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Labour Market Assessment with focus on Green Economy

Save the Children

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Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussions
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics, Albania
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMA	Labor market assessment
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NAES	National Agency of Employment Skills
NAVETQ	National Agency of Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications
NVAW	National violence against women
POWER 4 AY	Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth
PWDs	Persons with disability
SCA	Save the Children Albania

Executive Summary

Project Details

Project name: Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth (POWER 4 AY)

Project locations: Albania - three municipalities (Elbasan, Shkoder and Diber)

Start date: October 2021

End date: September 2026

Donor: Bulgari

Total budget:

Thematic areas: Child Poverty, Protection, Education. Health

The Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth is a five-year program funded by Bulgari and led by Save the Children Italy. Implemented by SC Albania's country office in Albania, it aims to empower adolescents and youths to face new challenges across the socio-ecological model. The POWER 4 AY approach focuses on four key outcomes: empowering adolescents and youths to face new challenges, improving their choices to prevent violence and abuse, promoting gender transformative functional literacy, providing decent employment, and partnering with private sectors and governments for improved policy frameworks and services. The project is implemented in three municipalities(Elbasan, Shkoder and Diber) in peri-urban and rural areas, aiming to break the intergenerational poverty cycle.

The Labor Market Analysis (LMA) focuses on green jobs, identifying entry-level, semi-skilled, and skilled positions in green sectors or traditional industries with high potential for green jobs. The primary purposes include developing detailed estimates of green employment opportunities, identifying employers with potential for green transition, identifying gaps and challenges for potential employers to retain quality employees, providing TVET institutions with findings and recommendations on the development or update of VET curriculum regarding specific green sectors, and documenting market gaps for introducing innovative models for creating alternative employment pathways and developing promotion messages for youth to acquire a green mindset. The study used a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The research targeted adolescents in public schools and beyond across three municipalities, and employed a quantitative approach through random sampling for surveying enterprises in the agricultural sector and related fields. Qualitative data was gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII), ensuring gender-balanced representation among participants. This methodology allowed for comprehensive data collection to understand the needs and opportunities for youth employment and empowerment in these communities.

The study reveals that while there is a high level of education among youth, disparities exist based on social and economic status, particularly among vulnerable groups like girls from Roma and Egyptian communities. The majority of respondents are not employed or in education, indicating a gap in labor market engagement. Self-employment is favored over wage employment, particularly in agrotourism and ICT in agriculture. However, there is a notable lack of awareness among youth regarding the green economy and green jobs. Educational initiatives need to address this knowledge gap in environmental concepts. Social media is a primary source for youth to learn about green concepts, but formal education is not the main channel. There is general uncertainty among the youth about engaging in the green economy due to lack of awareness, limited education, economic constraints, perceived barriers, cultural or social factors, trust in institutions, and

political factors. Vocational education centers are viewed as key institutions for acquiring green job skills, with critical thinking and problem-solving skills highly valued. Schools are considered important for developing social skills and self-control. The quantitative data suggests a high entrepreneurial intention among respondents, particularly in Shkoder and Diber. Technical and specialized roles like Senior Agricultural Technician are of high interest. Economic incentives are a significant factor in job preference within the green economy sector. Despite the potential for entrepreneurship, vulnerable youth encounter significant challenges in the workforce, including long working hours, inadequate compensation, and discrimination based on socio-economic status, ethnicity, or disability. Exploitative practices, such as low wages and lack of benefits, are prevalent in various sectors, highlighting the urgent need for improved labor standards and protections to safeguard the rights and well-being of young workers.
Youths with specific skills in high demand, such as vocational education or ICT, are more likely to enjoy favorable working conditions and greater job security.

Climate change is considered a serious problem by a majority of respondents, with rising energy costs, energy security, and air and soil pollution being major environmental concerns. Inadequate infrastructure and lack of finances/income are seen as the biggest obstacles to transitioning to a green economy.
The study highlights the challenges faced by green businesses in attracting and retaining skilled workers. It highlights the reliance on informal channels for job vacancies and the less frequent recruitment in agricultural businesses. The study also highlights the preference for practical, on-site training over formal education for green skills. The youth in these regions show a strong entrepreneurial spirit, highlighting the need for increased focus on green education.

The study emphasizes the necessity of providing specific training for green skills, so revealing a deficiency in the growth of the workforce. The green sector is undergoing a process of digitalization, which is leading to a higher demand for ICT skills. Green firms place a high importance on effective communication, excellent client service, and continuous professional growth skills. The research emphasizes the necessity of advanced training in product development and guidance on recycling and waste management. Nevertheless, firms are reluctant to employ green employment experts in the absence of explicit financial and knowledge-based assistance. The demand for environmentally-friendly products is increasing, even if the sector has reached a state of maturity. The study calls for strategic support and government policy to facilitate the adoption of green practices. It also calls for financial aid and streamlined policies to support green business development. Green businesses, primarily in agriculture, agroturism, and manufacturing, are dominated by small and medium enterprises. Most do not have an environmental certificate. The green economy faces a significant financial competency gap due to unique business models, regulatory landscapes, and market dynamics. Business owners and young entrepreneurs emphasize the need for robust financial literacy programs tailored to the green economy's unique context. Businesses are planning to hire in the coming years, primarily in small numbers.

Gender equality and disability inclusion remain ongoing challenges within the green economy, with women facing barriers such as limited access to resources and biases in recruitment processes. Individuals with disabilities encounter obstacles in accessing employment opportunities, including discrimination and lack of accommodations.
The emergence of remote work platforms offers new opportunities for disabled persons with ICT skills to participate in the workforce and overcome geographical constraints.

Schools play a crucial role in developing social skills and self-control, with a preference for workplace training in acquiring green skills. High entrepreneurial intention is evident, particularly in Shkoder and Diber, with technical and specialized roles like Senior Agricultural Technician being of high interest. Revising the curriculum to include competencies related to organic and bio products, traditional Albanian production, energy and water conservation, and agricultural technology is essential. Economic incentives play a significant role in job preference within the green economy, and there is a strong demand for targeted vocational training in this sector.

The NGOs should aim to empower youth through active participation in climate policy dialogues and environmental activism, encourage them to pursue careers in environmentally sustainable sectors, and support youth-driven green enterprises with financial and mentorship programs, especially for young women. Employment offices and agencies should integrate green concepts into educational curricula, tailor vocational training to include green skills, and create platforms for youth participation in policy-making and environmental discourse. Financial and technical aid should be provided for youth participation in green initiatives, including training, mentorship, access to resources, project design and implementation support, networking opportunities, funding, and policy advocacy.

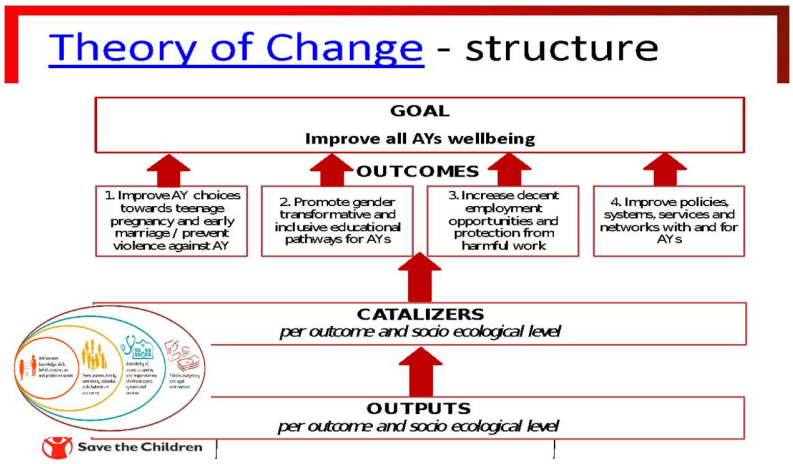
For the private sector, internships and training in green skills and entrepreneurship should be offered, with a focus on engaging young women and men equally. Corporate social responsibility efforts should invest in youth programs to attract and nurture talent, and environmental values should be ingrained in the workplace to promote eco-friendly practices. Schools and TVET institutions should embed sustainability and climate change topics in general and vocational education, revise the curriculum to include competencies related to organic and bio products, traditional Albanian production, energy and water conservation, and agricultural technology, and offer career guidance on green jobs. Practical green skills training should be provided to align education with labor market demands.

Introduction & Project Background

Pathways to Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience for Adolescents and Youth (POWER 4 AY) is a five-year program/project funded by Bulgari and led by Save the Children Italy which is being implemented by SC Albania country office in Albania between October 2021 and September 2026. This new initiative follows from the earlier Youth Empowerment Programme (YEB), which was also a five-year initiative and funded by Bulgari and implemented in Albania between 2016 and 2021. The YEB was the focus of a strategic initiative conducted during 2019-2021, on which SC Italy and SC Albania conducted extensive learning activities and co-led the release of the Adolescent Wellbeing Framework, which culminated in the development of a new approach incorporated in POWER 4 AY.

POWER 4 AY is guided by five principles from the Adolescent Wellbeing Framework. These are (1) human rights fulfilment which is at the core of all adolescent focused support; (2) the rights of adolescent participation to inform programming and policy; (3) program and policy are tailored to the unique needs of adolescents according to gender, age and abilities/disabilities; (4) transformation of gender and improvement of social justice through adolescents; and (5) change for adolescents is catalysed at all levels of the socio-ecological model starting from themselves, their families, communities, services, systems and policies. Guided by these principles each participating country including Albania developed a new program, which will be improving the wellbeing of adolescents and youth by measures of protection, healthier life, education and learning, decent employment, and improvement in policies, systems, and services.

The POWER 4 AY approach is designed with interventions that empower adolescents and youths (AYs) to face new challenges across the entire continuum of the socio-ecological model starting from (1) adolescent's knowledge, skills, beliefs, motivation and protective assets to (2) peers, parents, family, community attitudes, skills, behaviours, and norms to (3) availability of, access to, quality and responsiveness of infrastructure, systems and services, to (4) policies, budgetary and legal environment. The four key outcomes necessary to operationalize this holistic approach is transcribed into the Theory of Change of POWER 4 AY which is presented below.



For realizing the objectives of the Theory of Change, the POWER 4 AY will adopt the strategy of breaking intergenerational poverty cycle through: improving choices of AYs towards preventing violence and abuse against AYs at home and their communities; gender transformative functional literacy; decent employment, and partnership with private sectors, governments and like-minded organisations for improved policy framework, systems and services. The strategy will also focus on creating enabling environment for school dropouts and likely to dropout adolescents and unemployed youths by: retaining them in formal school education through improved access to financial support; providing life-skills, vocational and micro-entrepreneurship training and thus improving their livelihood by enhancing their chances of employment and thereby increasing their income; and improving family knowledge and awareness on the needs of AYs. The project emphasises gender equity and participation of disabled AYs.

The LMA study will support:

a) TVET service providers (VET Centres/TVET Schools) concerning development or update of VET curricula for specific green sectors;

b) Employment Offices and Agencies in focusing their attention to referrals for green job opportunities;

c) private business employers in better understanding and reflecting to decent job opportunities, retaining of quality employees and understanding of youth aspirations for future careers;

d) the POWER 4 AY project in better identifying needs of TVET service providers and development of an inclusive and practical green mindset program curriculum.

The study was in line with Save the Children's definition of green skills and green jobs. Save the Children's manual of LMA that describes the step to take and instruments to use was the primary resource to adjust instruments for data collection.

1.1 Study Purpose & Scope

The primary purpose of the LMA with focus on green jobs is to identify green sectors that demonstrate opportunities for entry level, semi-skilled and skilled positions or traditional sectors/industries with high potential for green jobs, or opportunities for young people to develop green business initiatives.

a) Develop detailed assessments of green employment opportunities within each of the green sectors/industries (# potential, internship, formal employment; daily wages/monthly wages; income potential).

b) Identify employers with green transition potentials (ie focus on production processes that save energy, resources or contribute to environmental protection (mitigation), climate change reduction).

c) Identify gaps and challenges for potential employers to retain quality employees (ie skills mismatch)

d) Provide VET institutions with findings and recommendations for developing or updating the VET curriculum related to specific green sectors.

e) Document market gaps for introducing innovative models for creating alternative employment paths and develop promotional messages for young people to acquire a green mindset.

1.2 Previous Studies / Literature Review

The socio-economic landscape of Albania is being significantly influenced by climate change, which has important consequences for the country's youth. The nation, located in the Mediterranean region, is undergoing environmental changes that have significant impacts on multiple sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, health, and coastal areas.

Albania has had a 1°C increase in its average annual temperature during the 1960s. This change has resulted in a higher occurrence of extreme weather events, including floods, storms, heatwaves, and wildfires (World Bank Group, 2021). These climate changes not only impact the ecosystem but also have substantial socio-economic consequences, particularly for the younger generation.

The agriculture sector in Albania is significantly affected by climate change. Kamberi, Islami, Bruci, and Salisbury (2022) have observed that climate change exerts both beneficial and detrimental impacts on agriculture. Elevated temperatures and altered precipitation patterns have resulted in heightened evaporation rates, more frequent occurrences of drought, and the possibility of water scarcity in crops such as corn, tomatoes, and perennial plants. Nevertheless, the heightened vulnerability to inundation and the intrusion of saltwater into coastal regions as a result of the elevation of sea levels provide substantial obstacles, resulting in the depletion of cultivable terrain and adversely affecting the stability of food provision.

The health consequences of climate change are equally substantial. Increased temperatures, high levels of moisture in the air, and changes in the timing of pollen release worsen chronic respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular problems (Kamberi, Islami, Bruci, & Salisbury, 2022). The mental well-being of individuals is particularly susceptible to harm, as severe weather occurrences and the resulting strain have a greater impact on individuals with mental health disorders and the elderly.

For the young population of Albania, these shifts entail the task of manoeuvring across a terrain characterized by heightened levels of environmental and economic unpredictability. The conventional means of earning a living and the sectors they may have anticipated joining are seeing swift and significant changes. Extreme weather occurrences are causing more instability in industries such as agriculture and fishing, leading to more hazardous job conditions. Albania's agriculture sector, which accounted for 21% of the country's GDP in 2019, is underdeveloped despite its temperate climate, lush soil, and abundant water resources. The government aims to improve production by providing financial assistance to farmers and facilitating private investment in the agro-processing industry. In 2020, $55 million was allocated for drainage and irrigation infrastructure development, while initiatives focused on food safety and consumer interests were also addressed. While the fisheries sector may be relatively small, it holds significant socio-

economic importance due to its presence in regions characterized by high unemployment rates and socio-economic requirements. The fisheries and aquaculture sectors are estimated to contribute approximately 0.3% to Albania's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In addition, as Albania embraces the European Union's Green Deal and strives for carbon neutrality by 2050, there will be a rise in new skills and employment prospects in the field of green industries. This transition poses both a difficulty and a chance for the younger generation.

The Government of Albania commenced its long-term National Adaptation Plan (NAP) project in 2015 as a proactive reaction to the increasing difficulties presented by climate change. The NAP process, aligned with the technical guidelines of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), seeks to strengthen Albania's ability to withstand climate change in the long term and facilitate efficient collaboration among different stakeholders, including ministries, local government units, agencies, private sector, civil society, and academia. The NAP serves as the adaptive element of the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS), which received approval through Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 466 on July 3, 2019. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) consists of a total of 15 key activities, encompassing 118 specific measures for adaptation and 23 objectives that are to be executed by the year 2035. The National Action Plan of Albania consists of 15 Priority Areas (PAs). The 15 Pas focus on various aspects of climate change adaptation in Albania, including steering the process, mainstreaming initiatives, climate finance readiness, implementation monitoring systems, public information, capacity building, climate resilient irrigation, drainage, flood protection, integrated water resources management, health sector adaptation, ICPC, municipal adaptation, tourism adaptation, civil defence preparation, and ecosystem-based adaptation.

Education and skill development in sectors pertinent to the green economy, such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, are urgently required to prevent young individuals from becoming marginalized throughout this transition.

The recent change in worldwide environmental regulations and the increasing recognition of the effects of climate change have had a considerable impact on educational curriculum, namely in vocational education and training (VET) schools in Albania. Incorporating the ideas of climate change and green economy into these schools is becoming more and more important in order to educate a workforce that can actively contribute to a sustainable future.

Vocational education and training (VET) schools and also private and public universities in some study programmes as tourism, biology, environmental biology, environmental engineering, etc. have recently begun integrating modules and courses specifically focused on climate change and the green economy. This educational development is consistent with the national strategies specified in publications like "Ndryshimet Klimatike, 2020" (Ministria e Turizmit dhe Mjedisit, 2019) and the country's dedication to the EU Green Deal. These regulations emphasize the necessity of a well-educated labour force proficient in sustainable practices and well-versed in environmental matters.

In terms of TVET, with the contribution of Kultur Contact (Austrian based NGO) the subject of Sustainable Environment and Development is introduced to VET schools for VET students of grade 13 or 4th year of VET school (graduates). **Textbooks in agricultural vocational schools**

increasingly incorporate sections on sustainable farming techniques, with a focus on organic agriculture and water conservation approaches (Kamberi et al., 2022). The purpose of this content is to provide students with the essential abilities to adjust to evolving climatic conditions and make valuable contributions to a sustainable agricultural industry.

Textbooks at technical and vocational institutions have incorporated sections on solar and wind energy technologies under the domain of renewable energy. The following sections include essential information regarding renewable energy sources, their adoption, and their contribution to minimizing the impacts of climate change (Islami & Bruci, 2022).

Over the past several months, tourism has experienced a substantial surge, attracting widespread coverage from both domestic and international media outlets worldwide, including countries such as the United States, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, China, and others .In the span of seven months in 2023, the total count of foreign residents entering Albania amounts to 5,167,656. The number has had a 30.6% growth compared to the corresponding period in 2022. In July 2023, the overall number of arrivals (including foreigners and Albanians) has experienced a 39% increase compared to July 2022, when considering monthly rates. In July, there was a significant 48.2% rise in the total number of nights spent, as compared to July 2022 (Musabelliu, 2023).

Engaging in tourism and eco-tourism efforts might be advantageous for vulnerable youth, particularly those from marginalized communities or experiencing economic difficulties. These projects serve the dual purpose of creating job opportunities and promoting a strong commitment to environmental conservation and community engagement. Albania's varied ecosystems provide numerous opportunities for eco-tourism pursuits, including hiking, birdwatching, camping, and wildlife protection initiatives. The country boasts a plethora of national parks, like Theth National Park and Valbona Valley National Park, which offer optimal environments for immersive encounters with nature.

In addition, Albania's coastline along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas has prospects for marine eco-tourism, encompassing activities such as snorkelling, scuba diving, and the implementation of sustainable fishing methods. Responsible tourism organizations and tour operators are growing, offering training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged adolescents in guiding, hospitality, and conservation positions.

Similarly, the vocational education curriculum at VET Schools has included eco-tourism, particularly in Vet schools situated in major urban centres that play a pivotal role in the tourism industry. Current textbooks increasingly encompass subjects such as sustainable tourism practices, environmental preservation, and the economic advantages of eco-tourism. The purpose of these instructional resources is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for pursuing employment in a sector that values and conserves Albania's natural and cultural heritage, while also fostering sustainable economic development (Salisbury & Islami, 2022).

Notwithstanding these favourable advancements, obstacles persist. There is inconsistency in how schools incorporate these new curriculum aspects, and t**here is a requirement for more extensive**

teacher training on these subjects (Kamberi & Islami, 2022). **Moreover, the incorporation of tangible, experiential activities alongside academic understanding is crucial for achieving optimal learning results.**

1.3 Study Questions[1]

Research Questions:

1. What are the employment potentials in the sectors (green industries) that are identified?
2. What entities pose significant economic growth in the target counties/municipalities?
3. What opportunities within the sector … (name the sector/s) have positive social and environmental impact?
4. What sectors have potentials to transit to more environment friendly processes or solutions that adapt to effects of climate change?
5. What are the main green job opportunities in the sector? (Wage employment and self-employment)
6. What are the main entry-level green job opportunities in the sector?
   - Demand (present & forecast)
   - Skills/competences and education qualifications
   - Job quality (pay/benefits/working environment)
7. What challenges do employers face in identifying and retaining quality employees?
8. What technical skills are required to operate green jobs?
9. Are present and forecast jobs decent jobs?
10. What challenges do employee face in identifying and retaining quality employees?
11. What mechanisms do employers use to recruit new employees, especially youth?
12. What are employers' perceptions of hiring youth from vulnerable communities?
13. What policies or regulations are promoting opportunities for employment/self-employment with focus on sectors with potentials for green jobs?
14. What are the causes that prevent opportunities for employment/self-employment with focus on green sectors, or sectors transition to green processes?
15. How is provision of green skills training programs taking place?

[1] In the text below study questions will be referred as Q and the number

16. What challenges do TVET providers face in skilling youth for employment or entrepreneurship (with focus on green)?
17. What do TVET providers need to do to integrate green skills into curriculum of Courses or training program?
18. How important are 'green skills' to employers?
19. What is the demand for training program related to green jobs?
20. What are youth's needs and hopes for the future? What aspires youth in pursuing careers?
21. What are youth's interests in priority green sectors?
22. What challenges/barriers to employment/self-employment do youth face?
23. How sensitive/aware are AYs and their community to the Climate Change?
24. What do 'green skills', 'green jobs' terms mean to youth?
25. What type of skills youth would consider important in acquiring and retaining a quality
26. job or setting up a small (green) business?
27. What type of green entrepreneurship initiatives youth can identify to be engaged in the 3-5 years?
28. What green sectors are strong in the target municipalities? (include format and non-formal)
29. What is driving demand for green products and services?
30. What policies/regulations are there to help business companies invest/grow in green sectors? What constraints are there?
31. How are the environmental problems/challenges addressed by: 1. The business companies; 2. Public Institutions (local/central)?
32. Are there grants/subsides provided for promoting green jobs or opportunities or climate change mitigations?

33. What are the largest market actors in green economy operating in the target counties/municipalities?
34. Are there examples of business companies that have undergone a green transition? (those
which adapted their operations/processes)
35. What approaches are there to promote youth actions to green innovations, skills and jobs?

2. Methodology& Limitations

2.1 Study design

The LMA study will support a) TVET service providers (VET Centres/TVET Schools) concerning development or update of VET curricula for specific green sectors; b) Employment Offices and Agencies in focusing their attention to referrals for green job opportunities; c) private business employers in better understanding and reflecting to decent job opportunities, retaining of quality employees and understanding of youth aspirations for future careers; d) the POWER 4 AY project in better identifying needs of TVET service providers and development of an inclusive and practical green mindset program curriculum.

The analysis aligned with Save the Children's delineation of green skills and green jobs. The key reference for adjusting instruments for data collection was Save the Children's manual on LMA, which provided a detailed description of the necessary stages and instruments to be used.

The mixed method approach was expected to enhance the internal validity of the design through the combination of triangulation and explanation of quantitative data (surveys) with qualitative data (such as desk review, in-depth interviews (KII), FGDs, surveys, etc.). The mixed approach was employed to not only triangulate data, but also to offer additional insights into quantitative variables through the use of qualitative methodologies. Quantitative data formed the foundation for making generalizations, while qualitative data offered explanations and descriptions of the causes and reasons that the study questions aimed to address. The LMA employed a cross-sectional research to gather data.

Sampling Methods & Sample Size

The methodology used in this study focused on a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The research targeted adolescents and was conducted mainly in public schools across three municipalities: Diber, Elbasan, and Shkoder. Additionally, the project employed a quantitative approach through a random sampling method for surveying enterprises, particularly those in the agricultural sector and related fields.

Qualitative data were gathered through 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 21 Key Informant Interviews (KII), ensuring a gender-balanced representation among participants. These FGDs and KIIs were instrumental in exploring the perspectives of adolescents on various issues, including the integration of green jobs into curricula and local economic opportunities. This methodology enabled the collection of comprehensive data, balancing depth and breadth, to understand the needs and opportunities for youth employment and empowerment in these communities.

The survey of beneficiaries for the POWER 4 AY project focused on the category of Adolescents. The calculation was based on data from the Statistical Yearbook for Education and Sports, specifically the total number of students enrolled in both public and private schools. However, the survey was only conducted in public education.

The questionnaire for this group was designed to target the specific concerns of the three groups outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToRs). To prevent any sampling statistical error and to keep the margin within ± 4 % (confidence interval), with confidence level 95% (p = 0.05) it is necessary to have a sample equal to 500 AYs.

Sample size formula:

$$N = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2}$$

N: sample size.
z: confidence level at 95% (standard value of 1.96).
pq: variance of population (0.501).
e: allowable error (5%).

Table 1.1 Distribution of the sample by regions based on the sampling design:

Groups of target communities	Confidence Level	Confidence Interval	Sample size [2]
Diber	95%	5%	100
Elbasan	95%	5%	200
Shkoder	95%	5%	200
		Total	**500**

According to the official data from INSTAT, the POWER 4 AY initiative encompasses three towns where around o**ne-sixth of all registered firms in the country are operating in 2022.** Furthermore, approximately **one-fifths of these businesses are owned and operated by women**. The survey sample size for this category, in accordance with the specified specifications for the level of confidence and margin of error, is determined to be 271 firms in total.

In recent years, Albania has witnessed significant developments in its economic landscape, with a growing emphasis on sustainable growth, innovation, and sectoral diversification. Against this backdrop, the strategic selection of sectors by the Advisory Group for evaluation, particularly focusing on agriculture and related activities, aligns with the country's broader development objectives and emerging economic trends.

[2] Based on the estimated population (14-26 years old) for each municipality we have applied the formula for the sample size

Albania has recognized the importance of fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth, driven by targeted investments in sectors with high growth potential and alignment with national priorities. Agriculture, as one of the traditional pillars of the Albanian economy, has undergone transformational changes aimed at modernizing production techniques, enhancing productivity, and promoting value-added activities along the agricultural value chain.

Furthermore, there has been a concerted effort to leverage Albania's natural resources, favorable climate, and geographical diversity to position the country as a key player in agricultural production and agribusiness. Investments in infrastructure, technology, and market linkages have facilitated the integration of smallholder farmers into formal value chains, unlocking opportunities for income generation, job creation, and rural development.

The local Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the municipality where the POWER 4 AY project operates gave the data for the interviews. The evaluation of green enterprises was conducted using criteria including environmental effect, resource efficiency, regulatory compliance, social responsibility, innovation, and reporting transparency. Registered enterprises involved in agricultural or related activities were found through chambers and business associations in different regions. These enterprises possess the capacity to generate employment opportunities that are environmentally sustainable.

