania after many years of living in Austria. She had graduated

from a prestigious Austrian hospitality school “Salzburger Tourismusschulen” and worked at an international level in tourism and education. Her listenership to the radio programme helped her to recognise a missing niche and awoke a dream that she had held for many years to establish a hospitality and tourism school in Albania *“Time and time again in the show there were people who stated that it was very hard for*

them to get people who are ready to work at an international (quality) level...all of them stated basically the same thing – we can’t get trained people, and that is where we come in”.



“A Hospitality training centre was something I had in mind but I had given it up. Hearing about the need on radio reawakened the idea”

Gladiola Dona, Founder and Director of the newly established Hospitality and Tourism Academy in Tirana.

As a direct result of this exposure, Gladiola founded the Hospitality and Tourism Academy in Tirana (<https://hat.al/en/>) in October 2015, the first private dedicated hospitality training centre in the country. The academy started in 2016 and by 2025 had expanded to include not only in-house face-to face courses, but also online courses and consultancy for hospitality companies. By 2025 the training center has expanded with 8 instructors and enrolled 320 students and completed 215 courses offering diplomas in bar service, mixology(cocktail mixing), restaurant service, front desk administration, food management, hotelier and hospitality business management. The interest in the courses has been very strong from both the hospitality industry and students. The demand for skilled hotel staff far outstrips the supply and skilled job seekers have enhanced job prospects and higher salaries as Gladiola explains *“Most of the graduates are employed in very good hotels, gourmet restaurants and lounge bars where a specific level of professionalism is required and is therefore better paid. An example: a bar keeper gets 200-300 euro a month, one of our barkeepers at one of the best and newest hotels in Tirana gets 500 Euros a month”*. Gladiola continues to use mass media to promote these opportunities and her training courses.

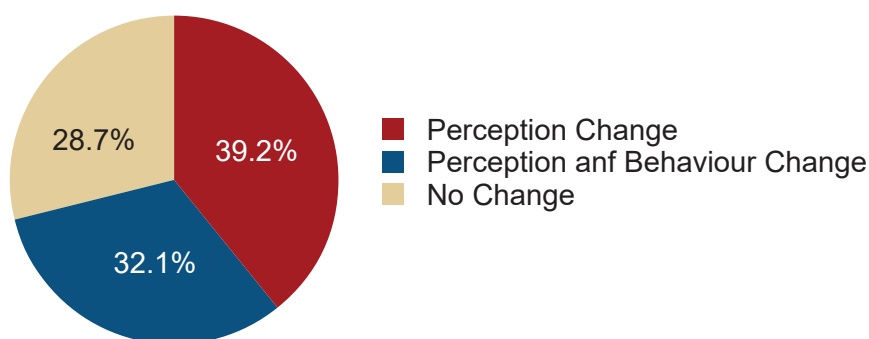
As Gladiola’s example shows, it is not just job seekers and their parents who need to adapt to the realities and opportunities of an ever changing labour market. Service providers, policy makers and employers themselves also need to stay abreast of changes and opportunities and to adapt their way of operating.

5.3 Employment level change: To what extent have media resulted in audiences finding employment?

All the examples above show instances where mass media has influenced key aspects of job-seeking behavior among the young. It is these changes that have the potential to reduce the continued employment gap between the under 30s and over 30s in Albania. Young women and men who are more willing to take jobs in sectors they had ignored before, who decide to pursue training and education in areas that are more likely to

lead to good job prospects and those who take the plunge and strike out on their own to establish businesses that will employ them and often others as well. These young women and men are the ones who are unlikely to continue to suffer the ill effects of unemployment and will in turn stimulate economic growth that can reduce unemployment overall.

