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The Impact of Education System in the Youths Leaving Albania

ABSTRACT

The education system is playing a very important role in the youths who want to leave Albania. The majority of students who intend to leave Albania to work and travel to other countries are studying in some very specific universities and branches that are mostly required especially in the German labor market. It is noticed that they are studying nursing, medicine and IT engineering and more.

Since the day that Germany offered to Albanian youths to work there after being awarded such specific diplomas from Albanian universities and with a very good command of German language, many private universities were accredited and opened more opportunities to students to study in such fields. The number of students is increasing every year with no intention to be decreased.

The education system is not doing anything to stop this process of “leaving youths”. On the contrary, they are allowing it by granting universities the opening of new faculties with the required professions. Despite this fact, it is noticed that many youths do not prefer to be teachers of maths, physics etc. This means that within some years we will be in great need of these professions so much required for the future education in Albania. This will harm our children and the future of the country.

For the purpose of this research, it is will be drafted a questionnaire the results of which will provide a better view point about the situation that the current students are facing and their future plans in relation to immigration to Germany or other European countries.

Keywords: education system, youths, universities, immigration, labor market, professions.

INTRODUCTION

MIGRATION OF ALBANIANS

According to INSTAT (Institute of Statistics of Albania) the population of Albania is 2.793.592 inhabitants, referring to the date 1 January 2022.

It is a fact that Albania is a country of emigration which started from the year 1991 when Albanian borders were opened for the very first time after the communist regime fall. Migration of Albanians occurred even before 1991. Since that time, the number of Albanians living abroad has been increasing.³

In 2017, Albania had about 1.5 million citizens outside its territory, or about half of the country’s population. The majority of migrant communities are present in neighbouring countries, like Italy (448,407) and Greece (356,848), although there is a growing trend of Albanians residing in other European Union Member States as well as in North America and Canada. On the other hand, population projections indicate a long-term trend toward achieving a neutral migration balance.⁴

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³Alma Zisi, Bitila Shosha, Armela Anamali, *The Empirical Evidence on Albanian Youth Migration*, Vol. 29 No. 1, 2022, pp. 127-139

⁴ IOM Albania, *The national strategy on migration and action plan 2019-2022*, p. 8

Emigration of Albanian citizens, in particular toward European Union (EU) countries continues despite the constant improvement of living conditions in the country, a net stable growth of the Albanian economy and constant improvement of public safety.¹ According to INSTAT, five factors are estimated to currently influence emigration toward the EU, including; the work opportunities abroad (84%), family reunification (4.6%), unemployment rates in Albania (4.2%), study opportunities abroad (3.5%) and other factors (3.6%).²

According to EUROSTAT, in the period January 2008 – July 2021, there were around 234,000 asylum claims by Albanian citizens to an EU country (including the UK), with Germany and France having the highest number of requests. This phenomenon experienced its peak in 2015 with more than 68,000 claims. The country with the fastest increase in the number of Albanian emigrants in recent years is Germany, which saw a three-fold increase during the period 2015–2019 (rising to 4% of Albanian emigrants in 2019). The USA followed this increase of Albanian emigrants, hosting around 8% of Albanian emigrants in 2019.³

It still remains dramatic the increase of number of Albanian youths who want to leave Albania especially for economic reasons even though they may not have a proper education.⁴ They don't hesitate to learn the German language which can be ranked the first most learnt language in Albania even though it is not considered an easy language to be learnt by Albanians. They don't hesitate to change their lifestyle completely as well as leave their family behind.⁵

Youth and employment situation in Albania

According to Monitoring report “Where are the youth today” the unemployed youth in 2021 is increased to 37.7% which results in 5.4 percent more than June 2020.⁶

Referring to INSTAT during the year 2021, 30.7% of population belongs to age group 15-64.

The report also mentions that the youth are faced with a difficult transition when they enter the labor market for the first time. There is a high percentage of Albanian youths who are not employed, are not studying or being trained, which has reached 27.9% of the aged 15-29 which is the double of the EU-27 average of about 13.7%.⁷

¹ Arsim Sinai, *Globalization and modern economic reality*, International Journal Scientific Papers, Vol 12, Nr. 2, 2016, p. 301-304.