Table 1.2 The structure and number of Enterprises:

Regions	Active enterprises	Percentage	Sampling	Active enterprises/Women CEO	Sampling (Gender Representation)
Total	**209591**			**48203**	
Dibër	4 960	13,9	38	804	4
Shkodër	12 772	35,7	97	2 722	37
Elbasan	17 935	50,4	136	3 600	69
Total:	**35 667**	**100**	**271**	**7 126**	110
Percentage	17,0			14,8	

Within the qualitative component of the study. 18 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 18 key informant interviews (KII) with the key informants occurred.

For the qualitative component of the study, FGD and KII were implemented to obtain information on/from the target audience and key informants. The qualitative data collection also took place in three municipalities Shkodra, Dibra, Elbasan. Respondents were selected using a list of key informants provided by Save the Children, Albania. Requirements/ criteria for target audience are designed by Save the children, Albania.

The objective during the construction of the FGD was to maintain gender balance among each category of respondents. The focus groups, as outlined in the aforementioned groupings as anticipated in the Terms of Reference (ToRs), were conducted within the community center premises as indicated below:

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted, segregating AYs (Adolescent Youths) based on gender, parents, and community members, including community leaders. At least six Focus Group talks (FGDs) were organized for each of these groups. The talks were distributed among various communities within the program region. The field crew analyzed the input data from each FGD to determine the amount of saturation, specifically whether the same data was repeated in subsequent FGDs, in order to determine the necessary number of FGDs.

Table 1.3 The structure and number of FGDs:

Category	Shkoder		Elbasan		Diber	
	Nr. FGD	Nr. Participants	Nr. FGD	Nr. Participants	Nr. FGD	Nr. Participants
Community leaders	1	8	1	8	1	8
Parents	1	8	1	8	1	8
AYs Boys/Men	1	8	1	8	1	8
AYs Girls/Women	1	8	1	8	1	8
AYs Boys/Men with disabilities	1	8	1	8	1	8

AYs Girls/Women with disabilities	1	8	1	8	1	8
AYs that work	1	8	1	8	0	0
TOTAL	7	56	7	56	6	48

Following the FGDs, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were established involving individuals with service providers, system managers, and policy management authorities.

Simultaneously, using an equivalent number of representative respondents, data was gathered about teenagers' perspectives on the integration of green jobs into the existing curriculum, as well as their perception of the local economy's potential as a work possibility.

Table 1.4 The structure and number KII:

Nr.	Key informants	Number
1	Municipality	2
2	VET education and training center	1
5	Regional employment office	2
6	VET school	3
7	NGO (youth) in Shkodra, Elbasan, Diber	1
8	NGO (women) in Dibra	1
9	NGO (disabled)	1
10	Experts in green economy	2
11	Employers working in the green sector	5
12	Enterprises in green sector	3
	Total	21

2.2 Data Sources

Primary Data Collection

Data collection occurred during the month of December 2023 in the three Municipalities. The purpose for mixed method as explained above was to triangulate data for strengthening internal validity but also to provide further explanations of quantitative variables using qualitative method. The mixed method enriched evidence by not only answering the "what" question but also by addressing its causes and reasons by answering the "why" and "how" in questions which need to be included as part of each research question. The use of mixed method therefore better addressed

the research questions of the baseline as compared to non-mixed unitary method. Further, while quantitative data provided a basis for inferring on generalisation, the use of qualitative data provided explanation, description, and more analytical depth by factoring in catalytic variables in the context and assumptions of the program.

Data collection tools for the youth incorporated disaggregation by age, gender and disability. The data was disaggregated on the 16-26 age group into two age bands (16–19; 20–24) so as to better capture the specificities of this critical juncture in the lifecourse.

Owing to the major physical, cognitive, social and sexual transitions that adolescents experience, a growing evidence base suggests that monitoring and investing in the transition from childhood to adulthood will prove vital in consolidating recent gains made on early childhood development and in leveraging adolescent-responsive interventions across sectors. Needs, vulnerabilities and developmental milestones differ widely across the 16-26 years age bracket, and while there is considerable diversity within and across contexts there is also a general recognition that age-tailored interventions are critical. For example, 15 to 19 the honing of vocational skills and secondary educational learning and 20+ see transitions to work spheres, further educational prospects and initiating one's own family life.[3]

Data Collection Tools

Both secondary and primary sources for data were resourced. For secondary sources, data from county census and municipality records of population with categorization across age, gender, social stratification, and disability was used primarily to operationalize the sample design.

The quantitative data from youth were collected based on POWER 4AY Survey 2023. The questions of the survey were based on the TORS of this study, the same procedure was followed for the quantitative data from the enterprises.

The qualitative data of the study were collected through tools such as FGD and KII to obtain information on/from the target audience and key informants. The qualitative data collection also took place in three municipalities Shkodra, Dibra, Elbasan.

2.3 Data Analysis

Reliability of the translated survey was tested by observing the internal consistency of the test-retest process. Face-to-face interviews were performed with the respondents. Considering the survey's structure, the research team developed an e-survey at Google Docs platform and the interviews were shared through the link. This enabled to enter the answers of 435 youth (146 in

[3]Gugliemlmi, S., and Jones, N. (2019). The invisibility of adolescents within the SDGs: Addressing gaps in gender and age disaggregation to leave no adolescent behind. GAGE.

Shkoder, 210 in Elbasan, and 79 in Diber) interviews into the database right after the interview. After the fieldwork the interviews' data were exported from Google Docs platform to MS Excel platform, and after the preparation of the final dataset in SPSS format, the data were processed and analyzed. Multilevel control was used to ensure the high quality of the data collected. Descriptive statistics was generated during analysis. These include, among others, mean, standard deviation, the maximum, the minimum, frequencies, crosstabulations etc. Charts (bar graphs, pie charts, cluster graphs) and tables were used to enhance report understandability.

Research Ethics

The research team encouraged child participation in the resaerch process, encouraging them to actively participate in decision-making, data collection, and verification of research outcomes. The study was comprehensive, involving children from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities and those facing exclusion or discrimination. The study followed ethical principles, including safeguarding, addressing children's rights, transparency, and safeguarding participants' identities. Public access to results was granted unless restrictions were in place. Wide-ranging participation was engaged with relevant stakeholders whenever possible. The investigation was conducted with meticulousness and autonomy, ensuring the accuracy and credibility of findings and conclusions. Voluntary participation was sought from both children and their caregivers, and children were aware of their option to discontinue participation at any point without adverse repercussions. The children were provided with information about the purpose of their involvement in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), their perspectives, ideas, and feedback, enabling them to make informed choices about their participation.

The research team upheld rigorous ethical standards for enterprises involved in the study, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, transparency, safeguarding, no harm principle, and benefit. Enterprises were assured that their sensitive information was kept confidential and used solely for the study's purposes. They were informed about the study's aims, data usage, and the ability to withdraw at any point. Researchers communicated openly with enterprises about the research process, findings, and potential implications. Measures were taken to protect the reputation and operations of the businesses involved. The research did not place any economic or legal risk and did not interfere with normal business operations.

2.4 Limitations

The research conducted to investigate the perceptions of the green economy and employability among young individuals and firms in Albania recognized specific constraints that may have influenced the results and interpretations. The utilization of convenience sampling may not have adequately captured a completely representative cross-section of the population. Moreover, the dependence on self-reported data obtained from surveys and interviews may create biases, as participants' responses may not precisely reflect their genuine perceptions or behaviours. Additionally, the study encountered external limits such as time constraints, limited resources, and numerous situational obstacles, which potentially restricted the extent and thoroughness of the investigation. The study of the results took into account these constraints and their relevance to policymaking or practice. However, the study offers important initial observations and emphasizes

the necessity for additional research to improve our comprehension of the involvement of young individuals in Albania's shift towards a sustainable economy. It advocates for ongoing participation and empowerment of youth as crucial contributors to environmental sustainability.

2.5 Mitigation measures

The study team took into consideration:

- Data collection methods were age and gender appropriate.
- Study activities provided a safe, creative space where children felt that their thoughts and ideas are important.
- A risk assessment was conducted that included any risks related to children, young people's, or adult's participation.
- A referral mechanism was in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
- Informed consent was used.
- We were lead by the principle "If any of the research team member will have direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or beneficiaries and/or have access to any sensitive data on safeguarding and/or children and/or beneficiaries, it is the responsibility of this person to contact the local HR team and child safeguarding focal point to ensure vetting checks and on-boarding are conducted in line with statutory requirements, local policies and best practices guidance".

3. Findings

3.1. Findings on the adolescents and youth survey

3.1.2. Demographic Data & Respondent Characteristics

This section consists of the data analysis of the quantitative survey done among adolescents and youth aged 14-26 years old in three selected municipalities such as: Shkoder, Elbasan and Diber. The sample size for each municipality ranged from 79 to 210 depending on the resident population size of each of these municipalities, resulted in the last Population and Housing Census 2011. The adolescents aged 14 to 18 years old represent 74% of the sample followed by the age group 19 to 22 years old by 21% and 5% of them were aged 23 to 26 years old. Sex distribution of respondents was 45% females and 55% were males. Only 1% of the respondents were from the LGBTI+ community and only 3% from the Roma/Egyptian community. The respondents who were single represent 82% of the sample while 15% of **them were married. From the total 9.3% of the respondents were Roma or Egyptians. The majority of the respondents were attending education (33%) followed by the unemployed. In terms of higher educational achievement, the sample was comprised by 27% with professional high school education (vocational education) and 26% with general high school education, while 23% had finished primary education (class 6 – 9).**

Figure 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

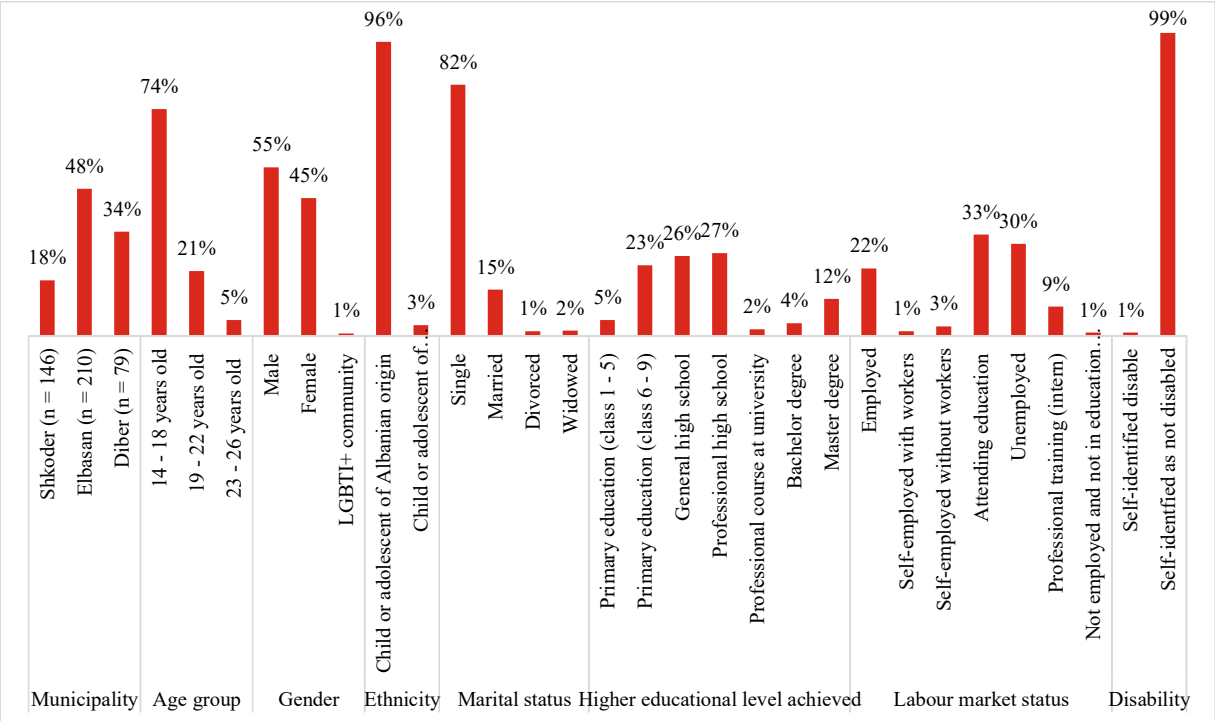


Table 3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics by Municipality

		Shkoder		Elbasan		Diber	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Age group	14 - 18 years old	114	78	150	71	59	75
	19 - 22 years old	27	19	47	22	16	20
	23 - 26 years old	5	3.4	13	6	4	5
Gender	Male	94	64	102	49	37	47
	Female	50	34	107	51	45	53
	LGBTI+ community	2	1.4	1	1		
Ethnicity	Child or adolescent of Albanian origin	140	96	209	96	76	96
	Child or adolescent of Roma/Egyptian origin (n = 15)	6	4	6	3	3	4
Marital status	Single	126	86	165	79	65	82
	Married	17	12	40	19	3	4
	Divorced	1	1	2	1	9	11
	Widowed	2	1.4	3	1	2	3
Higher educational level achieved	Primary education (class 1 - 5)	8	6	9	4.3	6	8
	Primary education (class 6 - 9)	36	25	43	21	21	27
	General high school	40	27	58	28	17	22
	Professional high school	45	31	51	24	22	28
	Professional course at university	2	1.4	7	3		
	Bachelor degree	8	6	7	3	2	3
	Master degree	7	5	33	16	11	14
Labor market status	Employed	21	14	58	28	17	22
	Self-employed with workers	3	2	2	1	1	1.3
	Self-employed without workers	4	3	8	4	1	1.3
	Attending education	46	32	68	32	30	38
	Unemployed	50	34	62	30	19	24
	Professional training (intern)	20	14	12	6	9	11
	Not employed and not in education (NEET)	2	1.4			2	3
Disability	Self-identified disable	2	1.47	2	1.0	2	2.5
	Self-identified as not disabled	144	98.6	208	99.0	77	97.5
	Total	146		210		79	

In Shkoder municipality the sample size was 146 from whom the majority was aged 14-18 years old (78%), male (64%), and single (86%). They were either employed/self-employed (19%), unemployed (34%), or attending education (32%). While their higher educational achievement was from a professional high school (31%).

In Elbasan municipality the sample size consisted of 201 adolescents and youth from whom the majority was aged 14-18 years old (71%), female (51%), and single (79%). Apart from the adolescents and youth who were employed/self-employed (23%), unemployed (30%) or attending education (32%), a significant share were in employment (28%). On the other hand, the larger share of the sample had either finished their education in a general high school (24%) or professional high school (28%).

In Diber municipality the sample size consisted of 79 adolescents and youth from whom the majority was aged 15-19 years old (75%), female (53%), and single (82%). Apart from the adolescents and youth who were employed/self-employed (25%), unemployed (24%) or attending education (38%), a significant share were in employment (22%). On the other hand, the larger share of the sample had either finished their education in a primary education (class 6 – 9) (24%) or professional high school (28%).

The survey provided data disaggregated by ethnic affiliation, by identifying the adolescents and youth part of the Roma and Egyptian minorities, the representation of these minorities for each municipality was approximately the same (3%). Also the survey provided data disaggregated by disability, the data shows that in Shkodër, Elbasan, and Dibër, only 1.47% of the population self-identifies as disabled, while 98.6% of the population is not disabled, with 144 in Shkodër, 208 in Elbasan, and 77 in Dibër.

Based on the focus group discussion, it is evident that there is a high level of education among participants. However, there is variation in educational attainment based on economic and social standing. Girls belonging to the Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as those from impoverished homes, face significant disadvantages. These girls are particularly vulnerable to the likelihood of never enrolling in school and prematurely discontinuing their education. The primary factor contributing to dropping out among girls is the competing demands of household tasks, while for boys, it is primarily due to a lack of interest in studies. Additionally, boys may be compelled by their families to engage in activities such as begging and collecting cans.

"As a girl from the Roma community, I feel there's a big difference in how education is seen for us. I wanted to continue school, but there's so much pressure at home to help out. My brothers sometimes skip school to work or beg; it's tough for all of us. School feels important to me, but it's hard when you have to choose between helping your family and studying."

Roma AY, FGD, Shkoder

During key informant interview with Vocational High school, in Elbasan, it was revealed, in VET Schools:

"As the director of this Vocational High School, I must express my growing concern over the trend of student dropouts (around 4%) due to migration issues that we are witnessing. It's a multifaceted issue that we're grappling with. A number of our students come from challenging socioeconomic backgrounds, and the pressures they face from home and their immediate environment often override their educational pursuits. Despite our best efforts to offer practical and engaging vocational training, which we believe can lead to immediate employment opportunities, we are still seeing a significant number of youths choosing to leave school prematurely. This is not just a loss for them on a personal level, but it's also a setback for our community's economic development. We are actively seeking partnerships with local businesses and organizations to

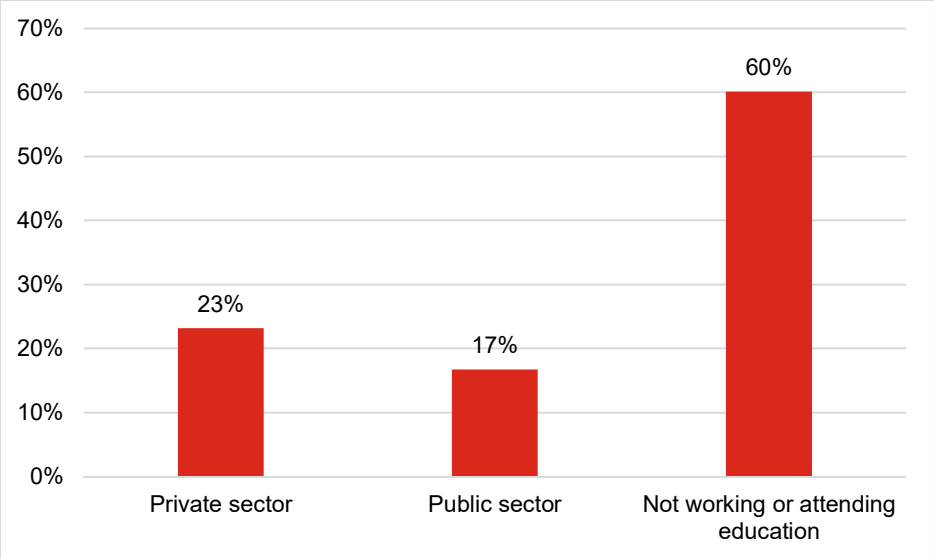
create more incentives and support structures to keep these young individuals in school Teh of Form"

Erina Disho, Director, "Mihal Shahini" Vocational Secondary School, Elbasan

3.1.2. Labour market and educational characteristics (Q18, Q19)

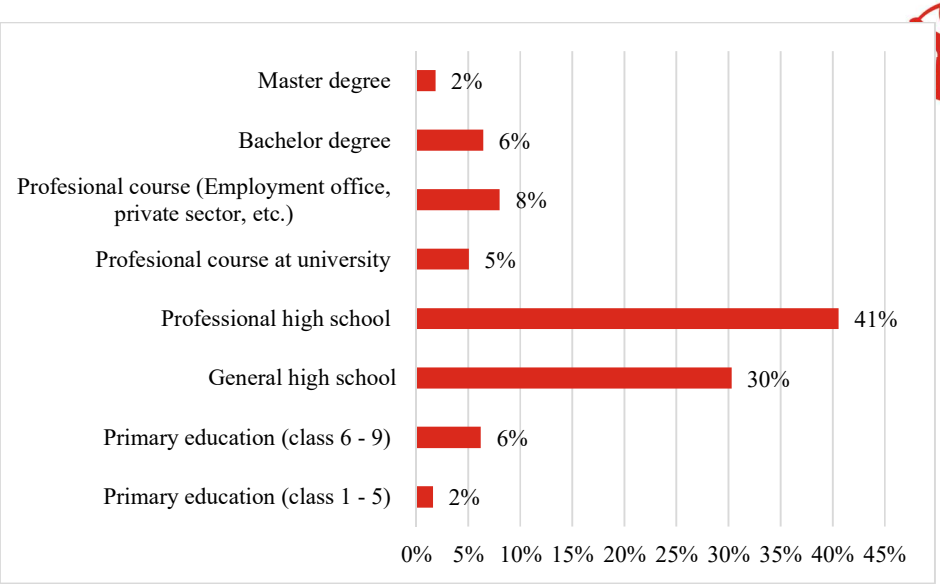
Most of the respondents of three municipalities we**re not in employment or in education (60%).** From those who were working, it was mainly in the private sector (23%) while the rest in the public sector (17%).

Figure 2. Sector of employment for the employed share of the sample



On the other hand, those who were attending education were mainly in secondary education, namely in a professional high school (vocational education training) (41%) or in a general high school (30%). Only 8% of the respondents were in tertiary education (bachelor or master degree) or have finished primary education (class 1 – 5 or class 6 – 9). The rest were attending professional courses either at the Vet Center or university (13%).

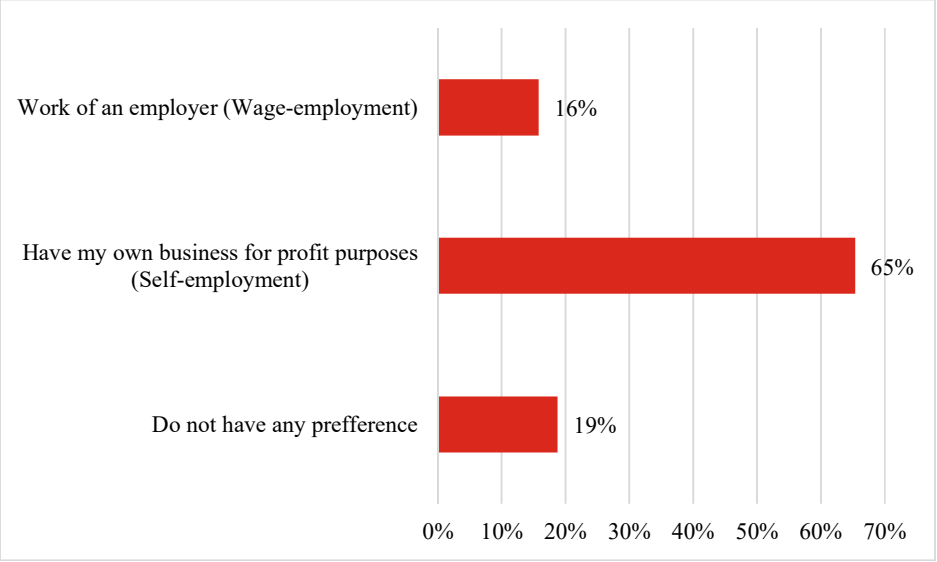
Figure 3. Type of education for the pupils/students share of the sample



Career orientation

When the respondents were asked to think of their ideal career in terms of would they prefer to work for an employer (private or public sector) or have your own business, **the majority replied in favour of self-employment (65%)** compared to wage-employment (16%), while the rest were indifferent between the two options.

Figure 4. Career orientation between wage-employment and self-employment



The qualitative data obtained from the focus group discussions (FGDs) corroborates these quantitative findings. Participants, especially the younger generation, demonstrate a significant aspiration for entrepreneurship, placing importance on independence, personal satisfaction, and the capacity to make a direct impact on society through their professional endeavours. The accounts provided by the participants indicate a shift from conventional job frameworks to a greater focus on entrepreneurial endeavours. Y**oung individuals hold the belief that being self-employed provides not only a feeling of independence but also the opportunity to implement inventive methods in their selected industries, such as renewable energy and agriculture.**

This emotion is captured by the two statements made by the young participating in VET programs for solar panel installation and agriculture. Their proactive approach in utilizing their vocational education for self-initiated projects demonstrates their dedication to innovation and sustainability. Their statements emphasize the youth's acknowledgment of self-employment as a feasible and appealing career choice that matches with their personal values and the skills they are developing.

"My solar panel installation class is teaching me a lot, and I'm starting to think that starting my own business would be more fulfilling than working for someone else. I've witnessed firsthand how being self-employed can free you up, and how your work has an effect on the world around you. I see launching a service that assists individuals in making the transition to renewable energy sources using the knowledge I am acquiring. For me, it's all about being self-reliant, about deciding what I want out of life and how I want to get it."

21Years Old AY, VET Center, Shkoder

"I'm still in middle school, learning about agriculture, and I like the idea of running my own farm one day. With what I'm learning, I could use modern farming techniques and maybe even start an organic business. It's not just about making money; it's also about being in control of what you do and how you do it. Working for someone else doesn't appeal to me much. I want to grow something from the ground up — literally."

16 Years Old AY, VET Middle School, Elbasan

The focus group discussions for the AYs that are working different jobs reveal that young people are encountering significant barriers to employment. These include long working hours, low pay, and a lack of basic worker protections such as insurance.

"It feels like I'm stuck in a cycle where I work endless hours just to make ends meet with no safety net if things go wrong. There's no room for growth or saving for the future, and it's like you're invisible to the system without proper insurance."

21-years-old boy, waiter, Elbasan

"Working almost every day, for ten hours, is exhausting and leaves little time for anything else. It's hard to consider pursuing further training or education when you're just trying to recover from one long day to start the next."

19-years-old girl, FGD, Diber

"I have been working to fix PCs for 16 years. I worked 8 hours a day and 6 days a week. I was paid a minimum wage of 35,000 lek a month. Maybe I would have been paid a little more if I had completed school for ICT or a formal training.

20 years old, , FGD, Elbasan

"I started working when I was 15 years old, but it's been a few months since I opened my shop as a barber. Finally, I can say that I do the work I love without feeling bad, exploited by others or humiliated because of my economic situation. Now that I have grown up, I understand that it is not normal to employ a 15-year-old child to work very long hours...."

17 years old, , FGD, Elbasan

"I work in a restaurant as an assistant cook. It's a very tiring job, but I get paid well, about 30,000 lek a month. I work from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., every day of the week. It's tiring not to have a day off, but when I think that they treat me well at work, they don't insult me or use nicknames for the fact that I am Roma, I feel very good."

16 years, FGD, Elbasan

"I worked in the hairdresser during the five months of May - September. It was very torturous for me.... I feel bad when I remember it.... I worked 12-13 hours a day and never had a day off. Most of the days we began work at 5.30 am because we had to do make-up to brides and at 8 in the morning they had to be ready for the photosets. I was paid 1000 lek a day, almost 200 lek left because I had to buy water and bread. In the end, there was very little left for my family. You didn't get paid if you took leave or were sick..."