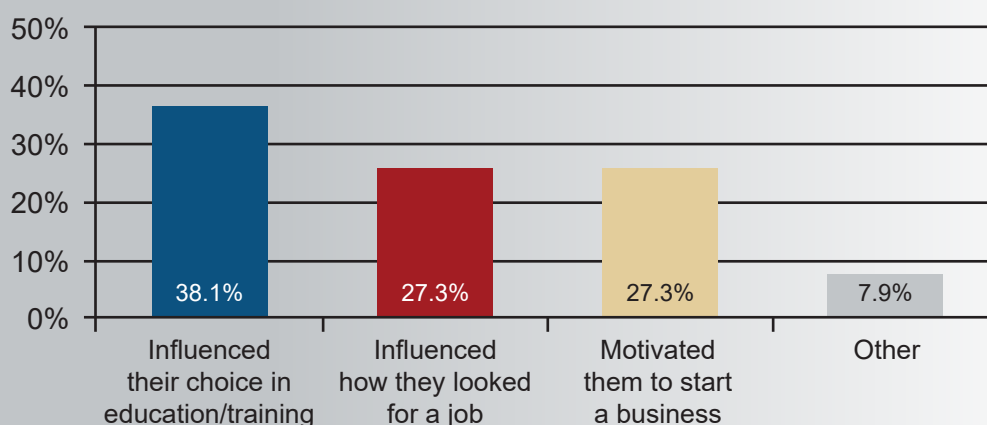
Impact on audience (source: RisiAlbania research 2015)



The survey undertaken by RisiAlbania in 2016 suggests that more than two thirds (71%) of the total audience of the media products were impacted by the programmes. 39% were impacted on their understanding of employment issues and almost a third 32% changed their perception and behaviour as a result of listening, watching or reading employment focused media. For the audience of Ti Mundesh alone this would mean that over 51,000 people had changed their behaviour as a result of watching the TV programmes. If the media products piloted with the support of RisiAlbania prove sustainable then this figure will grow and the impact on the employment problems of Albania can be profound.

When asked how the media had changed their behaviour, almost one in four stated that they were influenced in their choice of education or career; more than a quarter were influenced on how to look for a job and a further quarter were motivated to start a business.

How the media products impacted on behaviour





Perspectives on the intervention: 10 years after the intervention began

As the RisiAlbania project ends in October 2025, it is useful to reflect on this media intervention and explore the issues around changing relevance of mass media and the sustainability and impact of media interventions.

Relevance of mass media in a changing media landscape

The mass media is facing ongoing and substantial change with the rise of online media, increasing access to international media and the resulting fragmentation of audiences. Young people in particular are less likely to access their information through traditional mass media sources, relying more on social media and messaging. Print media has faced reducing sales of physical print and has moved more online. Broadcast media is increasingly posting episodes and clips online as real time audiences reduce and online audiences become more important. On the positive side, programmes that were once broadcast once or twice and then effectively archived are now available online for many years. Profitability has reduced in much traditional media with a corresponding reduction in staff and investment.

These changes, while making interventions in media challenging, do not necessarily undermine the viability of a media intervention in development. They require increased focus on multimedia, online and social media related content and identifying cost effective ways to develop content. Media houses and media professionals (particularly independent content generators and producers) are effective partners to develop dynamic content that responds to changing media habits and interests among audiences.

Interestingly, the survey of employment related products undertaken by RisiAlbania in 2021 showed that audiences were still highly engaged with the programmes and content. Media houses had moved more online and physical publications stopped,

but online content and programmes were watched repeatedly online. Mass media had changed, even since 2015, but the focus had maintained and was still commanding strong audiences and proving impactful on these audiences.

Sustainability in a media intervention

What does sustainability really mean in media? In some areas of media, such as online platforms, sustainability is about that platform continuing. But in broadcast media, programmes tend to come and go in a quest to stay fresh and original. Media professionals highlighted this in interviews in 2025 when reflecting on the employment content: The senior producer at Club FM noted about employment related programming *“The cycle of media requires change. Programmes merge, but the themes remain”*. For broadcast media in particular, sustainability should be seen less in whether a product sustains in the longer term and more on whether it has clearly influenced and stimulated new programmes and coverage.

With the benefit of time, RisiAlbania work can be seen as a mixed portfolio that includes some failure in sustainability, but many examples of surprising longevity of programming and some clear indications of influence on the way that employment is now covered by the mass media in Albania.

The media products that did not sustain

The product which lasted the least time (1 year) was ‘Have you got an Idea’ on Vizion Plus TV— a product produced on international license with an established format and in which RisiAlbania only provided very small seed funding. This perhaps highlights the increased financial challenge to sustainability of a licensed programme and that the locally innovated TV products proved more successful. *Ti Mundesh*, which in many ways was a flagship product for RisiAlbania and broadcast on one of the most popular TV stations in the country, only lasted 2 years, but actually ultimately stimulated a new employment programme ‘*Pune Pe Tekë*’ a few years later. The Club FM radio programmes lasted 2 years each with the first (*Ore e Punes* – 2014 to 2016) followed by *Rruga Drejt Punes* (2016 to 2018), but then resulted in employment segments and content being mainstreamed into other Club FM programmes – particularly their morning programme. Overall, there were few products that were supported by RisiAlbania that sustained less than 2 years.