² IOM Albania, *The national strategy on migration and action plan 2019-2022*, p. 8

³ IOM Albania, *The national strategy on migration and action plan 2019-2022*, p. 8

⁴ Shqipe Avdiu-Kryeziu, Arsim Avdiu, *Interculturalism in Contemporary Teaching in Kosovo*, *Journal of History and Future*, Volume: 7, Issue: 2, 2021, pp. 832 - 843

⁶ Renis Meta, Raport Monitorimi “Ku ndodhen te rinjte sot? Qendresa Qytetare, NED, gusht-tetor 2022, p. 3

⁷ Renis Meta, Raport Monitorimi “Ku ndodhen te rinjte sot? Qendresa Qytetare, NED, gusht-tetor 2022, p. 3

GERMAN OFFER

Based on the German Embassy in Tirana, the offer is the following: Due to the Recognition Act (*Anerkennungsgesetz*), which came into force in 2012, immigrants and anyone thinking of immigrating can have their foreign qualifications recognised in Germany. This is a necessary step for non-EU immigrants who do not have a university degree and wish to take up employment in Germany. For EU nationals who work in a regulated profession – doctors or lawyers, for example – recognition is also a prerequisite for exercising their profession in Germany. The chances of success are high: the total number of positive decisions regarding the recognition of foreign professional qualifications rose from 7,980 in 2012 to 36,696 in 2020. 53.8% of them even achieved full equivalence. This provides a favorable basis for immigrants wishing to find a job and start their career in Germany.¹

As Germany is in great need of youths due to its low birth rate and Albania is considered a third country, Albanian youths are probably projecting their future in Germany.

As specified by the German Embassy in Tirana, the more required professions are:

1. Nursing professionals
2. Physicians
3. Engineers
4. IT specialists
5. Scientists
6. Craftsperson²

Method

In order to identify the purpose why Albanian students are studying certain specific subjects such as nursing, IT engineering etc and avoiding the teaching faculties, it was carried out a questionnaire which was distributed to a total of 244 students from Albanian University, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Physiotherapy Department, Aldent University and University “Alexander Moisiu”, Durres participated in it. 89.8% were females and 10.2% were males.

66.4% of the students are studying in private universities and 33.6% in the state universities.

Most of the students live in urban area 77% and 23% live in urban areas.

56.6% of the students are studying nursing, 18% teaching, 11.1% engineering, and the rest were from other faculties as the following graph shows.

¹ <https://tirana.diplo.de>

² <https://tirana.diplo.de>

1. Në cilën degë studioni?

244 responses

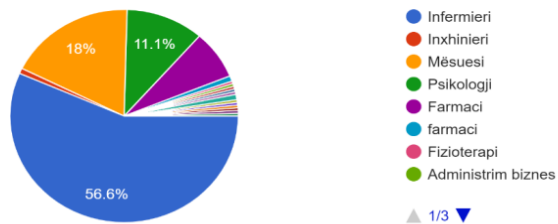


Figure 1. Studies abroad

After getting their degree, 58.6% are not certain if they would pursue their studies abroad, 23.8% are certain to study abroad and 17.6% don't want to study abroad.

Theoretical perspective

There are 27 active private universities in Albania. After a search of all the private universities 6 main universities with highest number of students' quotas provide the required professions by Germany. Respectively, Luarasi, Albanian University, Zoja e Keshillit te Mire, Universiteti European i Tiranës, Aldent have got in common the following programs: nursing, physiotherapy. Some of them have got information technology (engineering) in common respectively Luarasi, Albanian University, Barleti, Polis, Epoka, Universiteti Mesdhetar, Metropolitan. Dentistry is in common in some university respectively, Luarasi, Albanian University, Aldent, Ivodent (High Dental Technician) and Logos (high technicians in medical laboratories).¹

The recent years resulted in an increase of students' quotas in the private universities due to the following reasons.

1. Most of them are tempted by the German government offer to work and live in Germany
2. Most of them are disappointed by the salary and work conditions offered to saving life professions e.i. in the field of medicine.
3. The state university had relatively higher mark average and they couldn't attend their preferred faculty.

Sample and Sampling

In the selection of the sample for the purpose of studying the intentions of the future generation, there taken students which are very important for a country especially

¹ <https://ascal.al>

Albania due to the fact that Albania has got a high percentage of young age people which is gradually decreasing. This is due to the fact that the youths are thinking of having a life away from Albania. The students who participated in this questionnaire are aged 18-25. The students that participated in the questionnaire are Albanian University, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Physiotherapy Department, Aldent University and University “Alexander Moisiu”, Faculty of Education, Durres because such faculties are preparing a great number of students.

Instruments and data collection procedure

The questionnaire comprised the question referring to the reasons why they would study or work abroad. The results are 82.4% would leave Albania for better income, 16.8% for social welfare and 32.4% for career opportunities.

The other question is if they were offered better payment and work conditions, would they leave Albania? The response is that 52.5% wouldn't leave Albania if they had better payment and work conditions and 47.5% would still leave Albania despite of better payment and work conditions.