20 years old, , FGD, Elbasan

"For us, it is not very easy to find a job. There are very few announcements at the employment office, and those that are posted are mainly for full-time jobs, this hinders us a lot since we can attend vocational school or a course. .."

18 years old, FGD, Elbasan

"Regarding the ideal working conditions, I think we should be treated without prejudice because of the economic situation or our origin. This is the most important thing for me, I want to be treated with dignity and respect. I think that a young person should I work only 40 hours a week and the weekend is a day off. We mostly survive and we need to have two days off.... I think a very good salary for us would be 50,000 lek."

20 years old, Elbasan, FGD, Elbasan

"I worked in a shoe factory with some of my cousins and friends. We went to work at 6 in the morning until 3:00 p.m. The work in the factory is very tiring and the smell of shoe glue was often unbearable. Only Sunday it was a holiday. I was paid 25,000 lek a month. If I was absent because I was sick, for example with a stomach ache, flu, etc., they didn't pay me. Maybe they don't trust us."

21 years old, Roma community, FGD, Elbasan

""I spent many months working for an event firm, and I like my job there. I really made an effort to satisfy them with my work. However, I'm not sure why, despite my repeated calls, they didn't pick up when I rang them after two months and didn't offer me an explanation for why they didn't hire me. I was depressed. It seems sense that they behaved this way due to my illness."

S., person with disability, 21 years old, FGD, Shkoder

"During the summer, I work as an account maintainer on Instagram. I made posts, profile boosts, sponsorships, photos, posts with descriptions, etc. I worked 4 hours a day and I was paid 200 euros a month. I had weekends off and if I was sick they paid me a day of work. I felt very appreciated by my employers. They really liked the work I did."

17-years-old girl, FGD, Shkoder

"When I was 20, I finally found my place in the workforce, and it's been a wonderful journey. When I finished vocational school three years ago, I was eager to use my skills and make a difference in the field. It was like a dream come true to get a job in an automated agroprocessing factory. I couldn't be happier with my job because the conditions are very good. When I walked into the factory, I was amazed at how much technology and new ideas were being used. The automation processes not only make our work easier, but they also make sure that everything we do is done correctly and quickly. It's interesting to see how technology and machines

work together while keeping quality at the highest level. The company also cares a lot about its employees' health and safety, making sure that everyone on staff has a safe and supportive place to work. We go to training sessions on a regular basis to stay up to date on the newest technologies and best practices. This helps us keep learning and grow as professionals. The sense of community among coworkers is one of the things I like most about my job. Even though our work is always going quickly, there's always a spirit of teamwork and collaboration that makes every day fun.This is true whether we're fixing a technical problem or meeting a production deadline."

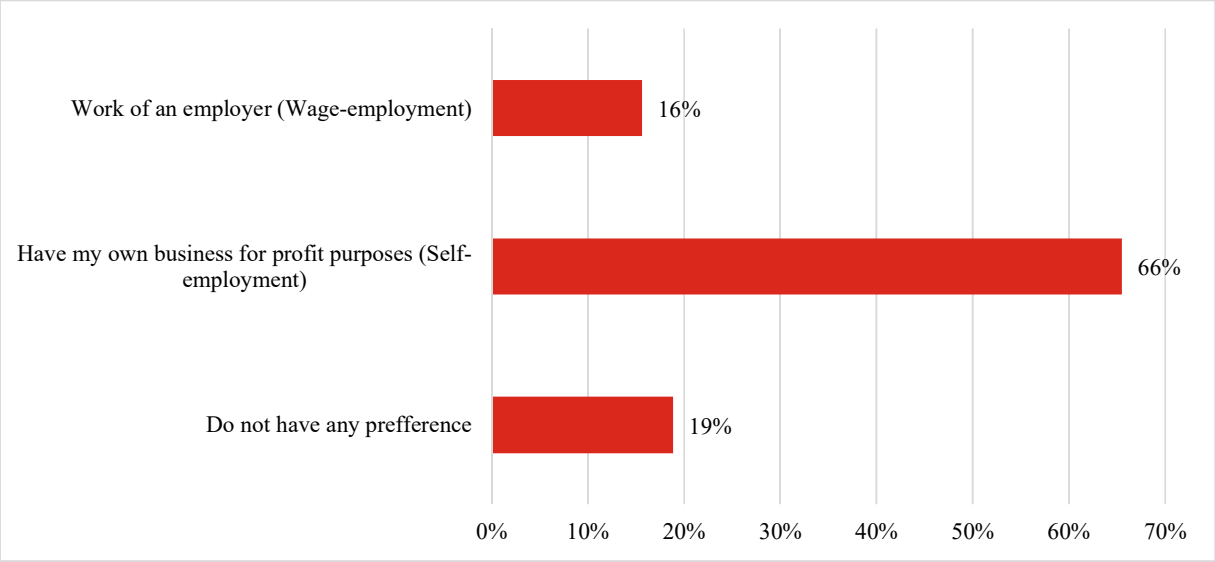
21-years-old boy, FGD, Shkoder

In FGDs with working youths, it is observed a stark contrast in working conditions based on the specific skills possessed by the individuals. Those with vocational education and ICT skills reported significantly better job conditions compared to their counterparts.

Participants who had undergone vocational education or possessed ICT skills found themselves in favorable positions within the job market. They expressed satisfaction with their employment situations, citing good working conditions, reasonable working hours, and adequate compensation. These individuals often found themselves in demand due to the scarcity of workers with their specialized skills, leading to better opportunities for employment and advancement.

Conversely, participants without vocational education or ICT skills faced greater challenges in the job market. Many reported working long hours, often in physically demanding or low-paying jobs. They expressed frustrations with exploitative labor practices, inadequate compensation, and limited opportunities for career growth.

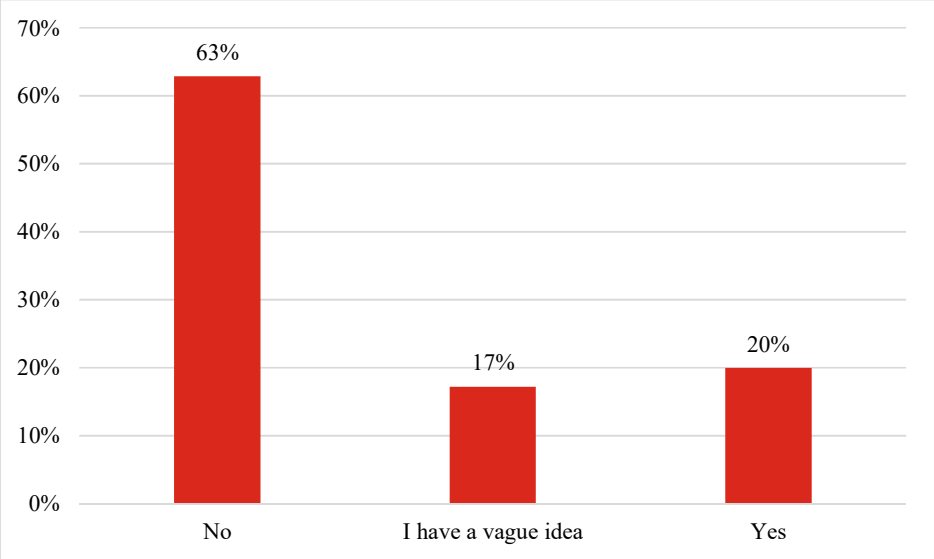
Figure 5. Career orientation between wage-employment and self-employment by municipality



The municipality with the highest entrepreneurial intentions was Shkoder and Diber with 70%, followed by Elbasan with 61%. While comparative shares of respondents preferred either wage-employment or were indifferent between the two options in Elbasan. In Shkoder, 17% preferred wage-employment while 17% were indifferent between self- and wage-employment. The second largest share of respondents in Diber were indifferent between self- and wage-employment (23%) while only 8% favoured wage-employment to self-employment. Overall, 66% of the respondents favoured a career in self-employment, followed by 19% who did not reveal any preference. The rest (16%) confirmed they would prefer wage-employment.

3.1.3. Green economy and green jobs (Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25)

Figure 6. Sample shares of respondents who had heard about the "green economy" and "green jobs"



The largest share of adolescents and youth had not heard before about the "green economy" and "green jobs" (63%) while only 20% were familiar with these terms and 17% had only a vague idea.

Even the FGDs uncovered a notable lack of awareness among various age groups and communities regarding the concepts of 'green economy' and 'green jobs'. These debates emphasize a deficiency in communication and education concerning environmental matters and the creation of long-lasting jobs. It highlights the necessity for enhanced educational initiatives to incorporate these crucial concepts into widespread consciousness, equipping the younger cohorts for an inevitably sustainable future.

"I'm not really sure what 'green economy' or 'green jobs' are. No one has talked about them in my school. Maybe it has something to do with the environment? I think jobs should help the planet, but I don't know how they work or what kind of jobs they would be."

14-year-old girl, FGD, Elbasan

"We've touched on environmental issues in class, but I haven't learned much about the green economy or green jobs specifically. I think these might be jobs that help reduce pollution or use less energy? It sounds like a good idea, but I wish we had more information on how we could get involved in such fields."

16-year-old youth, FGD, VET middle school, Diber

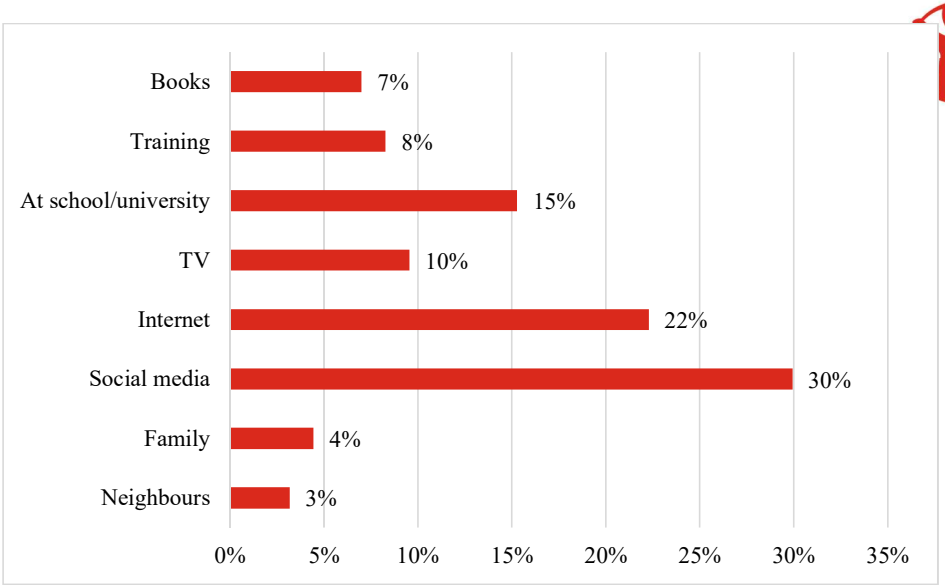
"I've heard the terms on TV, 'green economy' and 'green jobs,' but it's not very clear to me what they mean for my children's future. I want them to have stable jobs, and if these green jobs are important, I think schools should explain them better."

43-year-old mother in a parent FGD

"Green economy? Back in my day, we didn't have such terms. But from what I gather, it's about working in a way that doesn't harm the earth. I suppose it's important, given all the environmental changes we're facing. It's high time we start thinking about jobs that can make a difference for our grandchildren's world."

74-year-old community leader from the Egyptian community, FGD, Shkoder

Figure 7. Sources from where respondents had heard about the "green economy" and "green jobs"



The subjective feedback obtained from the FGDs aligns with the objective statistics about the sources of knowledge on the green economy and green jobs. Social media has become the main medium through which young people are introduced to these notions, representing 30% of their awareness. The internet, with the exception of social media, has a notable impact of 22%, suggesting that it is a crucial platform for sharing information about environmental subjects. Nevertheless, f**ormal education lags behind at a rate of 15%, indicating that schools and universities may not be giving priority to incorporating this subject into their curricula**. Conventional forms of media, such as television and literature, have significantly lower levels of influence, with only 10% and 7% respectively. Only a small number of individuals acquire knowledge about these topics through their social networks, such as family or neighbours. The distribution of information sources indicates the necessity for a more organized strategy to educating people about sustainable practices and job prospects in the green economy. This education should be provided in formal educational institutions as well as through conversations within families and communities.

"Recently, universities in Albania have incorporated lectures on green jobs and the green economy into the faculty of economics. However, there is currently a lack of specific courses that solely focus on the subject of green economy. Therefore, it is seen that there is a deficiency in prioritizing the inclusion of these themes in curricula. "

Brikene Dionizi, an expert in the field of green economy, Professor at University "Luigj Gurakuqi"

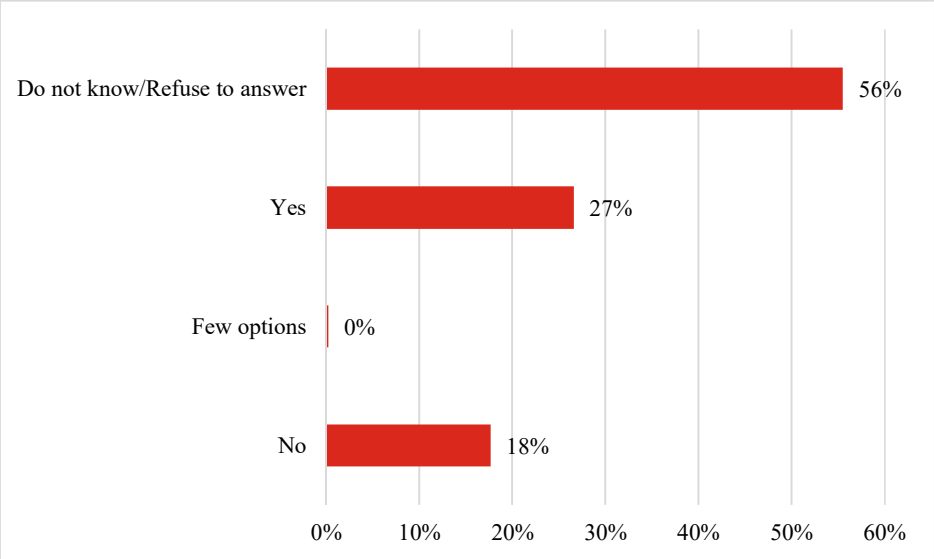
"I scrolled past a post about the green economy once on my Instagram feed. It had something to do with being kind to the environment with the jobs we choose. I don't really see much about it, but I guess it's because I follow more fashion and music accounts. It's not a common topic around here, and I've never heard about it at home or in school."

17-year-old girl, FGD, Diber

I've seen some stuff about green jobs and the environment online, like on websites when I do research for my projects. Our teachers mentioned it briefly in class too, saying that these jobs are part of the future. But it's not something we go into depth with, which I think we should, especially if it's going to be important for our futures."

16-year-old youth, FGD, middle school in Elbasan

Figure 8. Sample shares of respondents depending on their belief that they have options for engaging in "green economy" or "green jobs"



As illustrated in Figure 8, the largest share of the sample did not know or refused to answer on whether they believed that they had options for engaging in "green economy" or "green jobs" (56%) followed by those who believed that they had options in fact (27%). The majority of respondents are hesitant to engage in the "green economy" or "green jobs" due to various reasons. These include lack of awareness, limited education or exposure to environmental issues, economic constraints, perceived barriers, cultural or social factors, trust in institutions, and political factors.

Economic constraints may prioritize immediate financial needs over green initiatives, while perceived barriers may include lack of relevant skills or qualifications, limited job opportunities, or scepticism about the feasibility of green initiatives. Political polarization and lack of consensus on environmental policies may also contribute to scepticism. On the other hand, 18% of the respondents did not believe that they had no options for engaging in.

"I don't really know what a 'green job' is, and I've never thought I could have a chance at something like that. Where I come from, we're just trying to get by day to day. These things seem out of reach for someone like me. It would be nice to think there are options for us too in this green economy, but I don't see how it's possible when we're not even sure about our next meal."

18-year-old girl. Egyptian community, Shkoder

"I have always dreamed of having my own flower shop. I suppose that could be a green job, right? Working with plants and flowers, it's all natural. But I don't really know if that counts in the green economy everyone talks about. I'd love to learn more and see how my passion could fit into this bigger picture. I believe there are options out there; it's just about finding the right path to them."

17-year-old girl, Elbasan

"I've heard of the green economy, and I believe it's the future. I want my son to be a part of that future. The problem is, we don't have much information on how to get involved, or what kind of training he should get. I'm convinced there are opportunities in green jobs, and I'd support him to pursue that path, but we need guidance on where to start."

47-year-old parent, Diber

The focus group discussions reflect the quantitative data, showing a general uncertainty or lack of awareness about the 'green economy' and 'green jobs.' A significant portion of the participants, particularly those from vulnerable and excluded communities, feel disconnected from the opportunities that the green economy might offer. There is a sense of resignation among some, like the 18-year-old girl from the Egyptian community in Shkoder, w**ho feels that such options are beyond her reach due to her socioeconomic status. Conversely, there is a glimpse of aspiration and curiosity from others, like the 17-year-old with entrepreneurial dreams, who sees potential alignment with the green economy but lacks clear information.** Meanwhile, the perspective of the 47-year-old parent showcases a proactive yet frustrated view, recognizing the potential but facing a lack of resources and guidance to help his son pursue a career in this emerging field. These statements collectively underscore the need for targeted educational and support programs to bridge the knowledge gap and make the green economy an inclusive and accessible option for all, regardless of their background.

The findings from the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) regarding policies that promote youth employment and self-employment, with a particular focus on green jobs, indicate a strategic and proactive stance from various stakeholders. The Garancia Rinore Project, as discussed by

informants like Director Rozafa Zmijani, stands out as a significant policy initiative that is steering youth towards active participation in the labor market. While it is commendable for its comprehensive approach to engaging young people, especially those not in employment, education, or training (NEET), it appears there is a gap in its targeting.

Although the project casts a wide net, focusing on sectors such as Tourism and Energy and adopting elements of the dual system, it does not specifically prioritize green jobs. This omission suggests a missed opportunity to fully align with the global shift towards environmental sustainability and the growing sector of green jobs. The program's strength in creating a portal for youth engagement and its collaboration with various stakeholders are crucial steps. However, the KIIs reveal that to make the transition to a green economy, and to harness the full potential of youth in this sector, there is a need for targeted policies that specifically address green skills and jobs.

This gap highlights the importance of integrating a green perspective into broader employment initiatives. It underscores the need for targeted training, capacity building, and job creation strategies that not only cater to immediate employment needs but also consider the long-term sustainability and environmental impact of these jobs. Addressing this gap would not only empower the youth to be at the forefront of the green transition but also contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the local and national economy.

"The Garancia Rinore Project, underpinned by the support of the European Union, marks a significant stride towards integrating youth into the labor market, beginning with pilot programs in Tirana, Shkodër, and Vlorë. This initiative is set to support approximately 18,000 young individuals. It is specially designed to address the challenges faced by young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training. The scheme aims to offer young unemployed registered at employment offices within a four-month period an employment or training opportunity, with a special focus on sectors such as Tourism and Energy. The program also introduces elements of the dual system, emphasizing the proactive role of employers in training and hiring young people. To facilitate this initiative, a dedicated portal for the Garancia Rinore has been created, serving as an entry and information point for all young people. ***The commitment is strong from the Ministry of Finance and Economy to foster the right mechanisms and cooperation with all stakeholders, including businesses, employment offices, schools, professional centers, and local and central authorities."***

Rozafa Zmijanej, Director, Regional Directorate of the National Employment and Skills Agency, Shkodër

In the meantime, KIIs with NGO for PWDs and NGO for Women Rights underscore the persistent difficulties associated with achieving gender equality and promoting disability inclusion within the framework of the green economy. Notwithstanding advancements, women still encounter obstacles such as restricted availability of resources and prejudices in recruitment procedures.

Likewise, individuals with disabilities face challenges when it comes to accessing employment opportunities, such as instances of prejudice and inadequate provisions for their needs.

Nevertheless, there are encouraging advancements, specifically with the rise of remote work platforms for individuals possessing ICT skills, which offer fresh prospects for disabled individuals to engage in the labour market. These platforms possess the capacity to equalize opportunities and empower individuals with disabilities to exhibit their skills on a global scale, surpassing limitations imposed by geography.

"As the Director of a Women's Organization dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, I've been closely following developments in the green economy market. It is encouraging to see progress in sectors such as agriculture and agro-processing. However, progress toward gender equality in these fields is far from complete. Women still face numerous challenges, ranging from limited access to training and resources to ingrained biases in recruitment and advancement processes. Our organization is dedicated to advocating for gender-responsive policies and initiatives in the green economy. We believe that investing in women's skills, entrepreneurship, and leadership is more than just fairness; it is about realizing the full potential of long-term growth. We can create a more equitable and prosperous future for all by listening to women's voices and incorporating them into green jobs."
Denada Shpuza, Hapat e Lehte, NGO

"At our NGO we are edicated to advocating for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities (PWDs), I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities, both in the general labor market and within emerging sectors like the green economy. Historically, PWDs have encountered barriers to employment, including discrimination, lack of accommodations, and limited access to vocational training and skill development programs. However, amidst these challenges, we are beginning to see promising trends that offer new opportunities for PWDs to participate in the workforce. In particular, PWDs with ICT skills are leveraging online platforms such as Feverr and Upwork to find remote work opportunities and work from the comfort of their homes. This represents a significant shift in the employment landscape, especially in countries like Albania where infrastructure and policies for the recruitment of PWDs are still lacking.

The emergence of remote work platforms has the potential to level the playing field for PWDs, allowing them to showcase their skills and talents on a global scale without the barriers traditionally associated with physical workplaces. By harnessing the power of technology, PWDs can overcome geographical constraints and access a wider range of job opportunities in various sectors, including the green economy.

As advocates for disability rights and inclusion, it is imperative that we recognize and support these new trends in employment. We must work collaboratively with governments, businesses, and civil society organizations to create an enabling environment that fosters the inclusion of PWDs in remote work platforms and ensures equal access to economic opportunities for all individuals, regardless of disability status."

Saimir Beqiri, PWDs NGO

Figure 9 illustrates the answers to the question regarding the choice of a green job profile that they would prefer to work for. This question was arranged as a list of options with an open-ended option 'other' where respondents could provide their own feedback. As this Figure suggests, the majority of respondents (24%) preferred to work as a "Senior Agricultural Technician." Other green jobs profiles that emerged as preferences of the adolescents and youth surveyed, were "Senior Climate Change Technician" (11%) and "Supervisor for conservation/preservation" (8%), and "monitoring supervisor" (12%). All these jobs are characterized by a salary above the average re**ference salary.**

The highest percentage of interest lies in 'Senior Agricultural Technician' roles. This suggests a recognition of the importance of agriculture in the green economy and a willingness to engage in jobs that support sustainable farming practices.

A notable portion of respondents do not know about or refuse to answer regarding green jobs. This indicates a significant gap in awareness or interest, which could be due to a lack of accessible information or education about the green economy and its associated careers.

Jobs such as 'Senior Climate Change Technician' and 'Monitoring Supervisor' are of interest to respondents. This may reflect a growing consciousness of climate change issues and an understanding of the need for specialized skills to address environmental challenges.

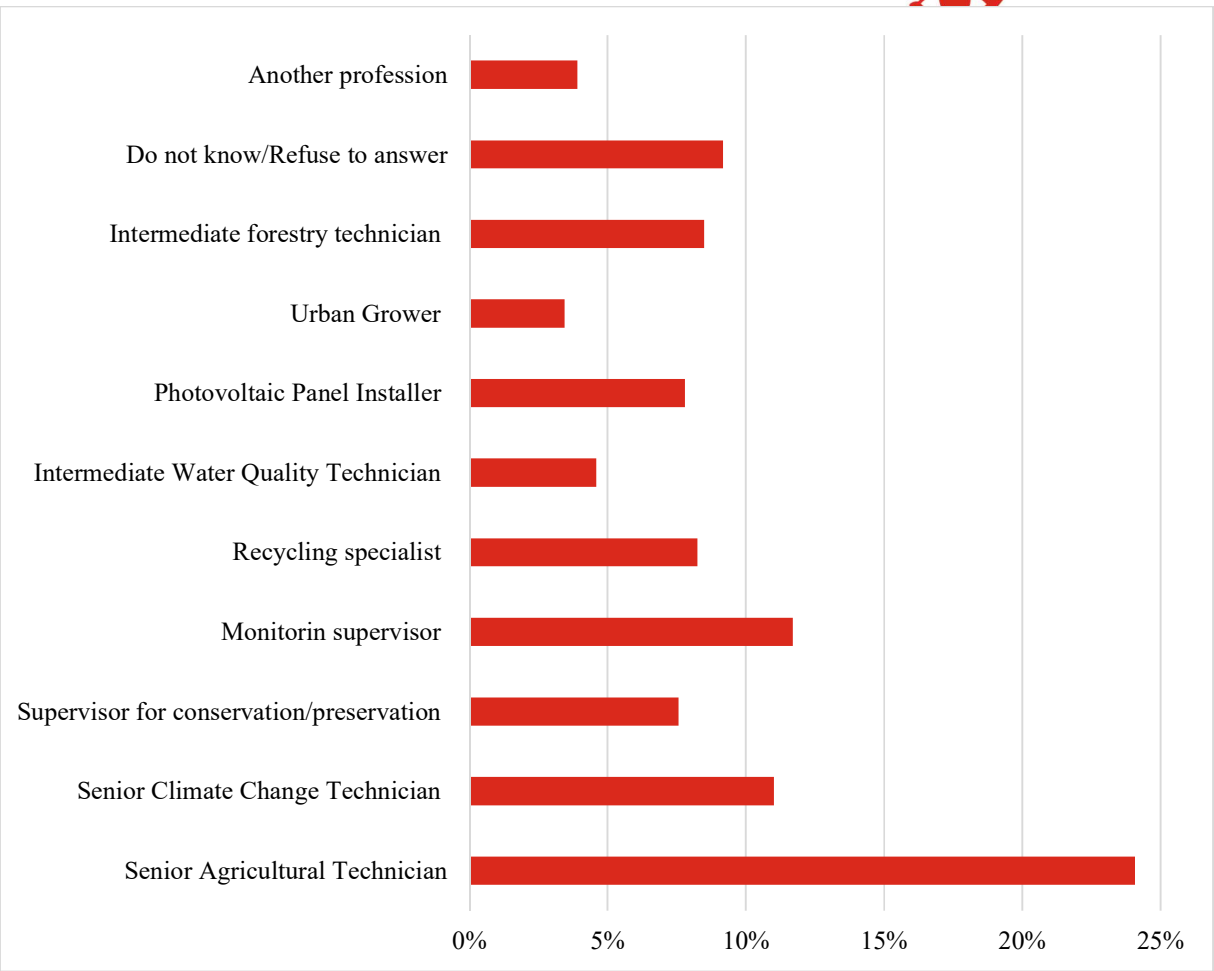
There is a spread of interest across various jobs, which points to a diverse set of aspirations and perhaps a need for varied educational programs to cater to these interests.