The media products that had longevity and longer-term impact

The online platforms supported have strong longer term ‘product sustainability’ (the product itself sustaining). *Drejt Punes* on *Shqiptarja.com*, *Think Big*, on *Business Magazine*, and *Gjej Pune* (find a Job) online portal on *droni.ai* continue in 2025 many years after the intervention and with the influence of the intervention clear on the focus of these platforms. The senior editor at *Shqiptarja.com* commented in 2025 that *“If it were not for RisiAlbania, maybe we would have touched on this theme [employment] here and there, but never in such a focused way.”*

The TV programme Puna qe Dua (The Job I Want) which was broadcast on NTV and Euronews and later RTSH lasted for 3 sessions and continues online. A reason for this success was the model of having an independent producer as the programme owner and champion, who moved the programmes to other broadcasters to sustain audiences and the life of the programme.

The media products that were most influential on how media covers employment in Albania

Media professionals interviewed in 2025 repeatedly highlighted that employment issues have increased in prominence in Albania over the past 10 years. While it is difficult to prove causality directly to the RisiAlbania work, it is clear that RisiAlbania is recognized as a catalyst for increasing media interest and focus in this area. Many media professionals appeared initially skeptical about the popularity of employment issues particularly among younger audiences, but the work of RisiAlbania reduced this skepticism.



“We thought young people would not find employment an attractive topic- but it exceeded all expectations ... it was completely innovative. Before, only people from showbiz or politics. Never HR..”

Flutura Reka, Club FM

While this reduction in skepticism worked with direct partnership with RisiAlbania in piloting a programme or content, it is clear that the popularity of employment content also influenced other media to focus on employment. Media professionals interviewed in 2025 from Club FM, Think Big and Shqiptarja.com and the independent producers of Me il miri ne vend (Iva Mera) and Puna qe Dua (Rezarta Nika) cited examples of media products in Albania that developed after they launched and which they believe were influenced by their content.

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS ON REPLICATION WITHIN THE ALBANIAN MEDIA

“After the programme, I saw other shows about tourism start. Gladiola Dona did almost the same programme in E Diela Shqiptare. Two journalists from Klan TV created a similar format for hotels. But none of the products came close to Më i miri në vend – they only took fragments.”

Iva Mera from Me i miri ne vend
dhe Gerti Boshnjaku, Business Magazine Albania

“After this, you started to see employment and career topics even in mainstream shows like Opinion. Universities also changed their marketing to better attract students.”

Flutura Reka, Club FM

“Now this kind of content has multiplied – others have taken the model and adapted it.”

Gerti Boshnjaku, Business Magazine Albania

“Risi[Albania] was the first to bring employment as a media theme. Before them, it wasn’t present at all. They created a movement that put youth employment on screen.”

Rezarta Nika, Puna qe Dua.

“We were an inspiration for others. After two years of us, everyone started doing it.”

Admirina Peci, Shqiptarja.com

Understanding and mapping impact

Identifying, proving and quantifying the top level (employment in this case) impact of mass media interventions is recognized as difficult. Information through mass media reaches all defined audiences and while some change in behavior can be immediate and directly attributable, much change is more subtle with audiences making a change in behavior years after being exposed to new ideas or concepts. Baselines are difficult, if not impossible, to set up when the content is not pre-defined and will be developed by the media itself.

RisiAlbania in fact did not undertake direct evaluation until the end of the first phase of work when a retrospective survey was undertaken to understand the impacts. Even this will provide only a very limited insight into the true scope of the impact of a media intervention. For every audience member who was interviewed and gave examples of how they were influenced on employment decisions, there are scores who will not have been captured. The story of Gladiola Dona, who attributed clearly her decision to establish the Tirana Hospitality and Tourism Academy to her involvement as a resource person on the Club FM radio programme while particularly noteworthy may not be an isolated case of service provision being stimulated. It is also of course impossible to fully quantify impact with media products that have lasted many years and use multiple experts and resource people.