7. Nëse do të ofroheshin pagesa dhe kushte të mira pune, a do të largohesh nga Shqipëria?
244 responses

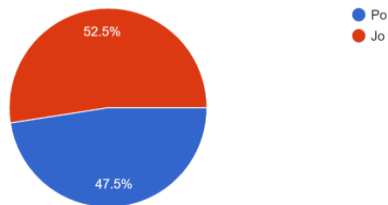


Figure 2. Leaving Albania

74.2% had relatives or friends in the country where they would like to go and 25.8% didn't have anyone.

Leaving Albania for work purposes would be 61.9% permanent and 38% temporary.

9. Largimi për punësim jashtë vendit do të ishte:

244 responses

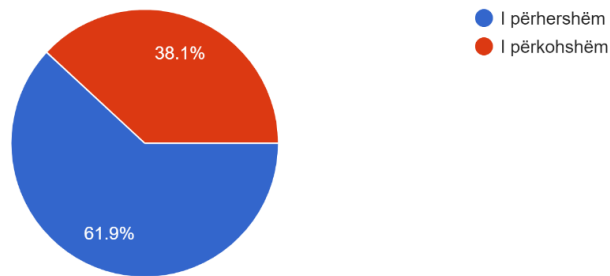


Figure 3. Departure by purpose

If they have information about their diploma recognition abroad, the response is that 70.1% of them know that it is recognized, 27.9% have no information and a small percentage say that that their diploma isn't recognized.

10. Ofron universiteti juaj diplomë që njihet edhe jashtë vendit?

244 responses

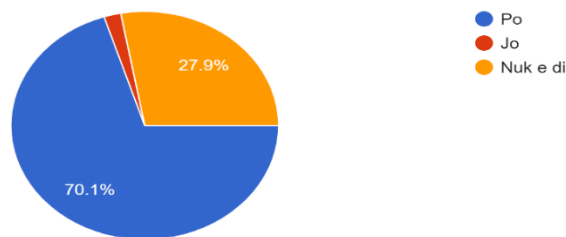


Figure 4. Recognition of the degree abroad

Data analysis

Taking into account that all the participants provided different arguments to leave Albania, it gives the confirmation that the number of the ones who want to leave is more than 23.8% who are certain to go abroad. The percentage of 58.6% of the students that are not certain to leave or not Albania, are maybe more pro to the idea to work and not just study abroad.

Another thing that confirms such affirmation is that 70.1% are informed in advance about their diploma recognition and they need the diploma recognition only if they want to study abroad.

It is surprising the fact that 61.3% of youth work purposes would be 61.9% permanent and 38% temporary which can be interpreted that in case they leave Albania they won't return. They intent to have a live abroad if they are offered work opportunities. The fact that 74.2% had relatives in the country they would like to go, it gives the information that the way to leave Albania is ready, they have the required support.

The consequence in the Albanian Education System

The consequence of the situation provided by the policies of Germany is the reduction of students' number studying teaching, maths, geography, history mainly the ones studying in the education sector.

Furthermore, it must be noted the quotas reduction in several departments in different cities of Albania. In the academic year 2022-2023 the number of reduced quotas is noticed in the University of Tirana, Faculty of Foreign Languages which had 135 less students than the last academic year. Drastic decrease with 70 less quotas had Journalism, Archeology and Geography. The reduction of quotas number is a result of the students' trend who don't prefer any more teaching. It is noticed in the number of students who chose such faculties which is decreasing every year.

The most preferred university was University of Medicine with the greatest number of students who wanted to become physicians, nurses etc. But even Engineering was the branch with a high number of students who want to become future IT Engineers etc.

According to UN Common Country Analysis, the population will naturally continue its aging process, with the median age expected to reach 42.1 years by 2031 which is another negative consequence of immigration of the Albanian youths.¹

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the questionnaire and the increasing number of students studying mainly in the faculties who fulfill the Germany requirements, it is important to take the necessary measures not to leave the future generations without qualified teachers who may result not covering the necessary need for the whole country.

It must be taken measure to encourage the students to study in the teaching faculties even in the private sector so that the number of nurses, physicians, IT engineers etc is limited.

Better conditions and payment must be provided to saving life professions so that most of them have the chance to reconsider leaving Albania.

The education system remains still a challenge concerning future teachers so the long procedure (3 years bachelor degree + 2 years master degree + license exam + portal exam) to become a teacher should be avoided so that Albania at least can have future teachers.

¹ UN, Common Country Analysis, Internal UN Draft, July 2020

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