The mention of salary levels (high pay, above average, etc.) alongside certain jobs suggests that economic incentives are a significant factor in job preference. This could be an important consideration for policy makers and educators when promoting green jobs.

The interest in technical and specialized roles like 'Photovoltaic Panel Installer' and 'Intermediate Water Quality Technician' underscores a potential demand for targeted vocational training programs.

While not directly shown in the data, if the sample is reflective of a diverse demographic, the variability in job preferences could also indicate differences in how green jobs are perceived across gender lines and different communities, which can inform targeted outreach strategies.

Figure 9. Sample shares of respondents regarding their "green jobs" preferences



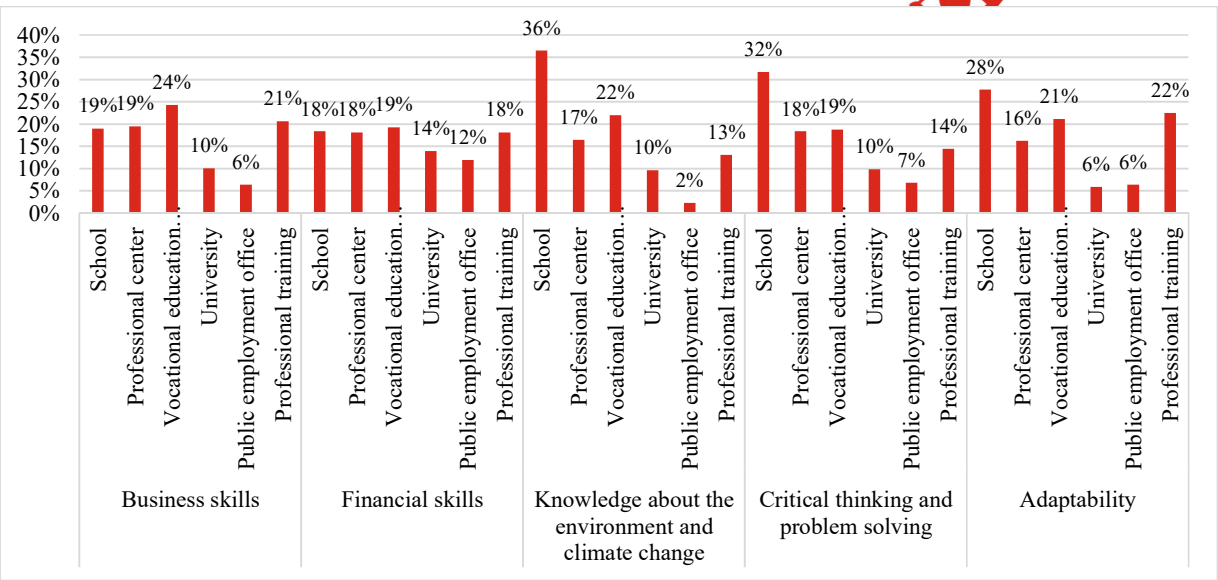
Note: Senior Agricultural Technician (Studies commercial plants, animals and cultivation techniques to improve the productivity and sustainability of farms and agricultural industries) (Salary above reference salary average.); Senior Climate Change Technician (Research, monitor and store data on climate change as well as guide manufacturers/traders on the best available techniques for developing their business facility) (Salary above the reference salary average.); Supervisor for conservation/preservation (Ensures the protection of the environment and natural resources through the improvement of production methods) (Salary above the average reference salary.); Monitoring supervisor (Ensures the protection of the environment and the maintenance of production through visual evidence, performing tests, improving methodologies) (Salary above the average reference salary.); Recycling specialist (Ensures environmental protection, takes care of waste management (different types) from production, manufacturing, and marketing processes.) (Salary from medium to high above the reference salary.); Intermediate Water Quality Technician (Ensures that minimum water quality standards and human safety are met and minimizes harm to the environment. Ensures that standards and other compliance requirements are met in three areas - ground water, surface water (lakes , rivers, ponds, etc.) and drinking water.) (Medium to high salary above the reference salary.); Photovoltaic Panel Installer (Mount and perform installation of solar panels on rooftops or other areas such as ground-mounted solar panels. A growing industry.) (High Pay.); Urban Grower (Responsible for growing food in a city. Green terraces can provide locally sourced food that helps protect the environment by reducing the use of pesticides, fossil fuels and other resources that are often used to grow and transport market food from farms) (High Pay); Intermediate forestry technician (Advise ways and implement techniques for planting, growing, harvesting and maintaining forests for timber production. To ensure balance and sustainable development, foresters can be involved in multi-purpose forest production, sustainable management of forests and reforestation of local forests.) (Salary above the average reference salary.)

The FGDs reflect the quantitative data showing a lean towards green jobs that are perceived to have a higher pay scale, such as Senior Agricultural Technician, Senior Climate Change Technician, and Monitoring Supervisor. These roles appear to resonate with the youth, perhaps due to the economic security they represent. However, there is a clear knowledge gap among the respondents regarding the specifics of these jobs, their roles, and the pathways to entering these fields. This suggests an opportunity for educational programs to provide more information on green careers, delineating the skills required and the impact these jobs have on sustainability. Despite the interest in well-paying green jobs, the lack of detailed understanding could be a barrier to actively pursuing these careers. Tailored awareness campaigns and enhanced curricula that connect green job opportunities to existing interests and courses, like the tailoring course mentioned by the 20-year-old respondent, could bridge this gap and empower the youth to engage with the green economy more effectively.

"In the tailoring course, they don't really talk about green jobs, but I've heard people mention them. Jobs like Monitoring Supervisor or Conservation Supervisor sound like they are good for the earth and they pay well. But I don't really know what the work involves. I wonder if there's something in green jobs for someone like me, who's into tailoring."

20-year-old girl from the Egyptian community in Shkoder, attending a VET center for tailoring

Figure 10. Sample shares of respondents regarding beliefs about skills that they think they need to be EMPLOYED in their preferred green jobs, and where do they believe they can get these skills.



In terms of skills needed for wage-employment in their preferred "green jobs", respondents have identified the main providers where they believe they can get these skills, **the majority have replied that schools, professional education, and universities are the main sources to get these skills.**

Knowledge about the environment and climate change is recognized as the most important skill needed for green jobs, with the highest percentage of respondents believing they can gain this knowledge from vocational education centers.

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills also rank highly, with schools and vocational education centers being seen as the main sources to develop these skills.

Adaptability is another valued skill, with schools being the primary place where respondents feel **they can develop this ability.**

Business and financial skills are seen as less critical for green jobs compared to the other listed skills, but there is still a significant share of respondents who believe that these skills are best developed at universities and vocational education centers.

"As a green business owner, I've realized the importance of financial literacy. It's not just about our bottom line; it's about understanding the economic ecosystem we're part of. We need training programs that focus on the financial aspects unique to green businesses, such as navigating subsidies and capitalizing on environmental tax benefits. There's a gap in our knowledge when it comes to leveraging these for business growth."

O.L, Owner of a factory with renewable energy in Shkodra.

"The green economy is not business as usual; the rules are different here. I find myself needing to constantly stay updated on market trends and regulatory changes. A training course in strategic business management within the green sector would be invaluable to entrepreneurs like me."

Nensi Kastrati, Represantative of medical plants enterprise in Shkodër.

"I'm studying sustainable agriculture, and I can see there's a whole world of business behind it. We're learning about crops and the environment, but not how to manage an agricultural business or market our produce. Courses on these topics would really help us get ahead after graduation." E., Student at a vocational school in Elbasan.

"I want to start my own recycling business, but I don't know the first thing about managing finances. We need more practical business training, maybe even mentorship programs where we can learn from successful green entrepreneurs."

A., a vocational school student from Shkodër.

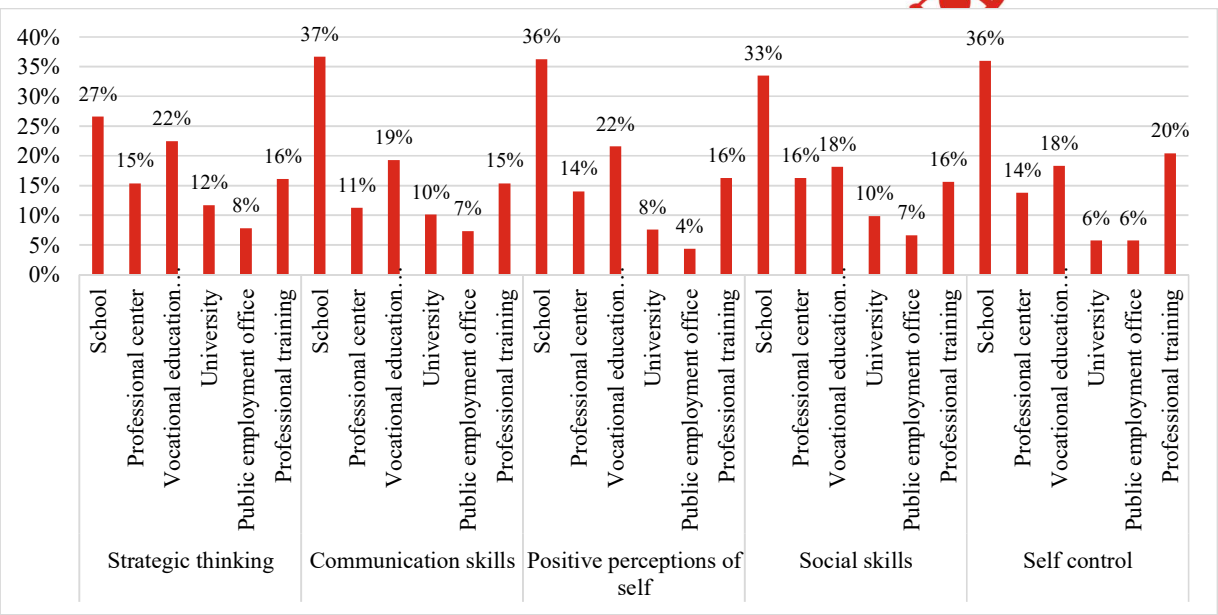
"I'm here to gain technical skills, but there's also a need for soft skills and business know-how. Most of us plan to be self-employed, and without understanding the business side of things, our technical skills won't be enough."

K., trainee at a vocational training center specializing in solar panel installation, Shkodër

"I see a lot of my peers dropping out because they can't see a clear career path after training. If there were more focus on entrepreneurship and financial management as part of our vocational training, it would give us the confidence to see these skills as a pathway to owning a business."

D., participant in a vocational program

These findings highlight the critical role of financial literacy in the green economy sector and its impact on business owners and vulnerable youth.



The skills featured in the chart are strategic thinking, communication skills, positive perceptions of self, social skills, and self-control.

Strategic Thinking is perceived as most effectively developed at universities, followed by professional education centers and schools. This suggests that respondents associate higher education with the ability to plan and make decisions that have long-term implications, which is vital for green jobs.

Communication Skills are seen as crucial across the board but are most associated with professional education centers. This could indicate an understanding that effective communication is not only theoretical but also practical, and hence the leaning towards centers that combine practical training with education.

Interestingly, the largest percentage believe that schools are the place to develop Positive Perceptions of Self. This might reflect the role of schools in shaping early self-concept and the recognition of the need for confidence and a positive self-image in the workplace.

Social Skills are also seen as most developed in schools, which may be due to the social nature of school environments where students interact with a diverse peer group.

Like with social skills, schools are viewed as the primary source for developing self-control. This suggests that respondents believe the discipline required in school settings is conducive to developing self-regulation.

3.1.4. Climate change

In terms of considering climate change as problematic, the largest share of respondents consider it as a 'very serious problem' and as 'somehow a serious problem'. On the other hand, the shares of the sample which believed that climate change was 'not a serious problem' or 'not a problem at all' were 14% and 10% respectively.

Figure 11. How problematic do you consider climate change (long-term variations of temperature and weather trends) for your and your family's health?

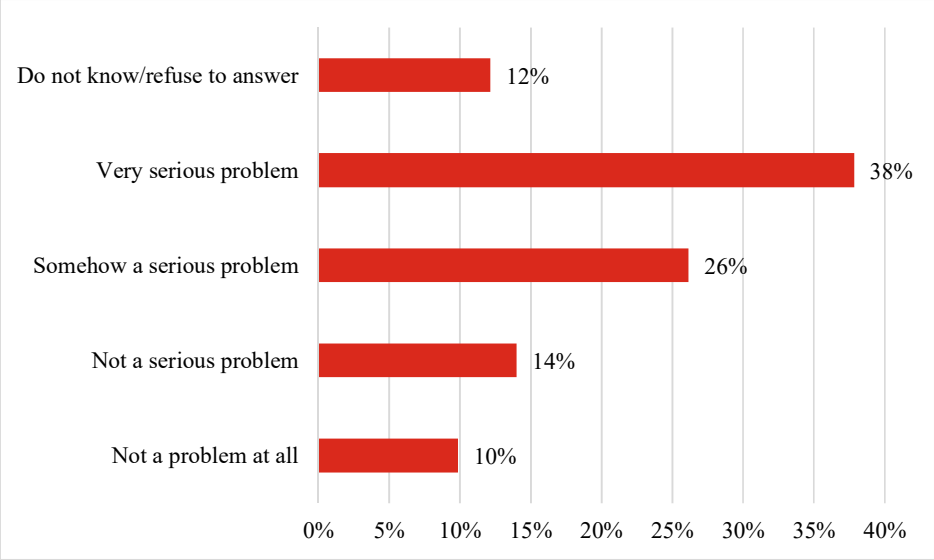


Figure 12. How problematic do you consider air pollution in the area where you live for your and your family's health?

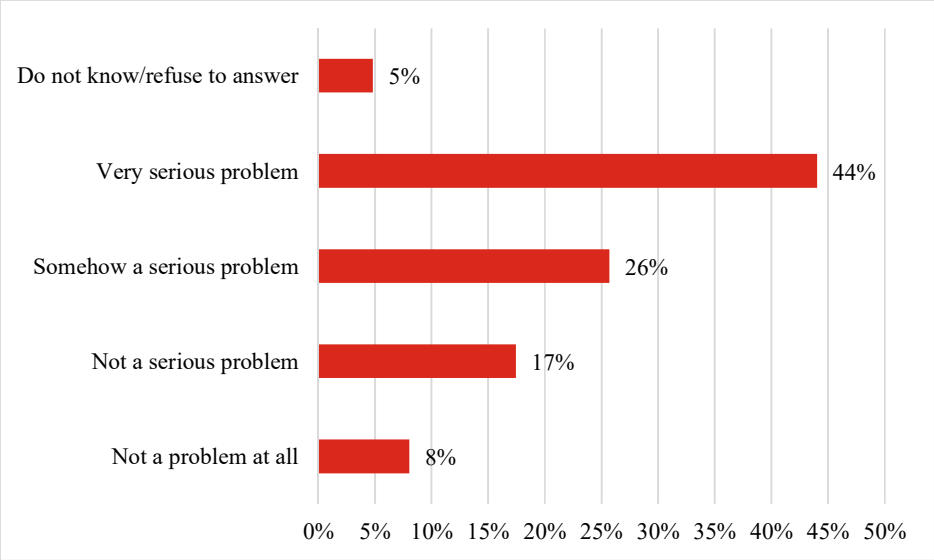


Figure 13 shows that the two main concerns regarding the energy issues in the respondents' households were in terms of rising energy costs (51%) and energy security, including the availability of electricity (18%). Figure 14 reveals that that air pollution (30%) and soil pollution (20%) are the main concerns regarding environment.

Figure 13. Main concern in your family regarding energy

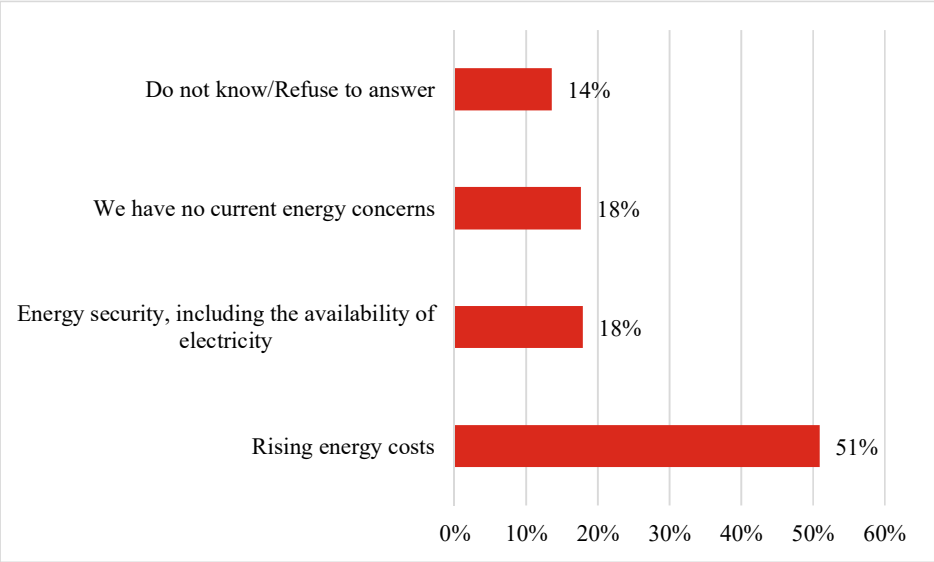
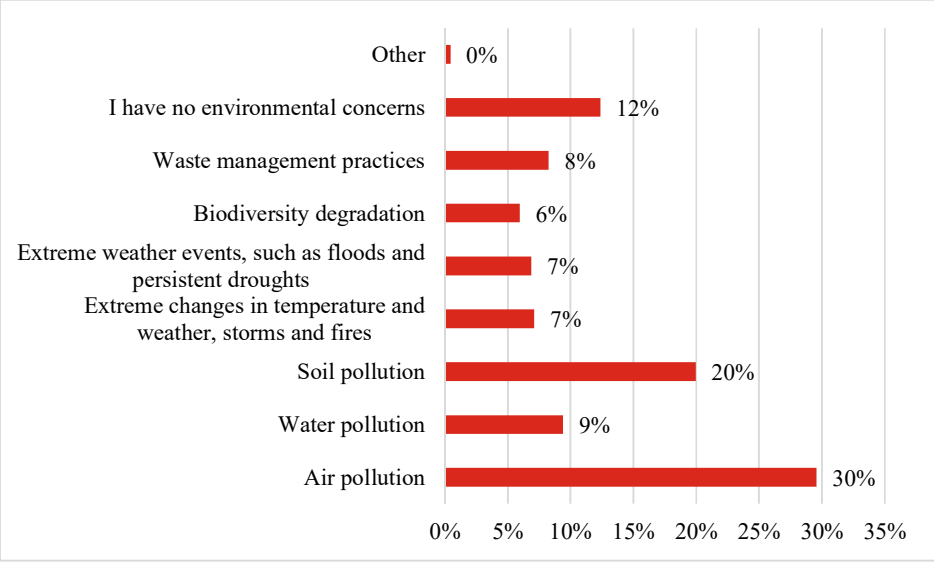


Figure 14. Main concern regarding the environment



The findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs) reveal a palpable concern among the youth about the effects of climate change on health. Participants across different age groups and educational backgrounds express varying levels of awareness and concern, with many viewing it as a serious issue impacting their immediate environment and personal well-being. The discussions highlight a need for greater education on the topic, as well as a call for more significant action from both individuals and authorities to address the climate-related challenges that directly affect young people's futures. These insights from FGDs underscore the importance of incorporating climate change into educational curricula and public discourse to empower youth with knowledge and tools to tackle these pressing issues.

"Seeing the changes in our weather and how it affects our family's farming, I'm worried. Climate change isn't just something I read about; it's real, and it's happening to us. I think it's a very serious problem that threatens our health and our future."

18-year-old girl, Maqellare

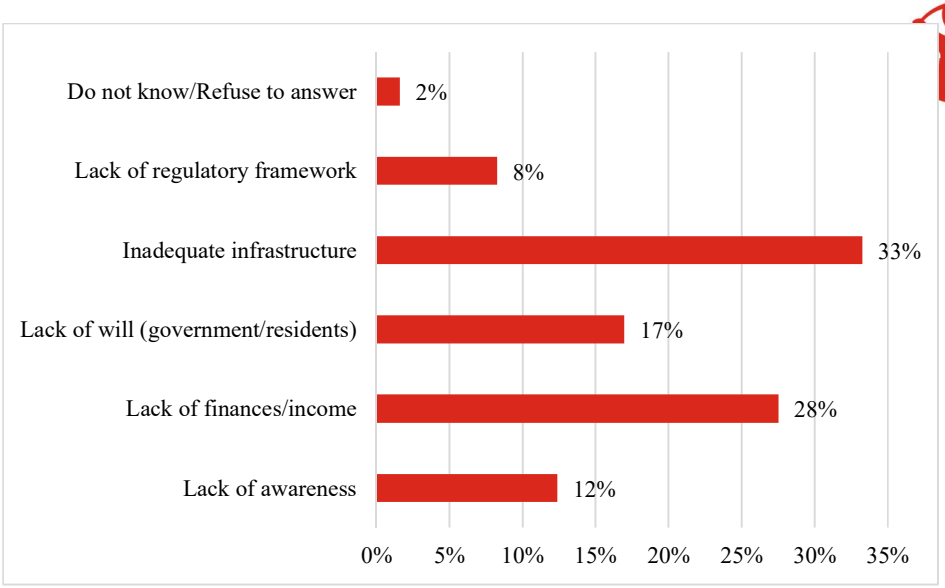
"I work with new technologies in renewable energy at the VET center, and I can see there's a lot of potential to address climate change. But it's frustrating because not everyone sees the urgency—it's definitely a serious problem for our health, especially in urban areas where pollution is worse."

23-year-old male participant at a VET Center, Shkoder

"In school, we discuss how climate change can lead to health problems, like heat stress or diseases spreading. Some of my friends don't think it's a serious issue, but I do. We're learning how we can discover ways to make a positive difference in addressing this critical issue."

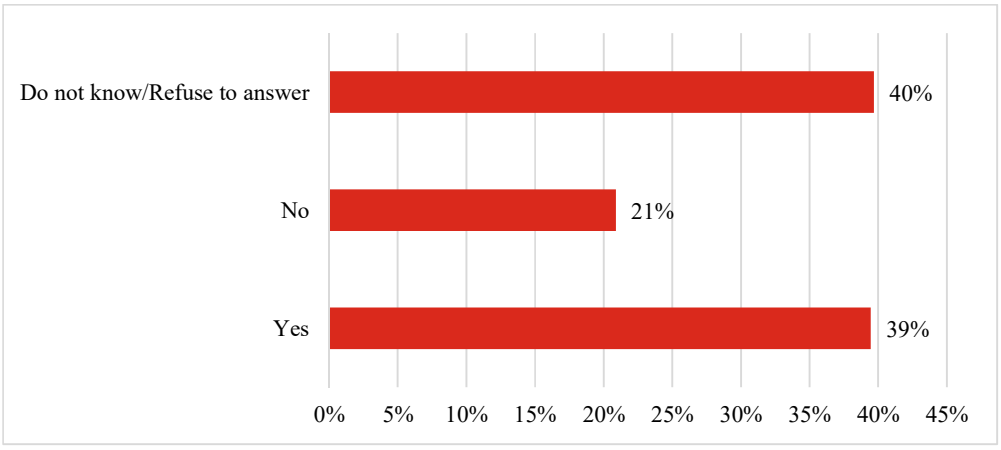
16-year-old boy at a VET School, Shkodër

Figure 15. Biggest obstacle for the economy of your city/village to make the transition to a green economy



Regarding perceptions about what is the main obstacle for the economy of their city/village to make the transition to a green economy, the majority of the respondents agreed that inadequate infrastructure (33%), lack of finances/income (28%), and lack of will (17%).

Figure 16. Opportunity to create a small business in the field of green economy with the aim of generating income



In terms of self-employment, the majority of respondents (39%) agreed that they think there are opportunities to start their small business in any field of the green economy. Examples would be businesses in organic farming, distribution/installation of solar energy systems, collection and sale of second-hand clothing, collection and recycling of e-waste, soap production, organic ovens, agro-forestry, production of efficient stoves and clean, production of briquettes/pellets, production

of bio-gas, production of natural fertilizer, etc.). A significant share of the respondents (40%) answered that they do not know or refused to answer at all regarding whether they believed that opportunities existed to have their own enterprise in the field of green economy.

Similar to wage-employment, the majority of respondents agreed that the main institutions where they believed they could get hard and soft skills were at school and in vocational education trainings.

"To be honest, I'm not really sure if I could start a business in the green economy. I mean, I hear a lot about sustainability and environmental stuff, but I don't know how that translates into a business that makes money. It's not something we've talked about much at school. Maybe there's an opportunity there, but I feel like I'd need more information to really see it."