Despite the complexity of fully qualifying impact, the RisiAlbania work shows that it is possible to at least map some of the impacts and prove causality from information delivered by mass media to actual behavior change. It also proves the potential substantial, broad and at times unforeseen positive impacts of working with mass media to focus more effectively on development related issues.



Key lessons and conclusions

This case study was developed with the support of an international consultant with specific experience in sustainable media development. It is therefore possible and useful to assess RisiAlbania's experience in the context of international media development. As stated earlier in this paper, approaches to working with the commercial media in a sustainable way are relatively rare in international development. An early experience (which partly inspired the RisiAlbania project) was the work of the FIT programme in Uganda (FIT Uganda and FIT-SEMA – Small enterprise Media in Africa) a series of interventions over a 7 year period ending in 2006 which focused on developing small enterprise and agricultural radio programming in the commercial media. More recently the ENABLE Programme in Nigeria has applied this concept to improving the business policy environment and working with both print and broadcasting. Other interventions have been undertaken in Nepal, Kenya and Ghana and the approach has also been expanded to health.

The RisiAlbania approach was similar in objective to these other media interventions. The RisiAlbania project aimed to build the commercial incentives for the media to cover development issues and was therefore focused on sustainability from the outset. The project was also different in some key respects. The interventions noted above relied heavily on technical inputs to the media as a key part of the 'offer' and mostly avoided financial cost sharing. The interventions also relied on recruiting project staff with media and journalism experience. To a degree, the media product innovations were inspired by the projects themselves while RisiAlbania actually maintained a lower level of influence. Other international projects often provided quite intensive technical hand-holding and scrutiny from trainers/mentors. This was not provided or deemed necessary in the RisiAlbania Project. These contrasts provide some interesting lessons for adapting the sustainable media development approach to a middle to higher income country such as Albania:

The need for technical support

The media in Albania is relatively sophisticated compared with many media industries in Africa and Asia. While the RisiAlbania intervention may have been enhanced by more technical inputs, it did not appear necessary within the context

of some of the Albanian media. Channels such as Top TV were more than capable of developing and producing quality programmes without external support and only really required the initial catalytic input. Nevertheless, some emerging media products were weaker than Ti Mundesh, such as Drejt Punes on Report TV for example, and could have benefitted from technical input and support to improve the timing, content and format of the programme.

Marketing support

Other international media interventions have also offered marketing support (mentoring and hand holding) to support the revenue generation around the emerging content. Experience in Africa and Asia show that marketing departments are often weak at packaging and promoting new products to potential advertisers – preferring to meet sales targets by selling proven products or more generic airtime and space. Focused support to marketing can assist in rapidly proving the commercial profitability of a new programme concept. It is difficult to assess whether marketing support would have assisted Club FM to maintain a more focused programme rather than changing to shorter info spots or if it would have increased the likelihood of a Ti Mundesh third season, but it is an area of focus that has proven important (and sometimes critical) for sustainability.



The use and possible limitations of financial support

Without a strong technical or marketing offer, RisiAlbania's main tool for catalysing new product development was financial cost sharing with two calls for proposals in phase 1 and limited support in phase 2 of the project. This proved effective in Albania and resulted in good partners emerging who were more interested in programme development than just tapping into donor finance. This approach of using finance as the main offer is potentially more problematic in countries where there is a greater prevalence of donor activity and donor purchasing of media space. The fact that Albania has a relatively low level of donor involvement with the media will have assisted this intervention to succeed. It is also important to note that RisiAlbania vetted financial support carefully and most importantly made it clear to media partners about the short term and rapidly diminishing nature of the financial support. These factors are critical for financial support to succeed in catalysing sustainable changes in the media.

The influence of regional and international experience

While RisiAlbania did not provide ongoing technical inputs, they did provide exposure to international media i.e. senior editors from German newspapers and TV. This exposure was clearly important and the choice of German media is a good one in the Albanian context. In Albania, the media clearly perceives itself to be part of the wider European and global media and Germany is perceived as being a role model. Albanian media looks towards the experiences and models of European media and the media of other regional countries as the purchase of the licence of 'Have you got an idea', which was successfully run in Turkey, illustrates.