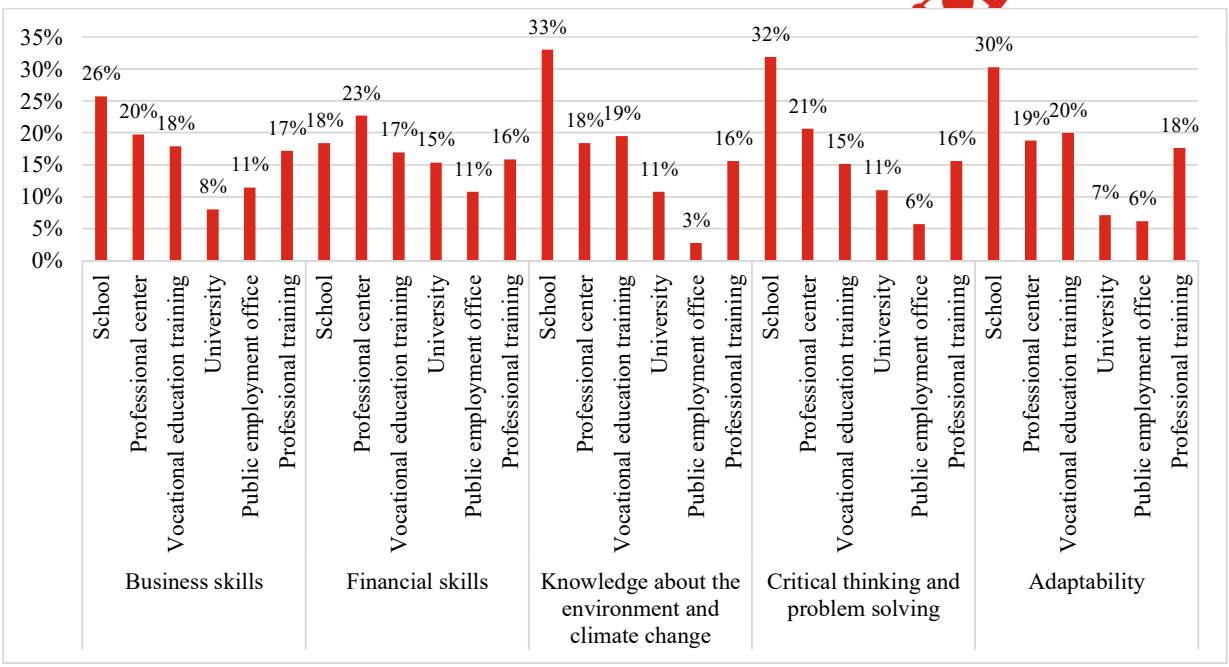
17-year-old girl, VET school

"I think there's a chance to do something with a green business, but I'm not too clear on the details. Like, I know we need to do more for the planet, and there are businesses that are all about that. But how do you start one? What do you even sell or do? I guess I'm saying yes, there's probably an opportunity, but I have no idea where to begin."

19-year-old boy, middle school

These statements reflect the findings of the quantitative data and FGDs, illustrating a general sense of ambiguity and lack of detailed knowledge about the green economy and its potential for small business creation among youth. There's an underlying optimism about the possibilities that the green economy may hold, yet it is tempered by a need for more education, resources, and guidance to navigate this emerging field.

Figure 17. Sample shares of respondents regarding beliefs about skills that they think they need to get SELF-EMPLOYED in their preferred green jobs, and where do they believe they can get these skills.



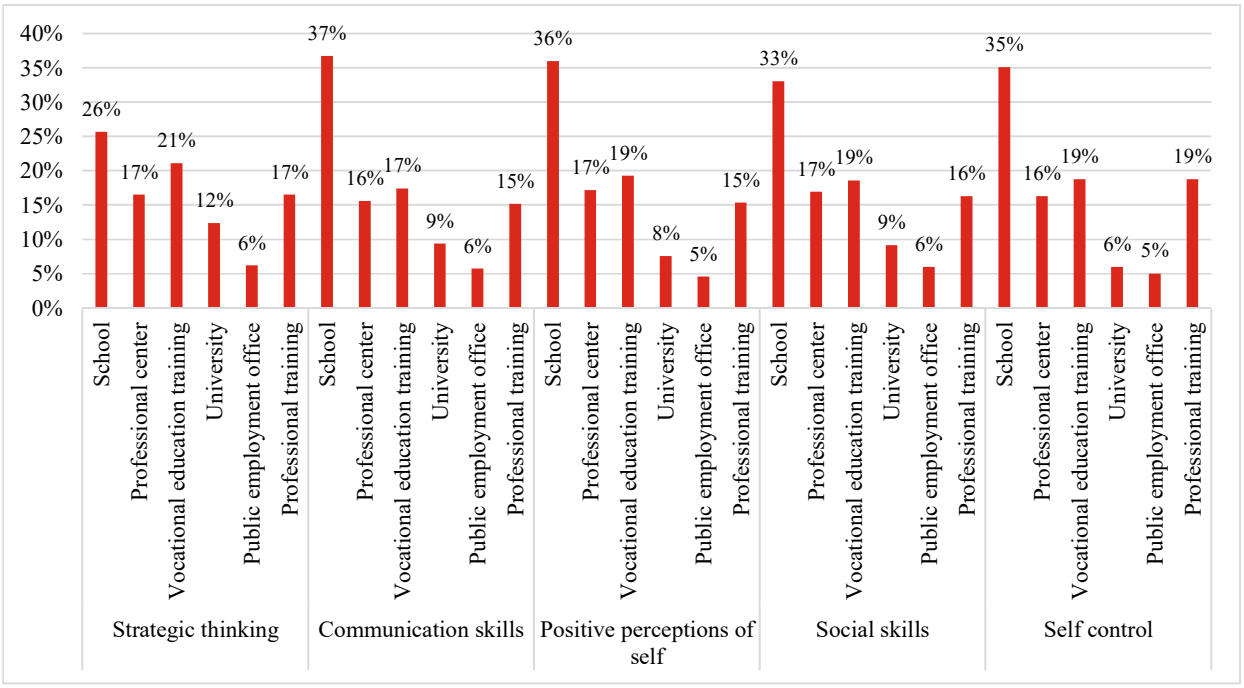


Figure 17 that show youths' beliefs about the skills needed for employment and self-employment in green jobs, and the institutions from which they believe they can acquire these skills.

Knowledge about the environment and climate change is seen as the most critical skill across both employment and self-employment, with vocational education centers being the most favored institution for acquiring this knowledge.

Strategic thinking and communication skills are highly valued for self-employment, more so than for wage-employment. This suggests that respondents believe entrepreneurial activities in the green economy require strong planning and interpersonal skills. Universities and vocational education centers are seen as the primary sources for developing these skills.

Social skills, positive perceptions of self, and self-control are considered more important for self-employment. Schools are believed to play a significant role in developing these personal attributes, which could be due to the formative nature of school experiences on personal development.

Business and financial skills are recognized as necessary for both employment types, but there's a stronger emphasis on these skills for self-employment. This is understandable considering that running one's own business requires a good grasp of financial management and business operations.

Critical thinking and problem-solving are deemed essential for both employment types, with vocational education centers and schools considered as the main sources for these skills.

Adaptability is consistently acknowledged as an important skill for the green economy, aligning with the recognition that this field is rapidly evolving and workers must be able to adapt to new technologies and regulations.

3.2 Findings on the business survey

3.2.1. Demographic Data & Businesses Characteristics

This section consists of the data analysis of the quantitative survey done among green business owners in the three selected municipalities: Shkoder, Elbasan and Diber. The sample size for each municipality ranged from 36 to 90 depending on the resident population size of each of these municipalities, resulted in the last Population and Housing Census 2011. The entrepreneurs aged 19 to 35 years old represent 26% of the sample followed by the age group 36 to 55 years old by 53% and 20% of them were aged 56 to 71 years old. Sex distribution of respondents was 34% females and 66% were males.

The majority of the respondents had finished a bachelor degree (33%) followed by those with a general and professional high school, 21% and 19% respectively.

Figure 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

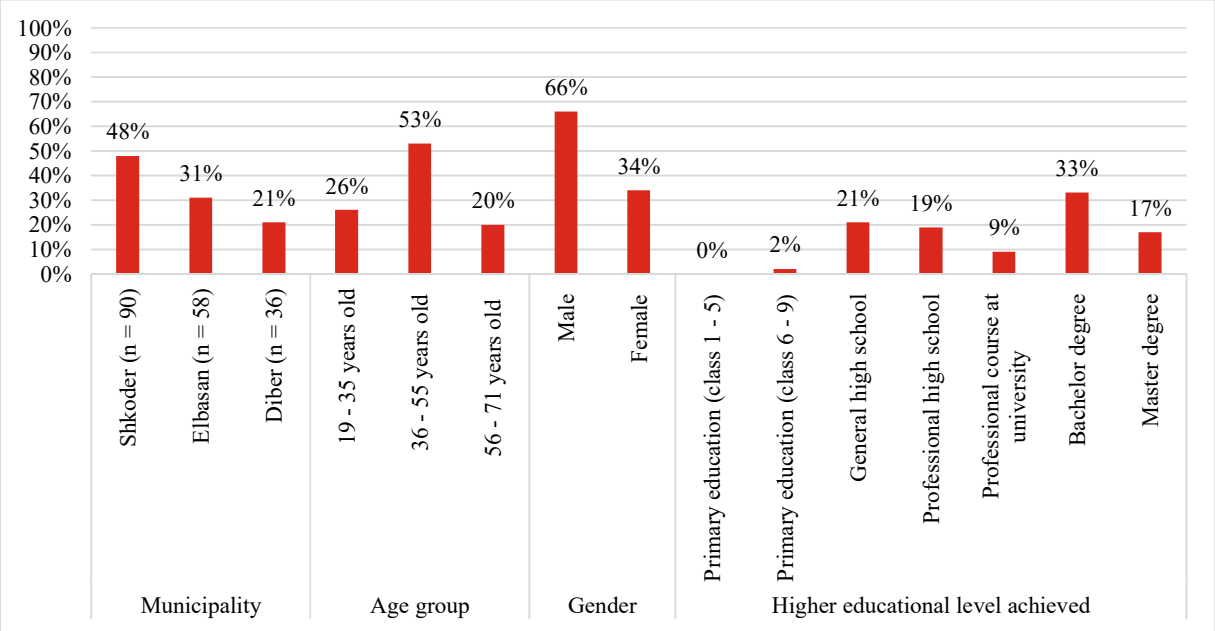


Table 3.2 Socio-demographic characteristics by Municipality

		Shkoder		Elbasan		Diber	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Age group	19 - 35 years old	8	19			4	44
	36 - 55 years old	24	57	22	76	5	56
	56 - 71 years old	10	24	7	24		
Gender	Male	24	57	23	79	5	44
	Female	18	43	6	21	4	56
Higher educational level achieved	Primary education (class 1 - 5)						
	Primary education (class 6 - 9)	1	2				
	General high school	14	33	1	3	4	44
	Professional high school	10	24	4	14	2	22
	Professional course at university			3	10		
	Bachelor degree	14	33	15	52		
	Master degree	3	7	6	21	3	33
Number of workers	Less than 10	14	33			8	78
	More than 10	28	67	29	100	2	22
Sector of the company	Materials/ waste management/ water management	2	5	1	3		
	Transport	3	6				
	Production/Manufacturing	20	48	11	38	1	11
	Construction	3	6				
	Prevention of pollution and cleaning of environment	1	2	4	14	2	22
	Trade in goods and services (retail/wholesale)	3	6	1	3		
	Renewable energy or energy efficiency	1	2	3	10		
	Agriculture and conservation of resources	9	21	10	35	6	67
Main activities of the company	Transport	4	10	3	10		
	Dairy and sub-products	4	10	3	10	1	11
	Wood products	2	5	1	3		
	Construction materials	4	10	1	3		
	Tobacco	3	7	3	10		
	Canned fish	2	5	2	7		

	Bio fruits and vegetables	4	10	1	3	2	22
	Seeds, sowing, harvesting of seedlings, irrigation	4	10	1	3		
	Canned fruit and vegetables	2	5	3	10	1	11
	Grinding corn and grains	2	5	3	10	1	11
	Bees	3	7	1	3	1	11
	Medicinal plants	2	5	3	10	1	11
	Decorative plants	2	5	3	10	1	11
	Agro producer	4	10	1	3	1	11
Has environment certificate	Yes	7	17	1	3		
	No	35	83	28	97	9	100
	Total	42	53	29	36	10	13

Table x presents socio-demographic characteristics and various indicators related to employment and the green economy across three municipalities in Albania: Shkoder, Elbasan, and Diber. Across all municipalities, the majority of individuals within the labor force fall within the age group of 36 to 55 years old, comprising 57% in Shkoder, 76% in Elbasan, and 56% in Diber. This indicates a workforce skewed towards middle-aged individuals, which may have implications for succession planning and skills development initiatives within the green economy.

In terms of gender representation, there is notable variation between municipalities. While Shkoder and Diber exhibit a relatively balanced gender distribution, with 57% and 44% male workers respectively, Elbasan presents a significant gender disparity, with 79% male workers compared to only 21% female workers. This gender gap may reflect underlying socio-cultural dynamics and warrants further investigation into potential barriers faced by women in accessing green job opportunities.

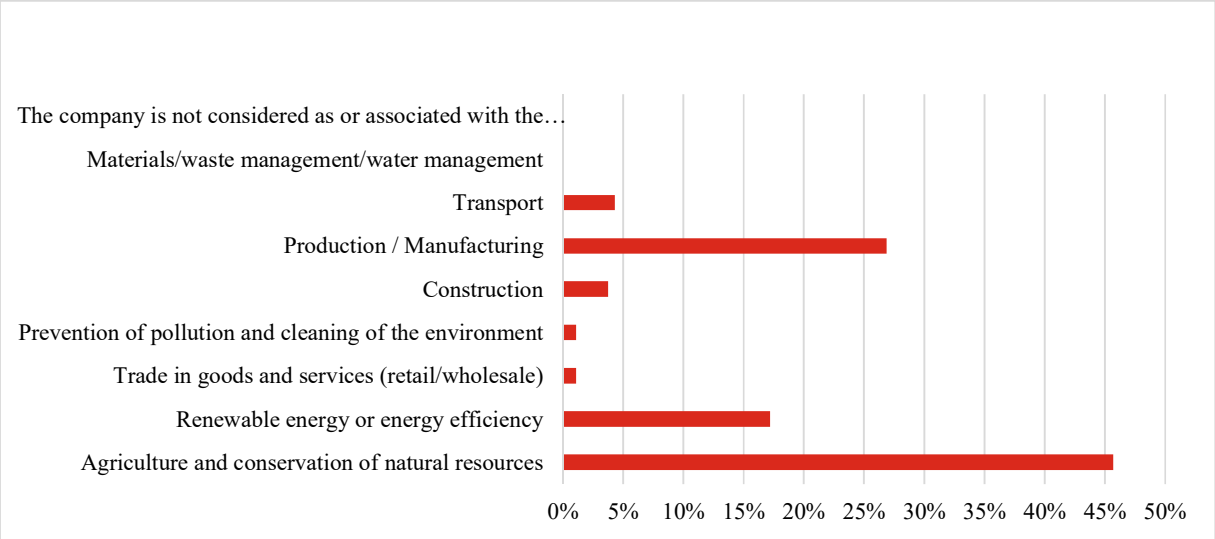
Educational attainment varies across municipalities, with differences observed in the distribution of workers holding higher educational qualifications. Shkoder has a relatively balanced distribution across educational levels, with notable proportions holding bachelor's and master's degrees. Elbasan stands out with a higher proportion of workers holding bachelor's degrees (52%) compared to Shkoder and Diber. However, Diber exhibits a lower overall educational attainment level, with a significant proportion of workers having completed only primary or professional high school education.

The majority of companies across all municipalities employ fewer than 10 workers, indicating a prevalence of small-scale enterprises within the green economy. Notably, Elbasan shows a higher proportion of companies employing more than 10 workers compared to Shkoder and Diber, suggesting a greater concentration of larger enterprises in this municipality. Regarding sectoral distribution, agriculture emerges as a prominent sector across all municipalities, underscoring the importance of this sector in driving green economic activities.

The presence of environment certificates varies among municipalities, with a relatively low prevalence across the board. Shkoder and Elbasan exhibit a higher proportion of companies

without environment certificates, indicating potential gaps in environmental compliance and sustainability practices. In contrast, Diber shows a higher prevalence of environment certificates among companies, suggesting a greater emphasis on environmental stewardship in this municipality.

Figure 2. Sector of the company



The largest share of the green businesses involved in this study were in 'agriculture and conservation of natural resources' and 'production or manufacturing'. Also 'renewable energy and energy efficiency' were a significant share as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 3. Main activities of the company

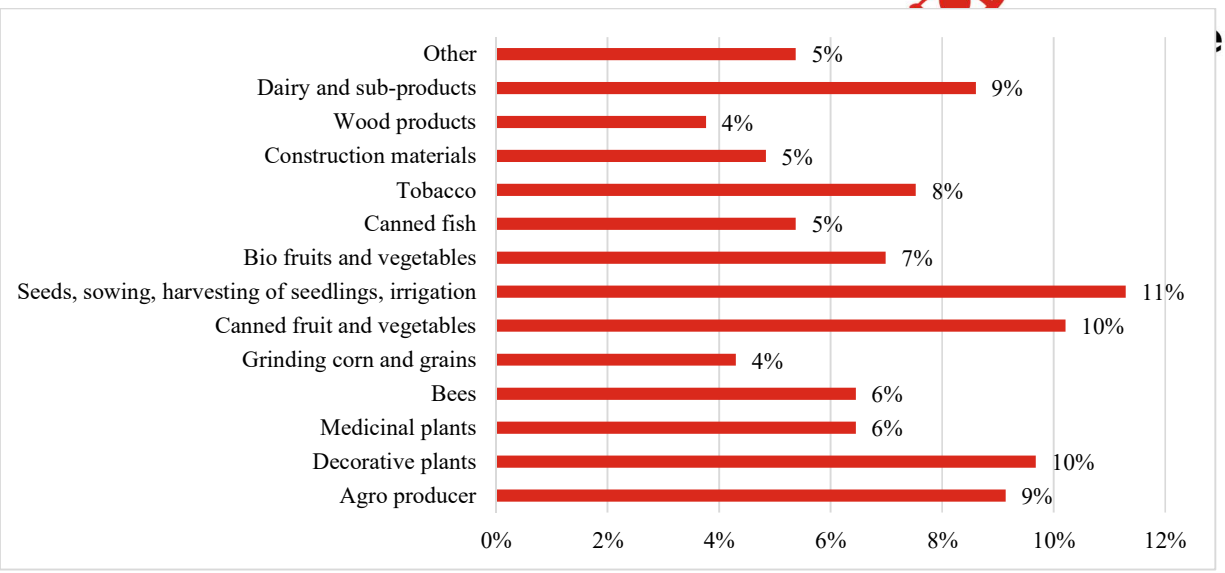


Figure 3 illustrates the main activities of these green businesses that were included in this study. Their main activities consist of 'seeds, sowing, harvesting, and irrigation', 'canned fruit and vegetables', cultivation of 'decorative plants' and 'medicinal plants', 'dairy and sub-products', and 'tobacco'.

"In Diber, our largest factories, which are primarily engaged in agro-processing, have shown considerable success. This sector's growth, however, contrasts with the forestry businesses, which are limited in number and operational capacity, largely due to environmental degradation and a shortage of specialized labor. On a brighter note, we've seen a rise in green initiatives like agrotourism and the installation of solar panels. Additionally, the IT sector is attracting many of our youth, reflecting a diverse engagement with the green economy."

Agron Cara, Director of the Directorate of Agriculture, Forests, and Water Administration, Municipality of Diber

"This year, Elbasan has been proactive in steering towards a green economy, with a particular emphasis on agriculture. Being chosen for a pilot project to mitigate severe environmental pollution has reinforced our commitment to this direction. The agricultural sector has thrived, with substantial support in the form of consultancy and funding provided to approximately 1550 businesses. Nonetheless, it poses certain challenges for young entrepreneurs who must demonstrate business acumen to qualify for grants."

Shpetim Çullhaj, Agency of Forests, Agriculture, and Environment, Municipality of Elbasan

The key informant interviews from the Municipality of Diber and Elbasan reveal a strong and active engagement in the green economy, particularly within the realms of agriculture, renewable energy, and emerging sectors like agrotourism and IT. Agriculture plays a significant role in both Dibër and Elbasan, with a focus on sustainable farming practices, organic agriculture, and the production of high-value crops. This includes initiatives such as organic farming, permaculture, and agroecology, which prioritize environmental conservation and biodiversity while promoting local food systems. Agrotourism involves the integration of agricultural activities with tourism experiences, allowing visitors to engage in farm-based activities, culinary experiences, and rural hospitality. In regions like Dibër and Elbasan, agrotourism presents significant potential for economic development, as it leverages the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and agricultural traditions of the area to attract tourists. Agrotourism initiatives not only generate income for local farmers and rural communities but also contribute to preserving traditional farming practices and promoting sustainable tourism. The emergence of IT as a green economy sector signifies the importance of digital innovation and technology-driven solutions in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainability. In Dibër and Elbasan, IT initiatives may include the development of digital platforms for environmental monitoring, precision agriculture technologies, smart energy systems, and eco-friendly tourism applications. The Municipality of Diber representative details the success of agro-processing in Diber, while also acknowledging the environmental and labor challenges facing the forestry sector. The Municipality of Elbasan representative notes the adaptability of the region's economy, with new growth areas providing opportunities for youth involvement. On the other hand, outlines Elbasan's targeted efforts to address environmental concerns and bolster agricultural businesses through significant financial support and expert consultancy. He highlights the municipality's focused approach to nurturing a green economy, though he also points out the hurdles that young potential entrepreneurs face, underscoring **a need for them to gain business experience** to access available resources. These KIIs reflect a transition towards sustainable practices and a willingness t**o innovate and support green business ventures, albeit with an understanding of the ongoing challenges that must be addressed to ensure inclusive growth and participation, especially for the youth.**

"Considering the economic trends in agrotourism, it is imperative to revise the curriculum to include competencies related to organic and bio products, traditional Albanian production, energy and water conservation, and agricultural technology. Also, the curriculum should be updated to cover automation in agriculture, the use of digital irrigation systems, and measurement systems for parameters like temperature and humidity."

Diana Xhelili, National Agency of Education, Professional Training, and Qualifications.

Figure 4. Size of business in terms of employees

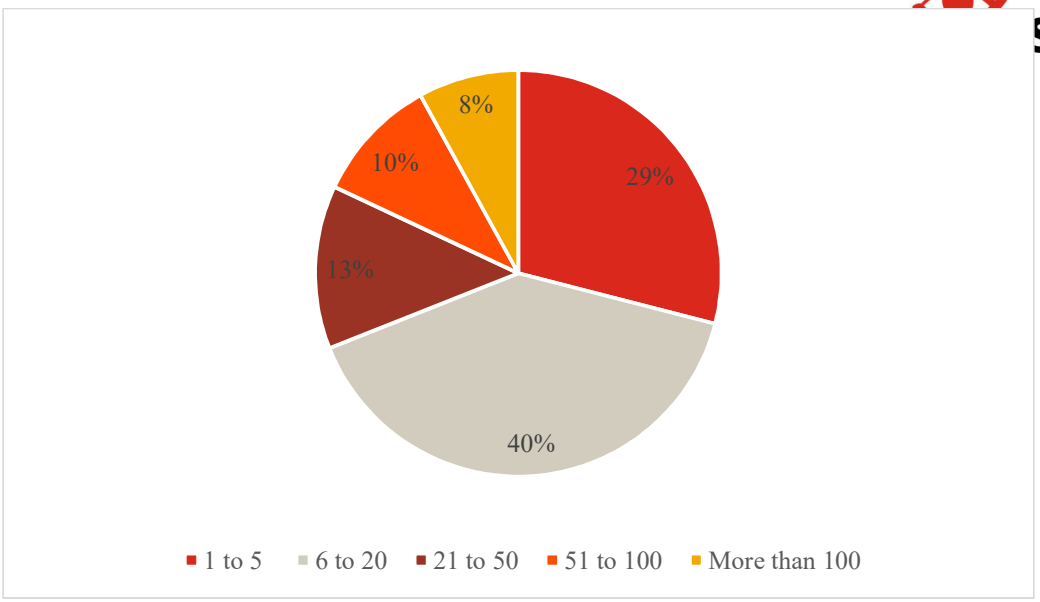


Figure 4 reveals that the main size of these green businesses was either with 1 to 5 workers or with 6 to 20 workers. This means that the sample consisted of mainly small and medium sized business.

3.2.3. Green economy and green jobs

When asked for the share of total workers that they consider as working in green jobs, the surveyed business owners indicated that they mainly (54%) consider 0 to 10% of their workers as working in green jobs, while only 20% of them consider the share of green jobs being from 11 to 60%, followed with 26% of them considering 61 to 100% of their workforce in green jobs.

Figure 5. Share of workers considered in green jobs

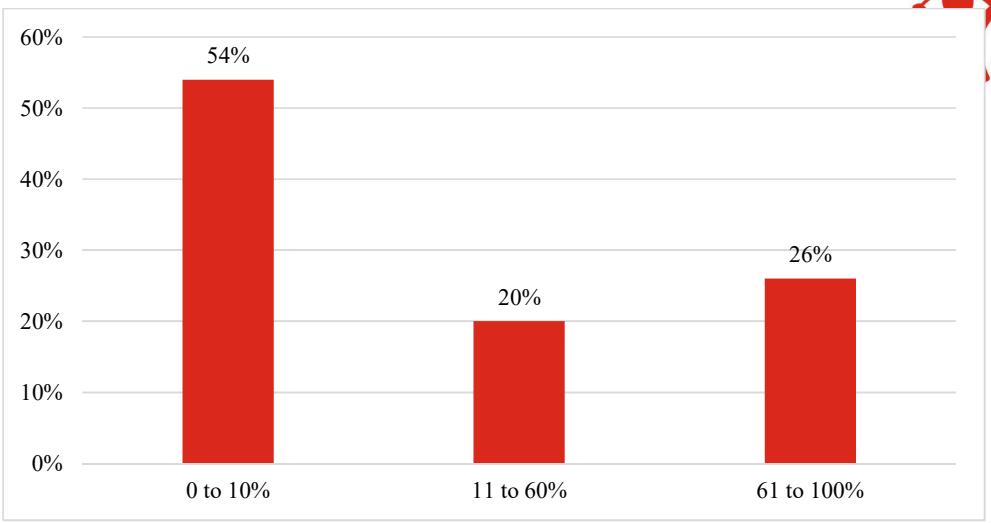


Figure 6. Share of businesses that have an environment certificate

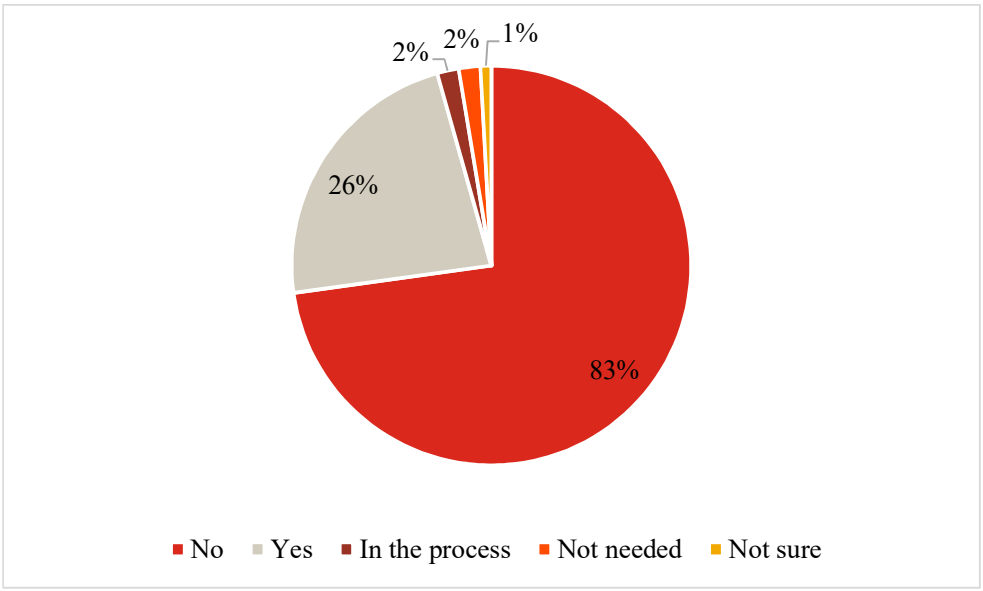


Figure 6 to 8 indicate that the majority of the selected green business did not have an 'environment certificate' (83%) **and that they plan to hire new workers in the next couple of years (67%). The most frequent number of workers planned to be hired by these businesses in the short-term is between 1 and 5 workers which is justifiable considering the fact that the largest share of the green businesses are small or medium sized.**

"As a provider of medicinal plants, we at Relikaj understand the importance of not just quality but also environmental responsibility. Our products like chamomile, lavender, and thyme are sourced

*from the wild and processed with cutting-edge technology for various industries. However, to fully brand our products as eco-friendly and to align with global environmental standards, we recognize the need for more training and professional assistance**. Obtaining an environmental certificate is not just about compliance; it's a step towards ensuring sustainable success. We are committed to this path because we believe it will not only enhance our marketability but also contribute to a healthier planet."***

Nancy Kastrati, KII, Relikaj shpk, Malesi e Madhe

This sentiment is reflective of a broader trend observed in the interviews, where businesses are increasingly considering the strategic i**mportance of environmental certifications** in today's market, not just for compliance but for the long-term viability and ethical standing of their operations.

"At Meat Factory Darb, we pride ourselves on the quality of our products and the efficiency of our operations. However, we're becoming increasingly conscious of our environmental footprint. The industry is shifting, and there's a growing demand from consumers for not just high-quality meat but also sustainably produced goods. We're currently exploring how to best integrate environmental certifications into our business model. It's clear that to remain competitive and responsible, we must invest in training and resources that will enable us to meet these environmental standards."

Representative of Meat Factory Darb, KII, Shkoder

The overarching theme is one of cautious progression, with enterprises navigating the complex process of becoming environmentally certified in the face of operational realities and market expectations.

Figure 7. Plans to hire new workers in the next two years

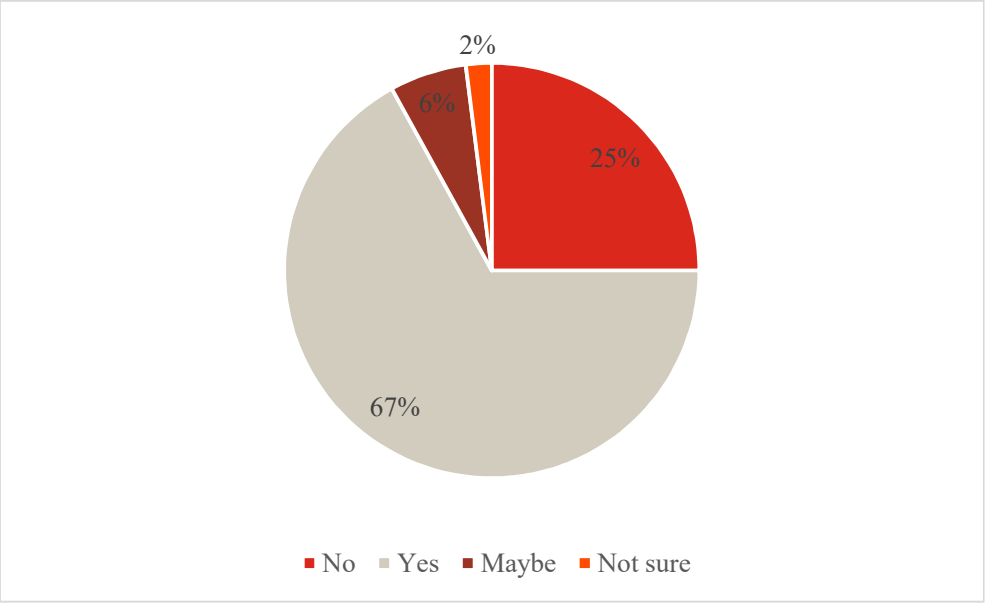
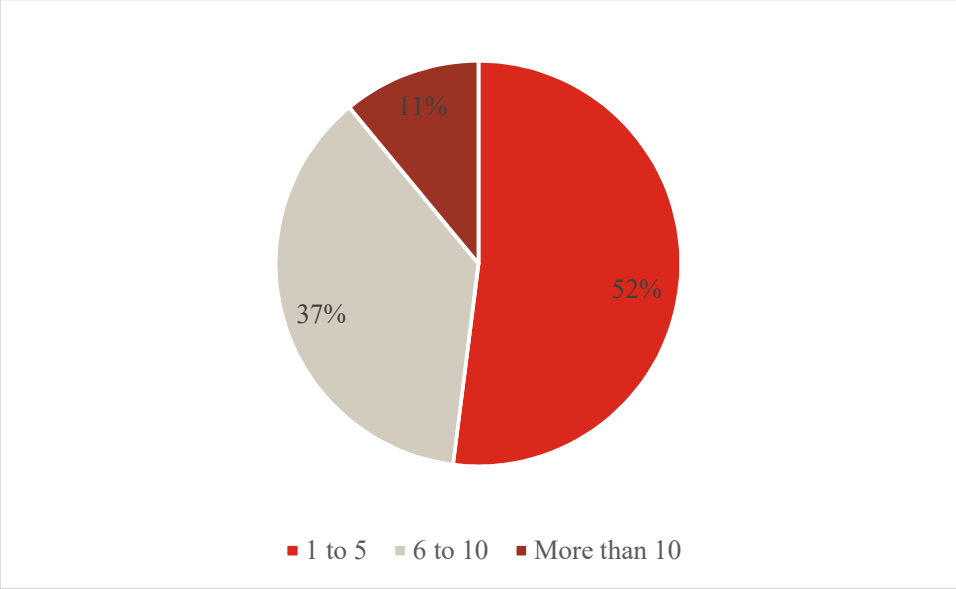


Figure 8. Number of planned hirings



"I believe in the power of youth engagement. Our company plans to hire new workers in the coming years, and we prioritize hiring from vulnerable communities. Not only are these young individuals highly motivated and dedicated to their work, but they also bring unique perspectives and experiences to our team. By investing in their growth and development, we not only contribute to their success but also ensure the sustainability of our business. It's crucial to engage youth locally, preventing brain drain and fostering a thriving workforce for the future."

Omer Luli, Enterprise Manager in Manufacturin

"At our business, we understand the importance of inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. Almost all of our employees come from vulnerable communities, and we take pride in providing them with opportunities for meaningful employment. By hiring youth from these backgrounds, we empower them to build better futures for themselves and their families. We believe that by investing in our employees, we can create positive change both within our company and in society as a whole."

Nensi Kastrati, Represantative of medical plants enterprise

"I'm a 21-year-old ICT technician working in an agroprocessing business, and I couldn't be happier with my job. Not only do I get to work with cutting-edge technology to optimize machine operations, but I also feel incredibly valued and respected by my employers. They've provided me with a competitive salary and very good working conditions, which make me feel truly appreciated for the work I do. What's even more meaningful is knowing that my company prioritizes inclusivity and provides opportunities for young people like me to thrive and succeed. It's not just a job; it's a supportive environment where I can grow both personally and professionally, and I'm proud to be a part of it."

24 years old, ICT technician, Shkoder

"I have personally observed the profound impact that investing in green skills and competence can have especially for vulnerable youth. In the contemporary and dynamic labour market, there is a significant need for individuals possessing specialized expertise in fields such as automation and agricultural technology. These individuals are able to command incomes that surpass the average income in Albania.
Professionals possessing green talents, specifically those possessing specialized knowledge in automation and information and communication technology (ICT), assume a crucial function in fostering innovation and promoting sustainability inside diverse sectors. The enhancement of productivity and the promotion of environmental conservation and resilience are facilitated by their capacity to streamline processes, maximize resource use, and implement state-of-the-art technologies.
In Albania, where there is a shortage of green job specialists, persons possessing these highly sought-after abilities have substantial earning potential. Professionals who are engaged in automation and ICT-related positions, as well as those possessing specific expertise in agriculture, particularly in the field of bio-product production, are among the most financially remunerated individuals in the labour market. One notable characteristic of occupations in the green economy is the possibility of earning significant income, either through daily remuneration for temporary projects or monthly salaries for extended periods of employment. The recognition of the importance of green talents by companies has led to a proliferation of chances for formal employment and career growth. Moreover, persons possessing competence in the field of green have the potential to utilize their knowledge and skills to secure internships, engage in research initiatives, and assume consultancy positions, thereby augmenting their income prospects. These individuals have a prominent position in spearheading sustainable development endeavours, exerting influence over the trajectory of our economy and environment.

Investing in green skills not only provides individuals with access to very profitable work prospects, but also enables them to exert a significant influence on both society and the environment. With the increasing demand for professionals specializing in green jobs, individuals possessing the necessary experience are well-positioned to excel in a swiftly changing labour market, while making significant contributions towards a more sustainable and prosperous future for Albania and other regions. "

Brikene Dionizi, an expert in the field of green economy, Professor at University "Luigj Gurakuqi"

"I understand the challenges and opportunities faced by both employers and job seekers (especially vulnerable youth) in our region." One of the most pressing issues we frequently encounter is a persistent gap between the skills required by employers and those possessed by potential employees. This mismatch creates significant challenges for businesses that want to retain quality employees and achieve their organizational goals. Despite the abundance of talent and potential in our region, many employers struggle to find candidates who possess the specific skills and expertise required to fill critical roles within their organizations. This skills gap is especially evident in emerging sectors like the green economy, where specialized knowledge in automation, ICT, agricultural technology is in high demand. Furthermore, a lack of awareness and training in green skills among the local workforce exacerbates the problem, limiting businesses' ability to recruit and retain qualified employees. While there is a growing recognition of the importance of sustainability and environmental stewardship, there is still a significant gap in the availability of green economy-specific training programs and educational resources. In addition to skill mismatches, other factors contribute to employers' difficulty in retaining quality workers.

As the National Employment and Skills Agency's Regional Directorate, we are dedicated to addressing these issues and closing the talent gap between employers and potential employees. We hope to provide job seekers with the skills and competencies that local businesses require through targeted interventions such as skills training programs, career counselling services, and industry partnerships. Furthermore, we understand the value of creating a supportive environment for businesses to attract and retain quality employees.

By advocating for policies that promote fair labour practices, provide incentives for skill development, and encourage investment in employee well-being, we can create a more conducive ecosystem for long-term employment and economic growth in our area."

Rozafa Zmijanej, Director, Regional Directorate of the National Employment and Skills Agency

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with stakeholders from green businesses to gain insights into their hiring practices and their considerations for employing vulnerable youth. The majority of green businesses expressed their intention to hire new workers in the coming years, with 67% planning to do so. These discussions shed light on the factors influencing their hiring decisions, particularly focusing on the recruitment of youth from vulnerable communities.

One notable finding from the interviews is that the most common number of workers planned to be hired by green businesses in the short-term falls between 1 and 5 individuals. This trend is attributed to the predominance of small or medium-sized green businesses, which often have limited capacity for large-scale recruitment.

Several KIIs from green business owners and managers highlighted their commitment to hiring youth from vulnerable communities. They emphasized the value that these young individuals bring to the workforce, citing their high levels of engagement, motivation, and dedication to their work. Additionally, many employers recognized the importance of providing opportunities for

meaningful employment to youth from these backgrounds, not only for their individual growth but also for the overall sustainability of their businesses.

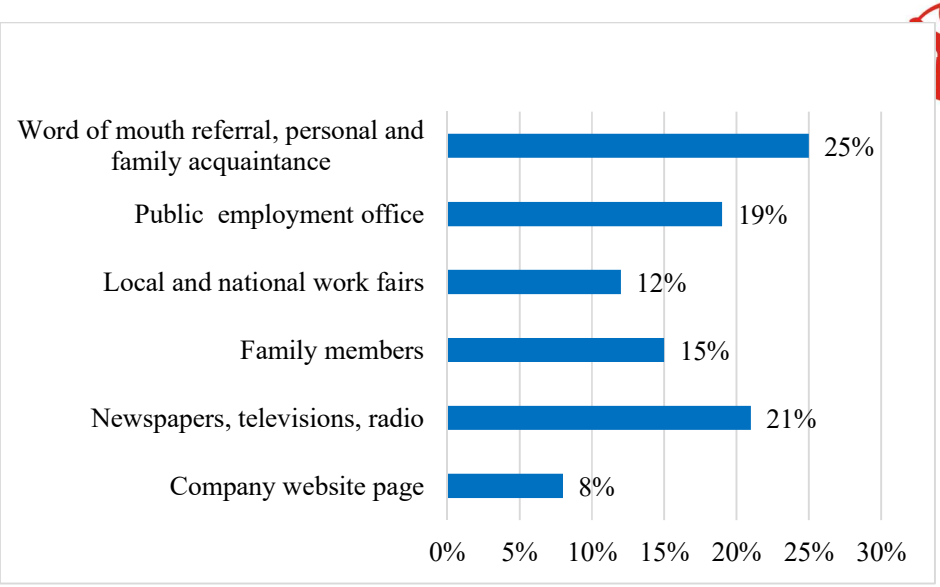
In particular, one testimonial emphasized the significance of engaging youth locally to prevent the phenomenon of brain drain, where talented young individuals leave the country in search of better opportunities elsewhere. By investing in the development of local youth and providing them with opportunities for employment and advancement, green businesses contribute to retaining talent within the community and fostering economic stability.

Furthermore, it was noted that a significant proportion of employees in green businesses come from vulnerable communities. Employers expressed pride in their inclusive hiring practices and emphasized their commitment to providing opportunities for marginalized youth to thrive and succeed in the workplace.

Also, KII with Green economy expert and Regional Directorate of the National Employment and Skills Agency emphasize that investing in green skills offers a substantial opportunity for disadvantaged young individuals to gain access to lucrative employment opportunities with incomes that surpass the average in Albania. Proficiency in areas such as automation, agricultural technology, and ICT is in high demand, allowing individuals to earn significant income. Furthermore, individuals possessing expertise in green technologies play a pivotal role in cultivating innovation and sustainability within diverse industries, thereby augmenting productivity, advocating for environmental preservation, and bolstering resilience.

Nevertheless, despite the possibility of profitable job prospects in the green economy, there are difficulties in aligning the skills demanded by employers with those possessed by prospective employees, especially among susceptible young individuals. Businesses face challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified workers due to the skills gap, which is further exacerbated by a lack of awareness and training in green skills. Furthermore, the employment prospects of young individuals are impeded by various factors, including insufficient educational resources and restricted availability of training programs.

Figure 9. Main channels used to advertise job vacancies



In Figure 9, respondents indicated that the main channels used to advertise job vacancies are informal channels such as 'word of mouth referral, personal, and family acquaintances', 'newspapers, television, and radio', and the 'public employment office'.

"Our collaboration with larger businesses is quite extensive; in the last 11 months alone, we have facilitated around 634 job vacancy announcements. However, we engage less frequently with businesses focused on agriculture. Small businesses in this sector, often not fully formalized, tend to rely on their own personal connections for recruitment purposes."

Rozafa Zmijanej, Director, Regional Directorate of the National Employment and Skills Agency, Shkodër

"We typically announce our job openings on our business's social media channels as it offers more convenience and allows us to follow our own selection procedures. This method seems to resonate with our target audience, providing a direct and efficient way to connect with potential candidates."

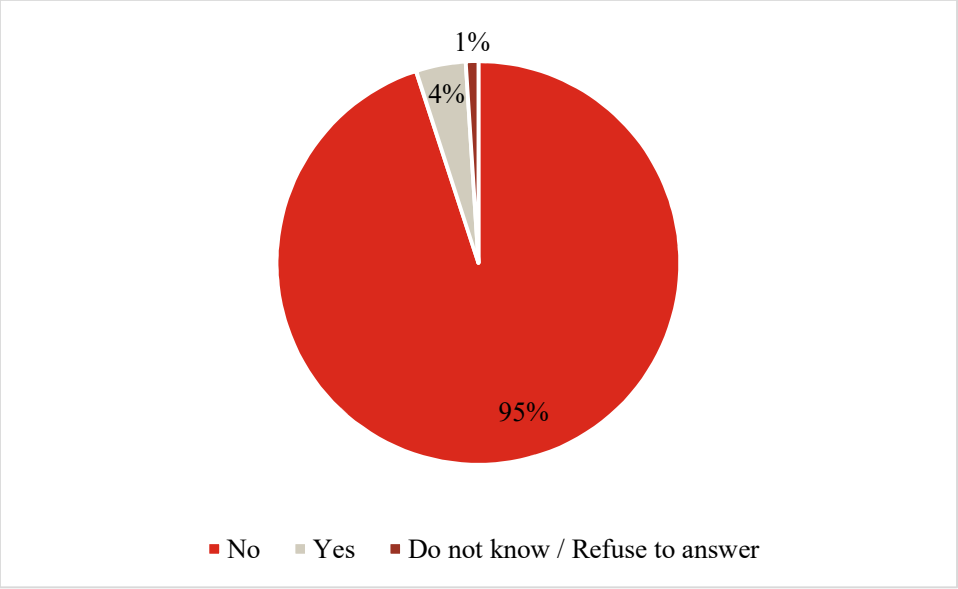
Representative of a Decorative Plant Business in Elbasan

The key informant interviews provide insight into the divergent approaches towards job vacancy announcements across different sectors. Rozafa Zmijanej points out a substantial level of activity in job announcements for larger businesses through the employment agency, suggesting a formal and centralized process for recruitment. Conversely, for **the agriculture sector and small businesses, the tendency leans towards informal recruitment strategies, leveraging personal networks and word-of-mouth, possibly reflecting a lack of formality and resources.** The statement from the decorative plant business in Elbasan reveals a preference for utilizing social media as a recruitment tool, highlighting its effectiveness in streamlining the hiring process and attracting suitable applicants. This digital approach aligns with global trends, yet it contrasts with the more traditional methods still prevalent in other sectors, underscoring the varied landscape of

job advertising strategies among businesses.**Research indicates that POWER 4 AY or the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) can become key job referral channels in the green economy sector.** To establish themselves as effective referral channels, they should engage with green businesses, industry associations, and environmental organizations to build partnerships and networks. They can also promote green job opportunities through their communication channels, such as websites, social media platforms, and newsletters.They can also offer skill development and training programs tailored to the needs of the green economy sector, enhancing job seekers' attractiveness to employers and increasing their chances of successful placement.

Outreach and awareness campaigns can be conducted to raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities available within the green economy sector. These campaigns could involve workshops, seminars, and career fairs, as well as collaboration with local communities and educational institutions. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of their efforts can help them position themselves as trusted and effective channels for connecting job seekers with employment opportunities in the rapidly growing green economy sector.

Figure 10. Share of businesses that have a 'green jobs specialist'

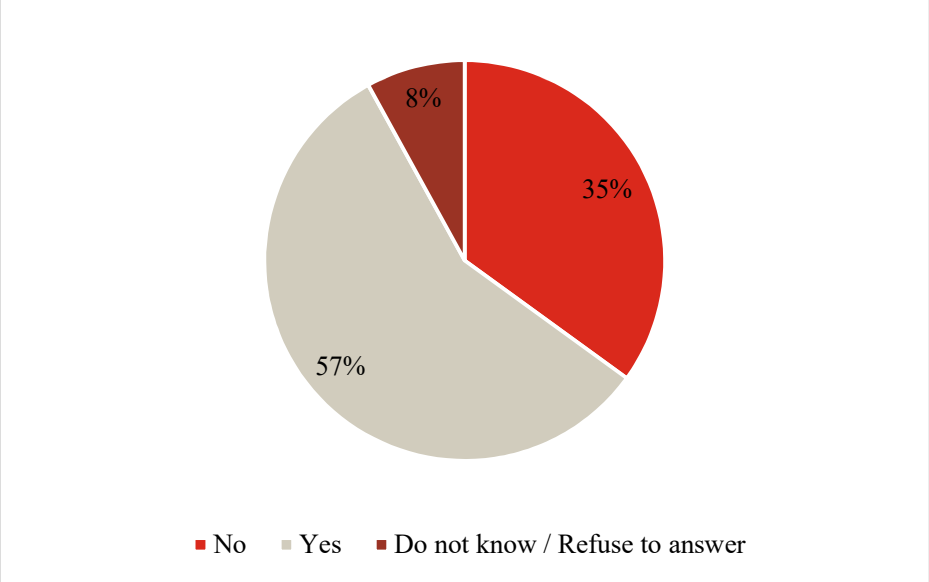


As expected, the majority of these businesses in the green economy do not have a 'green jobs specialist' and only 35% of them are willing to hire one.

To address this gap, businesses can invest in training and development programs to upskill existing employees and cultivate internal talent. Collaborating with educational institutions can help shape curriculum and equip graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills for the role. Talent retention strategies, such as competitive salaries, benefits, career advancement opportunities, and a supportive work environment, can help retain skilled workers. Remote work arrangements and digital solutions can help recruit green jobs specialists from other regions or countries, reducing

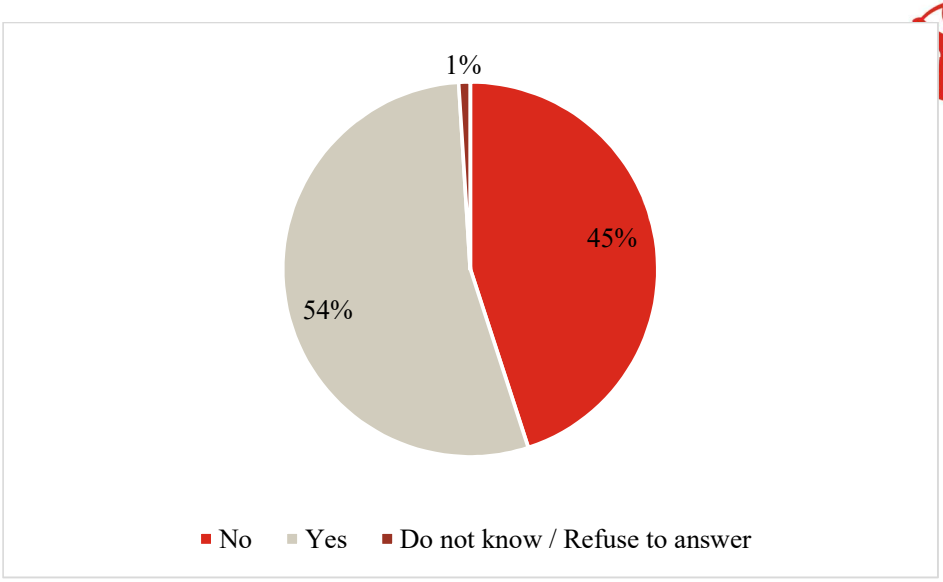
the impact of emigration on talent acquisition. Government incentives and support programs, such as tax incentives, training grants, and salary subsidies, can stimulate job creation and economic growth in the green economy sector.

Figure 11. Willingness to hire a 'green jobs specialist'



Frequent comments from the respondents include arguments such as that a green jobs specialist is not a priority as the production procedures need to be improved to achieve an ecological system of production. Others suggest that they need advice from a green jobs specialist on how to manage and recycle the production waste. Lack of knowledge and finance access is another reason why they do not believe that hiring a green jobs specialist is a good idea.

Figure 12. Hire a 'green jobs specialist' with certification



Comments on the type of certification that employers would prefer when considering hiring green jobs specialists include 'protection of environment and recycling', 'ecological production', 'green agriculture', 'efficiency in using agricultural resources', 'package that does not harm the environment', 'environment friendly processes of production'.

The key informant interviews reveal a nuanced perspective on the role of green jobs specialists within enterprises. While there is an acknowledgment of the potential benefits that such specialists could bring, particularly in terms of waste management and moving towards sustainable production methods, companies cite several impediments. T**he primary concerns revolve around the immediate need to refine production processes and the absence of a clear financial pathway to support the integration of green practices.** Additionally, there is a reported lack of knowledge about how to effectively implement and manage the changes that a green jobs specialist might recommend. These factors collectively lead to a hesitation among businesses to prioritize the hiring of green jobs specialists, despite a general recognition of the long-term importance of ecological production systems. This hesitation underscores a wider issue within the industry, where the desire for sustainability must be balanced against the realities of operational and financial constraints.

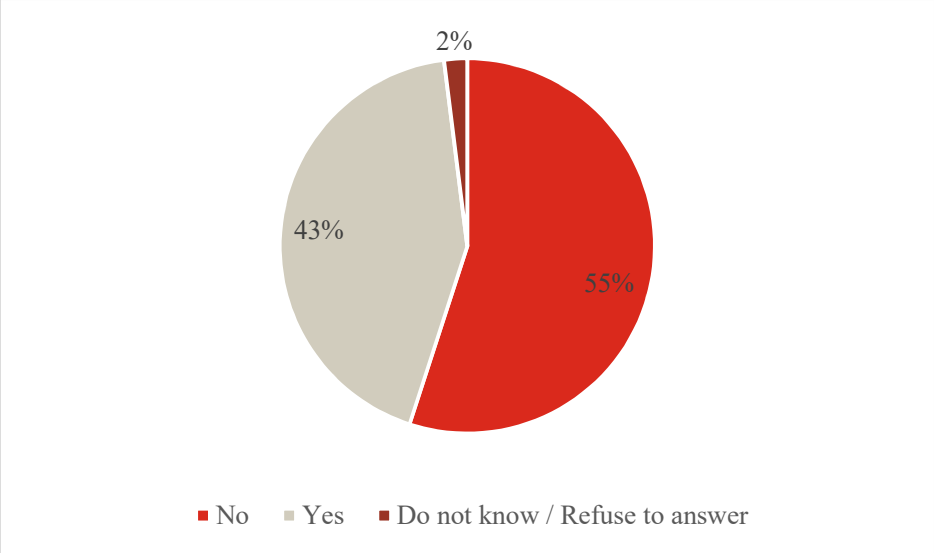
"While we understand the importance of green jobs, we currently view the appointment of a green jobs specialist as less of a priority. Our immediate challenge is to improve production processes to reach a level where they align with ecological standards. Financial constraints and limited knowledge about sustainable practices are the main barriers that prevent us from pursuing this role actively."