Media monitoring and impact tracking

RisiAlbania embarked on the media project with a view that it would not be possible to quantify employment level changes in a way that can contribute directly to project (logframe) targets. The survey and case study work undertaken in 2016 has shown that it is in fact possible to identify and explore impacts and potentially to quantify this impact. To effectively undertake this, media development projects need to initiate a process of monitoring the content and following up potential impact examples. If this is undertaken, it is highly likely that more impacts such as Gladiola Dona's founding of the Hospitality and Tourism Academy would have been identified. Undertaking an impact analysis retrospectively on 2 years of broadcasting is likely to result in missing and not learning from key impacts stimulated by the media coverage. To effectively measure the audience level impact of media content where the content is not predefined, requires projects to implement an ongoing content monitoring process - monitoring all content and identifying topics that have potential for sizeable impact. These topics then need to be investigated in a systematic way to assess whether change has taken place and to quantify the impact. Such a process is of course both time consuming and potentially costly, but would enhance the understanding of the media in impacting on perception and behaviour change.



With the benefit of time, The RisiAlbania media intervention can be seen to have been very successful with relatively very low human and financial resources, and also within a short time period (effectively a 3 ½ year intervention). As highlighted above, this may be partly a result of the dynamic Albanian media environment in which the project operated, which is often not the case in many countries. It may also be easier to operate in a sustainable way in countries with less donor distortion and buying of media space and airtime. It is also clear that the success was due to the focus on a topic that had relevance among policy makers and the audience and was opening up an issue (youth unemployment) that, while relatively ignored by the media, was of deep national concern. A mistake sometimes made by development is to expect media to take up issues that are of limited and minority interest to audiences. Mass media needs to attract mass audiences, and therefore an intervention must focus on issues that can attract sizeable readership, viewership and listenership.

The changes in global media industries have not diminished significantly the potential of working with mass media for developmental gains, but it has made it more challenging. There is a need to explore new formats, adopt multi-media approaches and engage with the online and emerging platforms that are attracting audiences. Each country's context will be different, but engaging with a mix of established and emerging media houses and with full time employed media professionals and freelance and independent producers and content developers appears important to establish a portfolio of media partnerships. Such a portfolio approach will allow for some inevitable failure as well as mediocre success, but also some surprising long-term achievements and influence. For RisiAlbania, the best results in the longer term came from some of the smaller media houses and independent producers while with the larger broadcaster (Top TV) was more fluctuating. Ti Mundesh ran (2014 to 16), then stopped but another programme ran for 4 episodes in 2018 (Dita e Pare e Punes – The first day of work) and then a similar programme to Ti Mundesh was launched 7 years after Ti Mundesh stopped.

The retrospective analysis undertaken by RisiAlbania in 2025 as the RisiAlbania project closed which engaged with many of the media professionals who were involved in the employment media products. Highlighted a number of lessons that can be applied to new media projects in Albania and potentially in other countries:

- **The increasing importance of multi media strategies:** Combining traditional formats (TV/radio/Print) with online platforms .
- **The challenge of financial sustainability for media products:** The need to assist media professionals with strategies to attract sustainable revenues (advertising and sponsorship)
- **The importance of combining education/information and entertainment effectively:** serious content also needs to be dynamic and entertaining.
- **The role of independent producers:** While media houses are effective partners, independent producers and content providers are also important partners and can elongate the life of programmes and become champions of a theme in media.
- **The catalytic role of a development facilitator:** A project can allow media and media professional to overcome preconceptions and internal and financial barriers to pilot and launch new products and this role is critical in getting media to cover topics that may be initially seen as risky.
- **The facilitator role can be very short term and limited:** In a comparatively more developed media market the support role can be effective even if it is for a very short period and with low levels of finance.
- **The impact of media and how this inspires and motivates media professionals:** The real impact of media on audiences clearly inspires media professionals. While many hear some of the impact from their audience and guests/experts, much does not reach the media themselves. While the impact monitoring of a media intervention is important to a development intervention, it can also be a way of enhancing motivation in the media itself.

To end the report, the project and authors would like to thank the dedication and commitment of the media professionals who took on the challenge and major work in this project. We finish with an aspiration for the future from one of these dedicated professionals:

“I have many ideas for Më i miri në Vend (The Best in the country TV programme). Everyone else leaves projects behind – I cannot leave it. Even today, people tell me ‘Iva you made such a beautiful, valuable programme!’”

Iva Mara, Producer, September 2025

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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

INSPIRING AND INFLUENCING THE YOUNG JOB SEEKERS OF ALBANIA

WORKING WITH THE MASS MEDIA
TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL
AND EMPLOYMENT CHOICES
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALBANIA

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