Omer Luli, Enterprise Manager in Manufacturing, Shkoder

"We are in a position where we need guidance on managing and recycling production waste. Hiring a green jobs specialist could provide us with the expertise necessary to transform our waste management systems, but there's a lack of clarity on the financial viability and the practical integration of such a position within our current operations."

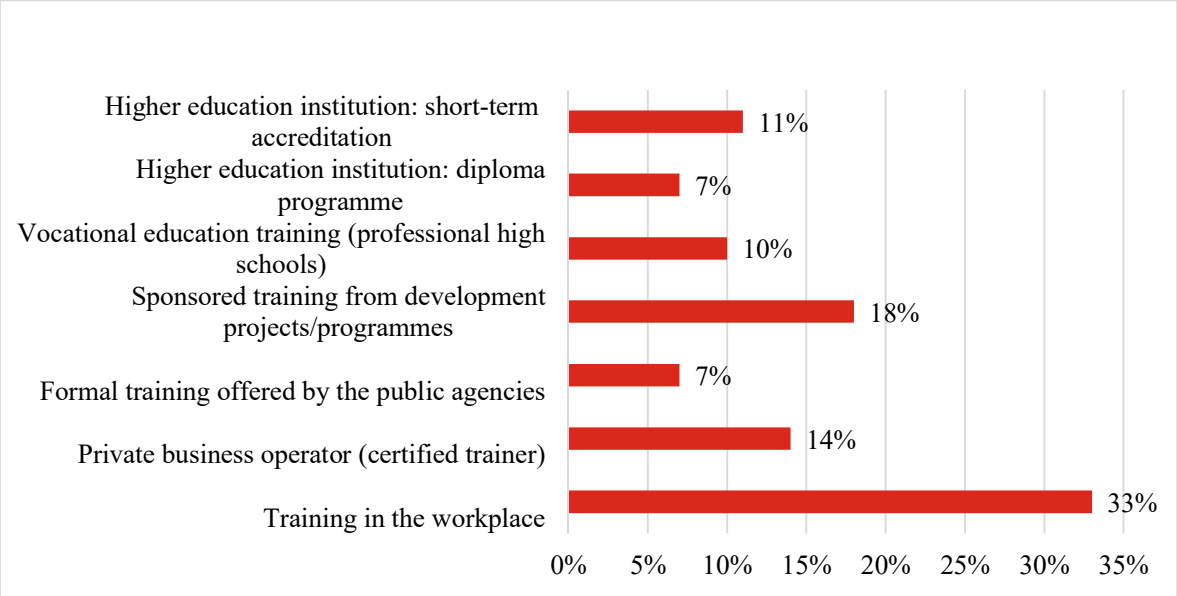
Operations Director at a Production Facility, Diber

Figure 13. Current workers need training and skills regarding the green skills and jobs



55% of the business owners believe that their current workers do not need training and upskilling in terms of greens skills and jobs. On the other hand, 43% believe that their workforce is in need of training and skilling in the field of green economy. Figure 14 illustrates that for that share of the respondents who confirm the need for training and skilling of their workers in the field of green jobs and skills, they would prefer this training to be arranged in the premises of their workplace. Another preferred option on how training should be arranged includes 'sponsored training from development projects or programmes' and 'higher education institutions: short-term accreditation' and 'vocational education training held in professional high schools'.

Figure 14. Preferences for providers of training and skills regarding the green skills and jobs



"As an Expert on Occupational Standards, we continuously collate and scrutinize data from AKPA to ensure our educational frameworks align with the evolving demands of today's labor market. Green economy principles represent a transformative approach that necessitates increased focus, particularly within sectors such as agriculture that hold immense potential in regions like Shkodra, Dibra, and Elbasan. These areas are home to exemplary VET schools that serve as pivotal institutions for fostering the requisite green skills. We are committed to integrating a green curriculum that addresses the specific needs of these regions, thereby equipping our students with the knowledge and competencies to excel in a sustainable and environmentally conscious job market."

Diana Xhelili, Expert on Occupational Standards at the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications

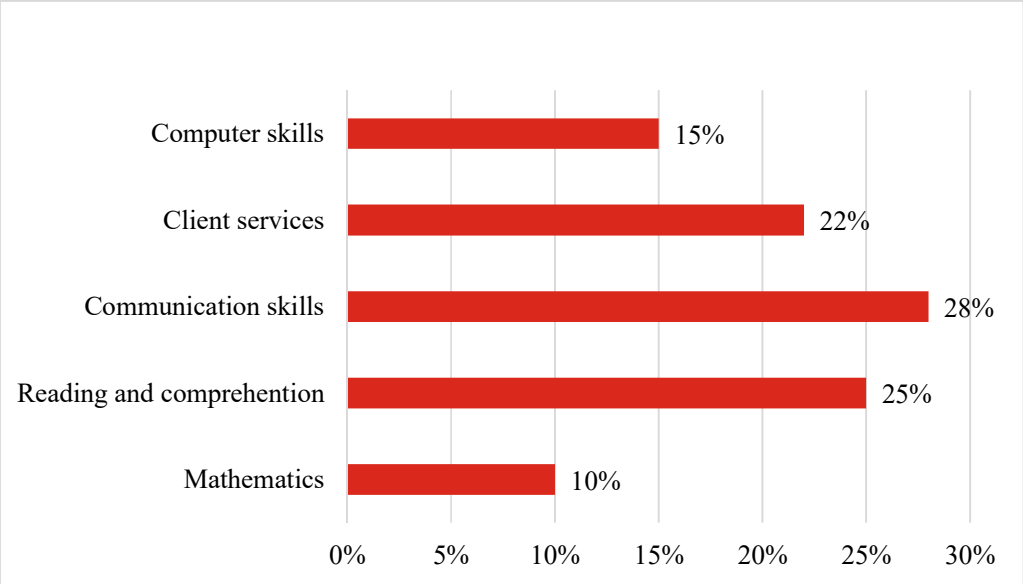
"At our Center, we focus on an approach that includes 30% theoretical learning and 70% practical, emphasizing different methods such as practical work and demonstration, either in groups or individually, using projects, aquarium methods, and illustrations to engage students. To strengthen teaching, we use lectures, interactive question and answer sessions, and open discussions. Learning takes place not only in the classroom, but also in local businesses to develop students' practical professional skills. We have signed cooperation agreements with various businesses, which not only allow professional practice but often also offer employment opportunities for young people after completing their training."

Irma Lohja, Public Professional Training Center, Shkoder

This training model, with its foundational ties to industry needs and its focus on practical experience, is aligned with the expressed preferences for workplace learning and development project-sponsored training. It underscores a shift towards experiential learning within the educational framework for green skills, preparing a workforce that is both knowledgeable and adept in the practical aspects of sustainable employment.

The main preferred basic skills that these green business owners believe are needed for their workforce are in the field of 'communication skills', 'reading and comprehension', and 'client services' as shown in Figure 15. On the other hand, regarding technical skills in the field of green economy, the respondents indicated that they believe are in the field of 'organic agriculture', 'environment education', and 'innovative products'.

Figure 15. Perceptions on essential/basic skills that are important for workers in green jobs in their company

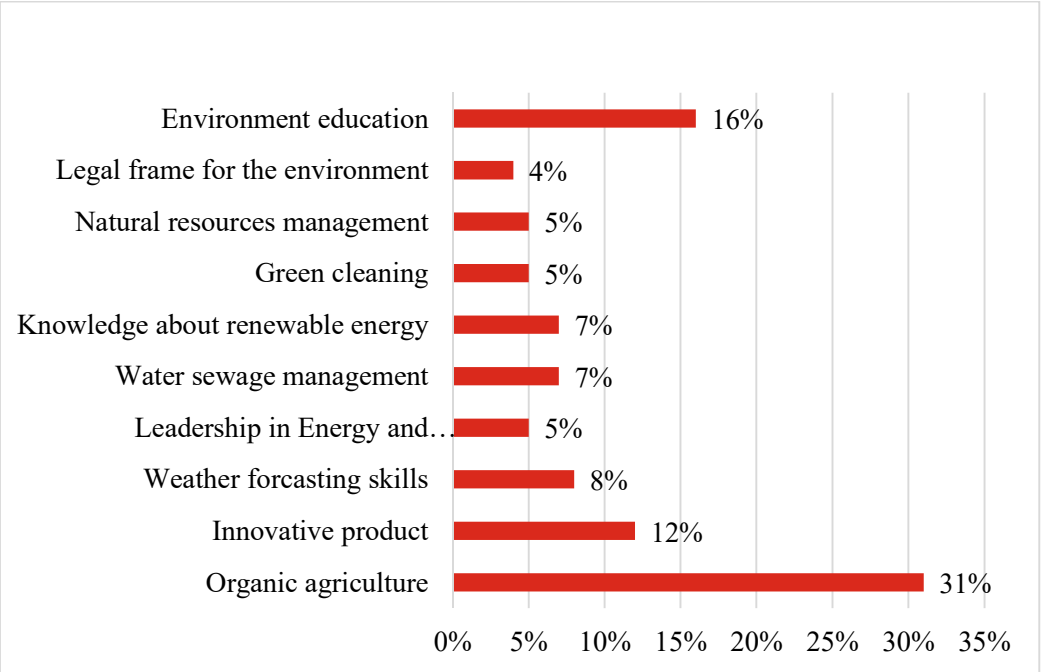


*"In our region, even as we delve deeper into the agricultural sector, which is traditionally seen as hands-on and labor-intensive, we are witnessing an **increasing need for ICT competency** alongside robust client service skills. The integration of technology in agriculture—from data management systems that track crop yields to digital platforms for market access—has made ICT skills indispensable. Moreover, as the market for agricultural products becomes more competitive, the ability to engage with customers, understand their preferences, and deliver exceptional service is becoming just as crucial as the agricultural expertise itself. We are encouraging our workforce to embrace these skills to remain relevant and competitive."*

Jetmira Doda, Regional Directorate of the National Employment and Skills Agency, Dibër

The key informant interviews, highlight a pivotal shift in the skill requirements for green businesses within the agricultural sector. These insights from the interviews suggest that the agricultural sector is not immune to the digital transformation affecting all industries, and that customer relations remain a key driver of business growth. The shift points to a broader trend where technical agricultural skills must be complemented by digital fluency and customer engagement proficiency to meet the evolving demands of the green economy.

Figure 16. Perceptions on training needs that are important for workers in green jobs in their company



In Figure 16, the data shows that the highest reported need is for training is organic agriculture (31%), followed by environmental education (16%), and training for innovative product development (12%). Other areas such as knowledge about renewable energy and water sewage management are also recognized but to a lesser extent (7% each). Skills related to the legal framework for the environment, natural resources management, green cleaning, and leadership in energy receive relatively lower emphasis (4-5% each), with weather forecasting skills sitting at 8%.

This suggests that companies are increasingly valuing specific skill sets that align with sustainable practices, with a clear emphasis on organic agriculture, indicating perhaps a trend or shift towards more sustainable agricultural methods. Environmental education's significant percentage points to a broad recognition of the need for a foundational understanding of environmental principles across green jobs. The recognition of the need for innovative product development suggests that companies are also looking to innovation to drive their green initiatives.

These results indicate that companies are aware of the diverse skill sets required to support a green economy and are possibly willing to invest in training to develop these skills within their workforce. Investments in training for the green economy can include on-the-job training and continuous learning opportunities to provide practical experience and practical application of skills in real-world settings. Online courses and webinars can also be provided to support ongoing

learning and stay updated on emerging trends and best practices in sustainability. The emphasis on organic agriculture might reflect a response to consumer demand for organic products, also it could be part of a broader commitment to sustainable business practices. Overall, the data reflects a growing trend towards more environmentally conscious business operations and the increasing importance of having a workforce trained in green skills.

"In the face of the global shift towards a green economy, our agency recognizes the urgent need to integrate specialized modules on sustainable practices into the VET school curricula. We are currently in the process of developing modules that will cover critical areas such as organic agriculture, renewable energy technologies, and sustainable resource management. These modules are designed not only to provide the technical skills necessary for emerging green jobs but also to foster a mindset aligned with ecological principles. Partnering with industry experts and utilizing cutting-edge research, we aim to ensure that these programs are at the forefront of innovation and effectiveness. Our goal is to prepare a workforce that is not only job-ready but also equipped to contribute to the green transformation of our economy."

Diana Xhelili, Expert on Occupational Standards at the National Agency for Education, Vocational Training and Qualifications

Figure 17. Perceptions what do you see as important challenges for green businesses

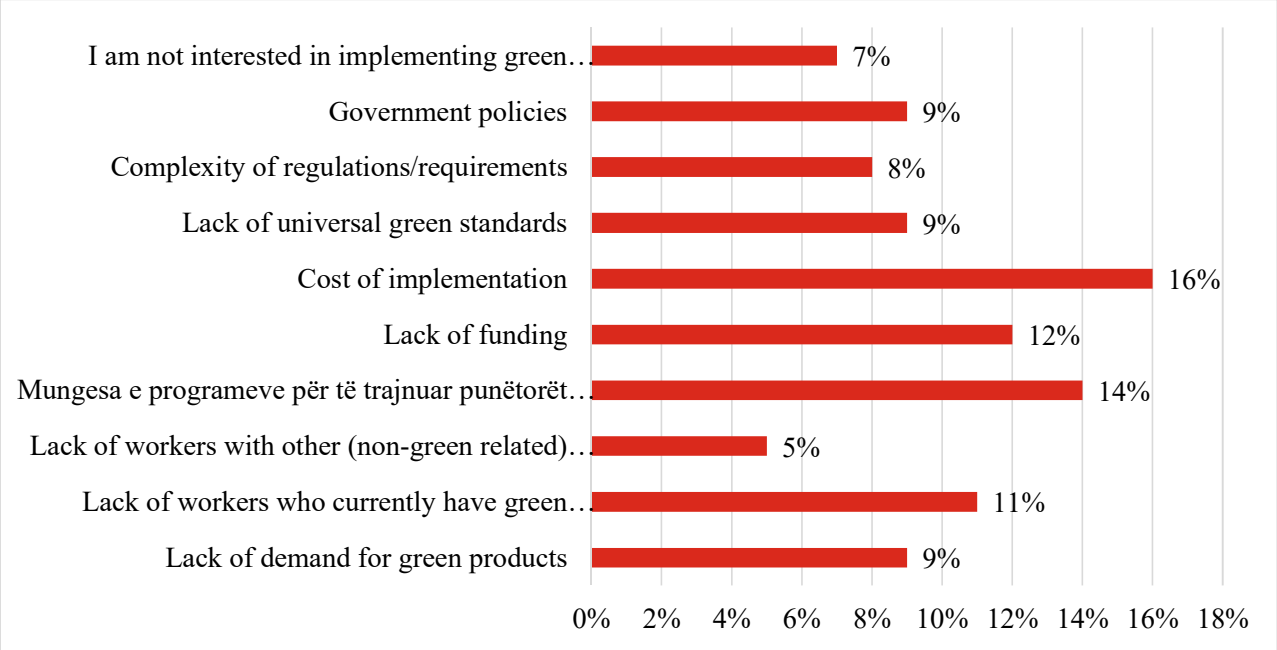


Figure 17 illustrates various challenges perceived as significant for green businesses. The most substantial challenge, as indicated by the chart, is the cost of implementation, with 16% of the

responses highlighting it as a major barrier. This is followed closely by the lack of funding and the lack of programs for training workers in green skills, which are seen as challenges by 14% and 12% of the respondents, respectively.

Other notable challenges include the lack of workers who currently have green skills (11%), and government policies, lack of universal green standards, and lack of demand for green products (each at 9%). The complexity of regulations and requirements, along with disinterest in implementing green practices, are seen as lesser challenges (8% and 7%, respectively). The least concern is the lack of workers with non-green related skills (5%).

This data indicates that financial barriers, such as the direct costs associated with implementing green practices and the broader issue of securing funding, are the primary concerns for businesses transitioning to green operations. Additionally, the chart reflects concerns about the human capital required to operate green businesses effectively, with a significant emphasis on the need for specialized training and the current shortage of skilled workers in the green sector. Governmental policy and standardization also play a role in the perceived challenges, suggesting that clearer policies and universal standards might facilitate the adoption of green practices. The relatively low concern about the lack of demand for green products could indicate a belief in the growing market for such products or a focus on other more immediate barriers.

"Transitioning to green business practices presents a multifaceted challenge. The most pressing issue we face is the financial burden associated with implementing sustainable technologies and processes. While we're committed to ecological principles, the reality is that the costs can be prohibitive without adequate funding or incentives. Another significant hurdle is the deficiency in worker training programs specific to green skills. We find ourselves in a catch-22 situation where we require skilled personnel to grow, yet the infrastructure for developing such skills is underfunded and underdeveloped. Government policies and a lack of universal green standards further complicate the landscape, making it difficult to navigate the regulatory environment and ensure compliance. Despite the growing interest in green products, the market is still maturing, and demand has yet to reach its full potential, underscoring the need for broader consumer education and market development initiatives."

Green Business CEO, KII, Elbasan

The key informant interviews echo the quantitative study's findings, shedding light on the intricate challenges faced by businesses striving for sustainability. Financial obstacles, particularly the costs of green implementation and a general lack of funding, are identified as the primary barriers to greener business practices. The interviews reveal a critical gap in the availability of specialized green skills training, which is necessary to support the practical application of sustainable business models. Additionally, the complexity of existing regulations and the absence of standardized green practices create a challenging operational environment for these businesses. Despite these hurdles, there is an optimism that, with the right support and resources, the market for green products will continue to grow. The KIIs underscore the importance of strategic support in overcoming these challenges, such as financial aid, streamlined policies, and robust training programs, to nurture the development of green businesses.

Figure 18. Perceptions what types of "green" skills or knowledge do your employees currently need or do you anticipate your employees will need in the coming years

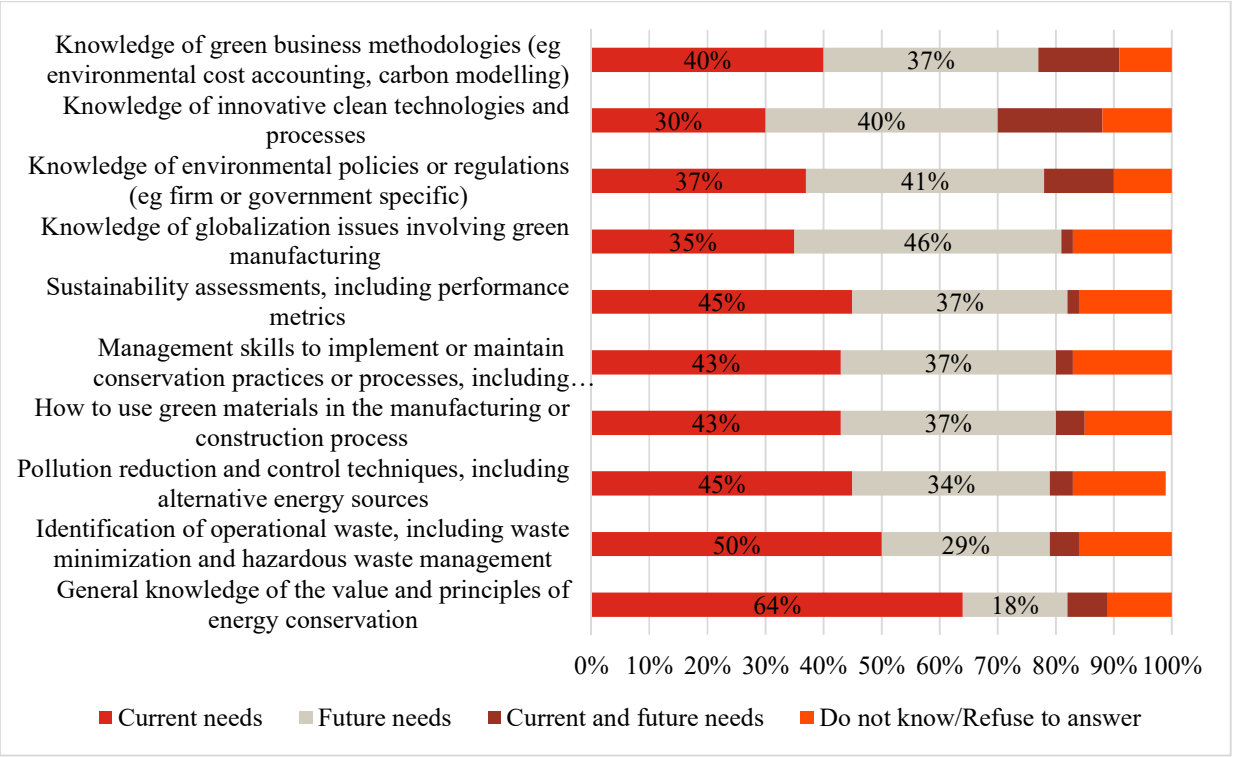


Figure 18 illustrates the perceptions of green business owners regarding the needs of their workforce for 'green skills' in the present and the near future, or both. In particular, 'general knowledge of the value and principles of energy conservation' is considered a priority as a current need mainly (64%). Similarly, 'management skills to implement or maintain conservation practices or processes, including facility assessment and energy audit' (43%) and 'sustainability assessments, including performance metrics' (45%) are considered mainly current needs but also future needs, with both 37%. This data illustrates a clear recognition of the importance of a broad range of green skills, with a focus on energy conservation and waste management as top priorities. It also reflects an expectation that the importance of understanding environmental policies and innovative technologies will grow. This information is vital for workforce development and can guide businesses and educational institutions in designing training programs that equip employees with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving landscape of green business practices.

CONCLUSIONS

For Youth Engagement in the Green Transition:

There's a high level of education among youth, but disparities exist based on social and economic status.

Vulnerable groups, particularly girls from Roma and Egyptian communities, face educational disadvantages.

The majority of respondents are not employed or in education, suggesting a gap in the labor market engagement.

Self-employment is favored over wage employment, indicating a drive for entrepreneurship. The study reveals a strong preference for self-employment over wage employment, particularly in agrotourism and ICT in agriculture. Agrotourism, a blend of agriculture and tourism, offers opportunities for individuals to start their own businesses. ICT in agriculture, which leverages technology for productivity and sustainability, offers self-employment opportunities in developing agricultural software, providing digital consulting services, offering precision agriculture solutions, and managing online marketplaces.

Vulnerable youth face significant challenges in the workforce, including long working hours, inadequate compensation, and discrimination based on socio-economic status, ethnicity, or disability.

Exploitative practices, such as low wages and lack of benefits, are prevalent in various sectors, forcing many young individuals to endure exhausting work conditions to make ends meet.

Youths with specific skills in high demand, such as vocational education or ICT, are more likely to enjoy favorable working conditions and greater job security.

There's a notable lack of awareness among youth regarding 'green economy' and 'green jobs'.

Educational initiatives need to address this knowledge gap in environmental concepts.

Social media is a primary source for youth to learn about green concepts, indicating the influence of digital platforms.

Formal education is currently not the main channel through which young people learn about the green economy.

There's a general uncertainty among the youth about engaging in the green economy. These include lack of awareness, limited education or exposure to environmental issues, economic constraints, perceived barriers, cultural or social factors, trust in institutions, and political factors.

Vocational education centers are viewed as key institutions for acquiring green job skills.

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are highly valued for both employment and self-employment.

Schools are considered important for developing social skills and self-control.

There's a preference for workplace training for acquiring green skills.

The quantitative data suggest a high entrepreneurial intention among respondents, especially in Shkoder and Diber.

Technical and specialized roles like 'Senior Agricultural Technician' are of high interest.

Economic incentives are a significant factor in job preference within the green economy.

There's a strong demand for targeted vocational training in the green economy sector.
Climate change is considered a 'very serious' or 'serious problem' by a majority of respondents.
Rising energy costs and energy security are main concerns in respondents' households.
Air and soil pollution are also major environmental concerns.
Inadequate infrastructure and lack of finances/income are seen as the biggest obstacles to transitioning to a green economy.
There's an opportunity for starting small businesses in fields like organic farming and renewable energy.
There's a need for more organized strategies to educate people about sustainable practices and green job opportunities.

For Employment Offices and Agencies in Focusing their Attention to Referrals for Green Job Opportunities:

Job vacancies are commonly advertised through informal channels, reflecting reliance on personal networks.
Recruitment is less frequent with agricultural businesses, indicating a potential area for formalization and growth.
There is an openness to hiring green jobs specialists, but financial and operational challenges are barriers.
Green businesses prioritize hiring from vulnerable communities, recognizing the value that these young individuals bring to the workforce.
Testimonials from business owners and employees highlight the positive impact of inclusive hiring practices, such as providing meaningful employment opportunities and fostering a supportive work environment.
The majority of green businesses plan to hire new workers in the coming years, with a focus on engaging youth locally to prevent brain drain and foster economic stability.
Small to medium-sized green businesses, which constitute the majority, typically plan to hire between 1 and 5 new workers in the short term due to limited capacity.
Investing in green skills presents lucrative job prospects for vulnerable youth in Albania.
Specialized expertise in fields such as automation, agricultural technology, and ICT is highly sought after, enabling individuals to command substantial earnings.
Professionals with green skills play a crucial role in fostering innovation and sustainability across various sectors, enhancing productivity, promoting environmental conservation, and resilience.
There is a preference for practical, on-site training over formal education for green skills.
The youth in these regions show a strong entrepreneurial spirit, especially in sectors with growth potential.
There is a need for increased focus on green education to align with market demands.
Technical skills like organic agriculture and environmental education are seen as crucial.
Businesses are aware of the importance of a diverse skill set for a green economy.
Financial barriers and the complexity of regulations are significant challenges for green businesses.
The data indicates that financial barriers, such as the direct costs associated with implementing green practices and the broader issue of securing funding, are the primary concerns for businesses transitioning to green operations. Additionally, the data reflects concerns about the human capital

required to operate green businesses effectively, with a significant emphasis on the need for specialized training and the current shortage of skilled workers in the green sector.
There is a lack of specialized training for green skills, highlighting a gap in workforce development.
The green sector is experiencing a digital transformation, increasing the need for ICT skills.
Green businesses prioritize communication, client service, and professional development skills.
Organic agriculture is the top training need, showing a shift towards sustainable methods.
The cost of green implementation is a major concern for businesses.
There is a demand for innovative product development training.
Businesses express a need for guidance on recycling and waste management.
There is a hesitancy to hire green jobs specialists without clear financial and knowledge-based support.
The demand for green products is growing, despite current market maturity.
Businesses seek strategic support to overcome challenges in adopting green practices. Governmental policy and standardization also play a role in the perceived challenges, suggesting that clearer policies and universal standards might facilitate the adoption of green practices.
There is a call for financial aid and streamlined policies to support green business development.

Fot the NGOs:

Gender equality and disability inclusion remain ongoing challenges within the green economy, with women facing barriers such as limited access to resources and biases in recruitment processes.
Individuals with disabilities encounter obstacles in accessing employment opportunities, including discrimination and lack of accommodations.
The emergence of remote work platforms offers new opportunities for disabled persons with ICT skills to participate in the workforce and overcome geographical constraints.

For the Private Sector:
Green businesses are predominantly in agriculture, agroturism and manufacturing, with energy efficiency also being significant.
Small and medium enterprises dominate the green business landscape.
The majority of green businesses do not have an environmental certificate.
Green businesses prioritize hiring from vulnerable communities, recognizing the value that these young individuals bring to the workforce.
Business owners and employees highlight the positive impact of inclusive hiring practices, such as providing meaningful employment opportunities and fostering a supportive work environment.
The majority of green businesses plan to hire new workers in the coming years, with a focus on engaging youth locally to prevent brain drain and foster economic stability.
Businesses are planning to hire in the next few years, primarily in small numbers.
Data indicates a palpable gap in the financial competencies required to operate within the green economy—a sector characterized by its unique business models, regulatory landscapes, and market dynamics. The voices of business owners and young aspiring entrepreneurs highlight a common

theme: a pressing need for robust financial literacy programs tailored to the green economy's distinctive context.

For Schools and TVET Institutions:

Schools are considered important for developing social skills and self-control.
There's a preference for workplace training for acquiring green skills.
The quantitative data suggest a high entrepreneurial intention among respondents, especially in Shkoder and Diber.
Technical and specialized roles like 'Senior Agricultural Technician' are of high interest.
Considering the economic trends in agrotourism, even it is imperative to revise the curriculum to include competencies related to organic and bio products, traditional Albanian production, energy and water conservation, and agricultural technology. Also, the curriculum should be updated to cover automation in agriculture, the use of digital irrigation systems, and measurement systems for parameters like temperature and humidity."

Economic incentives are a significant factor in job preference within the green economy.
There's a strong demand for targeted vocational training in the green economy sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Youth Engagement in the Green Transition:

1. Develop educational initiatives targeting youth to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the green economy and green jobs. Utilize social media platforms to disseminate information and raise awareness about environmental concepts and career opportunities in sustainable sectors.
2. Provide support for youth entrepreneurship in environmentally sustainable sectors, such as agrotourism, renewable energy, etc. Offer financial assistance and mentorship programs to empower young entrepreneurs, particularly women, in starting and managing green businesses.
3. Empower youth to actively participate in climate policy dialogues and environmental activism. Encourage young people to advocate for sustainable policies and practices at local, national, and international levels, amplifying their voices in shaping the green transition.
4. Encourage youth to lead eco-conscious community projects aimed at promoting sustainability and addressing environmental challenges. Support initiatives that empower young people to take active roles in implementing green practices and fostering positive change within their communities.
5. Emphasize the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills among youth through formal education and workplace training. Equip young people with the skills needed to adapt to the evolving demands of the green economy and contribute effectively to sustainable development efforts.
6. Provide economic incentives to encourage youth to pursue careers in environmentally sustainable sectors. Offer scholarships, grants, and financial support for vocational training and higher education programs focused on green jobs, making these career paths more accessible and attractive to young people.

For " Employment Offices and Agencies in focusing their attention to referrals for green job opportunities":

1. Customize vocational training programs to include green skills that align with market demands, ensuring gender inclusivity and addressing the specific needs of vulnerable communities. Provide hands-on training and practical experience to prepare youth for careers in environmentally sustainable sectors.

2. Create platforms for youth participation in policy-making and environmental discourse at various government levels. Empower young people to advocate for green initiatives and contribute to the development of policies that promote sustainability and support green job creation.
3. Facilitate financial and technical aid for youth participation in green initiatives. Provide training, capacity building programs, mentorship, access to resources, project design and implementation support, networking opportunities, funding, and grants to empower youth to engage in green entrepreneurship and employment.
4. Encourage entrepreneurship among youth by providing support for green business development. Offer guidance on navigating regulatory frameworks, accessing financing, and implementing sustainable practices. Foster innovation and creativity in product development to meet the growing demand for green products and services.
5. Advocate for clearer policies and universal standards to support the adoption of green practices by businesses. Work with governmental agencies to develop streamlined processes and regulations that facilitate the transition to environmentally sustainable operations. Provide guidance and assistance to businesses seeking to implement green initiatives.
6. Foster collaboration and partnerships between employment offices, educational institutions, businesses, and government agencies to maximize the impact of efforts to promote green job opportunities. Create synergies between stakeholders to create a supportive ecosystem for youth engagement in the green transition.

For the NGOs:

1. NGOs should continue to advocate for the implementation of gender-responsive policies within the green economy, focusing on promoting equal access to training, resources, and opportunities for women.
2. NGOs dedicated to disability rights should work towards enhancing disability inclusion efforts within the green economy, advocating for the removal of barriers to employment and the implementation of accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
3. Offer skill development programs tailored to the needs of women and persons with disabilities, particularly focusing on ICT skills that can enhance their employability in emerging sectors like the green economy.

4. Support individuals with disabilities in accessing remote work platforms such as Fiverr and Upwork by providing training and resources to leverage their ICT skills effectively.
5. Collaborate with governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to advocate for systemic changes that promote gender equality and disability inclusion in the workforce, including the development of supportive policies and infrastructure.
6. Conduct awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of gender equality and disability inclusion in the green economy, aiming to foster a culture of inclusion and diversity within workplaces and communities.
7. Offer support services such as counseling, mentorship, and networking opportunities to women and persons with disabilities entering the green economy job market, ensuring they have the necessary support to succeed in their careers.

For the Private Sector:

1. Promote initiatives such as skill-enhancement workshops, mentorship programmes, and scholarships that aim to attract and cultivate the potential of young individuals. Businesses can contribute to the development of a proficient and enduring workforce for the future by allocating resources towards nurturing the future leaders and innovators.

2. To promote environmentally conscious behaviour and ensure long-term viability, foster a culture of environmental values and practices within the workplace. Promote the adoption of eco-friendly practices among staff members, such as recycling, waste reduction, and energy preservation. In order to foster staff's understanding of the importance of environmental stewardship and their role in mitigating climate change and protecting natural resources, it is recommended to offer training sessions and provide relevant materials.

3. Recognise the need for extensive financial literacy programmes tailored to the specific characteristics of the green economy. Participate in partnerships with financial institutions, governmental entities, and nonprofit organisations to develop and implement educational programmes aimed at equipping business owners and entrepreneurs with the necessary financial skills to succeed in environmentally sustainable sectors.

4. Facilitate the establishment of networking and collaborative avenues among governmental entities, academic establishments, industry associations, and environmentally conscious enterprises. Promote cooperation, alliances, and joint initiatives to foster innovation, share exemplary methods, and tackle common challenges faced by companies in eco-friendly sectors. Through the process of collaboration, companies have the opportunity to leverage their collective knowledge and resources in order to expedite the transition towards a more ecologically sustainable economy.

5. Engage with policymakers and key stakeholders to advocate for legislation that fosters the expansion of environmentally sustainable businesses and to enhance public awareness regarding the benefits of investing in eco-friendly sectors. Businesses have the potential to exert influence on regulations and contribute to the attainment of sustainable development goals through active participation in policy deliberations and advocacy initiatives.

For Schools and TVET Institutions:

1. In light of the economic changes in the industry, the curriculum for Agritourism should be updated to incorporate skills in organic and bio goods, traditional Albanian production techniques, water and energy conservation, and agricultural technology. Revise the curriculum to include digital irrigation systems, automation in agriculture, and temperature and humidity measurement systems. This will support sustainable agriculture practices and help prepare students for jobs in the expanding agritourism industry.

2. Provide thorough career advice on green employment, taking into account both their financial advantages and practical uses. Inform students about the wide range of prospects in the green economy sector, emphasizing the possibility of both career advancement and financial stability. Motivate students to investigate green employment options that complement their abilities and areas of interest.

3. To match educational objectives with the needs of the labour market, offer practical green skills training. Provide students with opportunities for experiential learning and hands-on training so they may acquire the technical skills and competences required for green professions. Work together with industry partners to make sure that training curricula are current, pertinent, and adaptable to changing market demands.

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Appendix I: Indicator Table

[If the study includes a quantitative component, include a detailed indicator table. If an evaluation, this would include quantitative baseline and/or final evaluation figures, raw difference between baseline and final evaluation, and level of significance as applicable.]

Appendix II: Statement of Work, Terms of Reference,and/or Study Protocol

The final Statement of Work, Terms of Reference,and/or Study Protocol that guided the study team should be included as an Appendix. You can find a template for an Assessment, Research or Evaluation Terms of Reference here.

Appendix III: Data Collection Instrument

Youth Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus Group Discussion (FDG) Guide

Note: It is advised to have separate FGDs for males and females. All analysis should examine differences inresponses for males and females.

Consent:

Thank you for volunteering for this interview. My name is _____ and I work with Save the Children within the Skills to Succeed program. Skills to Succeed works to address lack of appropriate skills, access to job information and networking among youth. This interview is completely confidential and personal identifyinginformation will not be shared with others, so please feel free to share your honest feedback to help inform theprogram. Your participation is voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the questions or stop the interviewat any time. Do you have any questions?

If it is all right with you, I would like to record this session and take notes for my own use. Would that be OK?

[If OK…I will begin recording now. Thank you.]

[If not OK…Would it be all right to begin the interview without recording?]Ok. Let's begin!

Rapport building:

Assessment team asks some questions about youth's interest, areas of study, hometown, etc.

Questions:

Session 1. Information

What job would you like to have in the future? Why do want to have this job?

[For in-school youth only] What program are you currently in? Why did you select this program?

How do you prefer to receive information about the labor market and market opportunities and acquiring skills? How do you receive information? Do you want to receive more information than youare currently receiving? Why?

Probe: What type of information do you want to receive?

What are your attitudes towards [selected sector(s)]? What opportunities do you know about in this sector? What opportunities are you interested in?

Probe: Be sure to ask about identified green sectors

What do you see as current barriers to accessing these opportunities right now?

Probe: Location, safety, lack of skills

What important factors do you think about when you look for a job?

Probe: Location, salary, ability to grow…

When thinking of your ideal career, would you be more inclined to work for a company/government or run your own business? Why?

What do you think are successful strategies for finding and keeping a job or starting your own business? What has prevented or helped you find or keep a job or start your own business?

What can a program like ours provide you so you can be successful in attaining a job or starting your own business?

What do the terms "green skills" and "green job" mean to you? *[Provide Save the Children definition after letting youth respond]*

Do you think green skills are important for you? Why or why not?

Do you have any opportunities to develop green skills? If so, where?

Would you be interested in having a green job? Why or why not?

Do you consider that you have opportunities to access green jobs?

Do you consider that you have opportunities to create small green businesses or incomegenerating activities (IGAs)?

Session 2. Needs

In two groups, build a superwoman/superman with skills in working. Come back to the full group and discuss the following questions:

What types of skills/ training do you think are most important? Why?

Probe: Ask about both hard skills and soft skills

How do you think you could acquire these skills?

What are current barriers for you to acquire these skills?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time today and for sharing your insights!

Youth Focus Group Discussion Guide

Exploring Youth Employment Characteristics

Introduction:

1. Introduction and Purpose: "Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain insights into the employment characteristics and challenges faced by youth like yourself. Your input will help us understand the nuances of employment experiences, including aspects such as decent jobs, wages, work time, work conditions, and the finer details of employment offers. Additionally, we are interested in exploring gender and disability-related issues in the context of employment. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

General Information 2. Understanding Participant Background:

- Gender: "Could you please share your gender identity with us?"
- Age: "How old are you?"
- Disability: "Do you have any disability? If yes, could you please elaborate?"

Employment Characteristics 3. Current Employment Status and Decent Jobs:

- Employment Status: "What is your current employment status?"
- Decent Jobs: "Have you ever had a job that you considered to be a 'decent job'? If so, what made it decent in your opinion?"

4. Factors Influencing Job Decency:
    - Determining Factors: "When considering whether a job is decent or not, what factors do you personally prioritize?"
    - Satisfaction with Wage: "How satisfied are you with your current wage or salary?"
5. Work Time and Conditions:
    - Work Hours: "On average, how many hours do you typically work per week in your current job?"
    - Flexibility: "Do you feel that your work time is flexible enough to accommodate your personal needs and responsibilities?"
    - Work Conditions: "How would you rate the overall work conditions in your current job?"

Employment Offers 6. Declined Job Offers and Discrimination:

- Declined Offers: "Have you ever received a job offer that you declined? If yes, what were the reasons behind declining it?"
- Discrimination: "Have you ever faced discrimination or unequal treatment during a job application or interview process based on your gender or disability?"

7. Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities:

- Disability Opportunities: "Do you think there are enough opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the job market? Why or why not?"

Section 4: Additional Comments 8. Open-Ended Reflections:

- Participant Reflections: "Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with employment characteristics, job offers, or related issues?"

. Closing Remarks:

- Appreciation: "Thank you once again for sharing your insights and experiences with us. Your feedback is immensely valuable in understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by youth in the realm of employment. If you have any further thoughts or questions, please feel free to share them."

Schools and Training Centers In-depth Interview Guide

Types of organizations:

Public & Private technical/vocational education & training (TVET) schools, colleges, and training centers run by the government

Private & public sector providers in business skills and entrepreneurship training (including green entrepreneurship)

In-Depth Interview Guide

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of person (or persons) interviewed and position:

Name of Organization/School/Training Center:

Type Ownership (Public, Private, or Other to specify):

Year began operations:

Total number of students trained per year:

Location of operations:

SERVICES OFFERED

What types of services are provided by your organization?

- ¨ Training
- ¨ Placement assistance
- ¨ Others; Please specify:_____

What is the area of focus of your services?

- ¨ Technical skills
- ¨ Business skills
- ¨ Entrepreneurship skills
- ¨ Green skills (including green entrepreneurship skills)

- ¨ Gender equality and social inclusion
- ¨ Others; Please specify:_____

If training is provided on the above topics, what are the main topics addressed in the curriculum?

- ¨ Technical skills
- ¨ Business skills
- ¨ Entrepreneurship skills
- ¨ Green skills (including green entrepreneurship skills)
- ¨ Gender equality and social inclusion
- ¨ Others; Please specify:_____

For each topic/course, please list the length/frequency, cost, average course size (number oftrainees), completion rate below.

	Topic/Course	Length/ Frequency	Cost (if applicable)	Average course size (number of trainees)	Completion rate

Are your courses certified or recognized by professional groups, governments, etc.?

How is training delivered (methods, materials, in-person versus remotely)?

How are trainers trained – What is their background? Any education level or experience required?Does any of your trainers have any training on green skills?

Where is your training provided? Can you reduce the environment impact of your training? (e.g., reduction of the use of plastic, organic or plant based food etc.)?

Is the curriculum an established one, or is it adapted to the needs of different client groups?

How is "successful" completion of training measured? By private sector buyers or employers or other organizations?

What additional services (counseling, placement, etc.) do you provide?

If you offer placement services, what is the process of linking graduates of the programs to potentialemployers? (Continue to Q14) If you do not offer, what is the reason?

For each topic/course, please list the placement rates, barriers to placements, and types of places where students are being placed below.

Topic/Course	Placement rate	Types of places where students are being placed	Barriers to placements

Is there demand for training which you are currently not providing? If so what kinds of training?

Have you experienced any demand for green skills? If so, which skills? Have you been able to respond to this demand? Why or why not?

How are vocational pathways and jobs "gendered?" Which jobs are considered traditionally maleand female in this context? Are some of the jobs more lucrative/secure/in-demand than others? Which, if any, jobs are not reserved for a specific gender, race, ethnic group, socio-economic class,etc.?

What risks might youth face when traveling to participate in trainings or business and trade? Howdoes risk vary for different groups of youth based on gender and other power differentials?

How are training opportunities designed to accommodate youth with disabilities or address genderbarriers to male-dominated fields?

Green skills and green jobs TVET

Does your training include any green skilling? *(Provide Save the Children definition for "green skills").*

Why or why not?

What do youth in your programs need to get green jobs (including wage employment or self-employment)? (*Provide Save the Children definition for "green jobs").*

What opportunities do you see to integrate green skills into your curriculum and/or training program?

What are the steps that would be needed to do this?

Are employers asking for green skills? If so, which employers and which skills?

How would you define a "green TVET program"?

TARGET SERVICE USERS

What types of clients does your organization provide services to (adults, youth)?

- Adults
- Youth

What are the ages of your clients? (youth from_____to_____, adults from__to_____).

What is the percentage of males (_____), females (_____)?

What is the percentage of clients from low income households?

What are the requirements for entering and participating in training?

What or who influences the decision-making of young women, young men, and youth with non-binary gender identities around seeking employment, entrepreneurship activities/ business, or further educational opportunities? How does this vary based on gender and other power differentials?

What, if any are the specific barriers for young women and youth from low income households fromattending the training compared to youth from higher income households?

- High fees and/or cost of training materials
- Transportation costs
- Household chores/responsibilities
- Social norms around gender and employment
- Others; Please specify:_____

What, if any, are the specific barriers for young women and youth from low income households tosuccessfully complete the trainings compared to youth from higher income households?

- Irregular attendance due to other commitments
- Difficulty in understanding/engaging in classroom
- Others; Please specify:_____

What, if any, are the specific barriers for young women and youth from low income households to get accepted for internships/apprenticeships/jobs after the training compared to youth from higherincome households?

COST STRUCTURE

Is the service provided for free? If so, how can you ensure sustainability of programs?

Does the client pay for the service? If so, how much is paid (cost for trainee)?

Do you have any specific programs for students from low income households? (Loans, scholarships,links to government subsidies etc)

MARKETING & PARTNERSHIPS

How do you advertise your services (media, through NGOs or donors, through enterprise or trade groups, word-of-mouth)? Do you use any language related to green skills / green jobs in your advertisements?

Do you have existing contracts/linkages with market actors for placement of program graduates? What about for market actors working in the green economy?

Do government organizations, donors or NGOs approach your organization to provide training totheir program clients?

Do you have partners for which you fulfill the training role?

Do you know any government programs and funds available in support of training opportunities? Ifso, has your organization benefited from these programs/funds?

Is training given in partnership with microfinance institutions?

CONSTRAINTS

What is the capacity for your trainings (how many persons per course)? How many trainers do youhave available at any one time?

Do you have challenges with attracting high quality trainers?

Do you have challenges developing high quality and relevant curriculum? Do you have the capacityto develop high quality and relevant curriculum related to green transition?

If training is not in client organization's facilities, is it a problem for youth to travel to facilities?

Is there any difficulty "getting the word out" about your services?

What other constraints do you face in terms of delivering services?

What support would be needed to address these constraints? (Moderator should record each constraint given and the specific kind of support the respondent indicates is needed to address it.)

Thank you for your time and input!

General

Which sectors in this region are strong and growing?

What is driving demand for these products and services?

Are there major gaps or problems that could be filled by new enterprises or jobs? If so, what?

How likely are these sectors to hire young people in the short or long term?

Are there important programs, policies or regulations helping businesses in these sectors grow or expand markets? Please explain.

Are there any programs, policies, or regulations inhibiting growth? Please explain.

Are there any environmental regulations in these sectors? If so, what are they?

Are there programs, policies, or regulations supporting youth workforce development[3]? Do they differentially impact for people based on their gender, age, ability status [list any other relevant power differentials]? What are their active constraints and/or gaps?

Are there programs, policies, or regulations supporting small and medium enterprises? What are theiractive constraints and/or gaps?

Are there programs, policies, or regulations supporting youth who experience the most inequality (e.g., young women, youth with disabilities, etc.) in obtaining economic opportunities? What are theiractive constraints and/or gaps?

Do government policies and programs exist to promote youth economic empowerment? Do they reflect the input and needs of young women, young men, and youth with non-binary gender identities?

Do government policies and programs exist that promote the employment of youth who experiencethe most inequality (e.g., young women, youth with disabilities, etc.)? Are employers adhering to suchpolicies? If not, why?

Does the government provide any formal or informal labor market exchange systems to help youngpeople hear about and obtain jobs?

Are there any specific grants or subsidies provided for youth development or workforce development? Or for protection of the environment, climate change mitigation, or transition of energy sources? Please explain.

What organizations (including government, NGOs, business support organizations, etc.) are you aware of that work in environmental protection and/or the green economy?

Please see below some additional optional questions for government officials; select the questions that are relevant for the specific individual you are speaking with. For example, employment-related questions wouldbe relevant for Chamber of Commerce staff.

Green Jobs

Which green sectors in this region are strong and growing?

Is there a demand for green products – nationally or internationally?

How likely are these sectors to hire young people in the short or long term?

Which are the most important or largest firms or market actors in these sectors?

What are the main entry-level job opportunities for youth in these sectors in urban areas? (includingfor unskilled or low-skilled youth, and including the formal and informal sectors)

What are the main entry-level job opportunities for youth in these sectors in rural areas? (including forunskilled or low-skilled youth, and including the formal and informal sectors)

What are the main small business opportunities or income generating activities (IGAs) for youth in these sectors in urban areas? (including for unskilled or low-skilled youth, and including the formal andinformal sectors)

What are the main small business opportunities or IGAs for youth in these sectors in rural areas? (including for unskilled or low-skilled youth, and including the formal and informal sectors)

What are the potential sectors with green jobs for youth who experience gender and social inequalities?

What are the informal sectors contributing to the green economy but not recognized?

How can green skilling and green job creation efforts effectively engage youth who face gender andsocial inequalities?

What are the available green skilling opportunities for youth who experience gender and social inequalities?

What are some factors that impact whether all youth are able to access these opportunities, particularly women, youth with disabilities, [insert other relevant power differentials]?

Are there programs, policies, or regulations supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in thegreen economy (green entrepreneurship)?

Potential Employers

Who are the most important or largest firms or market actors in the largest sectors (including greensectors)? List top five that you are aware of.

How are businesses currently training workers (especially youth)?

What firms, if any, demonstrate interest in providing job opportunities to trained youth? What practices or considerations do they employ to ensure that youth who experience gender and socialinequalities are able to access these job opportunities?

What firms, if any, have existing partnerships with training providers or other institutions to hire required labor/staff?

What gender norms, social norms, biases, and stereotypes are factored into employers' hiring process, whether intentionally or unintentionally?

What firms, if any, may be interested in (partnering with Save/local TVET's/NGO partners on) workforce development activities for incumbent and future employees?

What are the gaps and challenges faced by potential employers in identifying and retaining qualityemployees (especially youth)?

Wage Employment Opportunities

What are the main entry level job opportunities in the largest sectors (including green sectors)?

Can any of these job opportunities contribute to the green transition? How?

What is the present and forecasted demand for young labor in these sectors?

What is the general or average job quality (pay, benefits, working conditions, and degree of formalityof businesses etc.) in these sectors? To what extent does job quality differ for employees who experience gender and social inequalities?

Are there any jobs for which youth would be particularly suited? If so, what are they?

Self-Employment Opportunities

What are the main small business opportunities in the largest sectors (including green sectors)?

What is the present and forecasted demand for new businesses like in these sectors?

Will the green transition creating new entrepreneurship opportunities?

What is the general or average structure of operating a business in these sectors (i.e. start-up cost, fixed/variable cost, profit margin, revenue)?

Are there any business opportunities for which youth would be particularly suited? If so, what arethey?

Are capital and other resources equally available to young entrepreneurs from different groups?

Are these opportunities equally accessible to and taken up by youth who face gender and social inequalities?

What social or community norms exist that encourage or discourage young women, young men, andyouth with non-binary gender identities from pursuing training or employment/business opportunities?

Skills for Employment

Which skills and/or competencies (including green skills) are required or in highest demand for gaining employed in in the largest sectors (including green sectors)?

Do vocational training institutions and other training providers support technical skills developmentopportunities for young women, young men, and youth with non-binary gender identities that matchmarket demand?

Are any educational qualifications required for gaining employed in these sectors? What are they?

Do workers usually learn on the job, or do they obtain an education or training first?

Skills for Entrepreneurship

Which skills and/or competencies (including green skills) are required or in highest demand for operating a business in these sectors?

Are any educational qualifications required for gaining employment in these sectors? What arethey?

Do workers usually learn on the job, or do they obtain an education or training first?

What barriers and opportunities do youth who experience gender and social inequalities face in acquiring skills for entrepreneurship?

Potential Training Partners

What are the most capable public and private sector workforce education and training institutions inthese sectors (including green sectors)? Name the top five.

What kinds of services do they provide?

Who are their clients (youth, adult, professionals, laborers, etc)?

What are their current capacities and needs?

Where are the strengths and where are the gaps?

Do they have any experience including green skills in their training?

What are the most capable public and private sector institutions supporting entrepreneurship and market linkages (e.g. business service providers, incubators, financial institutions, entrepreneurship programs, universities, etc.) in these sectors (including green sectors)?

What kinds of services do they provide?

Who are their clients (youth, adult, professionals, laborers, etc)?

What are their current capacities and needs?

Where are the strengths and where are the gaps?

Do they have any experience including green skills in their training?

Youth-led actions and innovations for green skills and green jobs

What programs or approaches are in place to promote youth-led actions and innovation on green skillsand jobs?

What are the skills and supports needed for youth to promote their innovations and solutions?

What barriers and opportunities do youth who experience gender and social inequalities face indesigning and implementing actions related to green innovations, skilling, and jobs?

Green Economy Experts - Interview Guide

Examples of green economy experts:

Green industry associations

Government industry/trade/development representatives, employers, and entrepreneurs workingin the green economy

Employment agencies/consultancies with experience in the green economy

TVET providers/private sector training institutes with experience in green skills training

Other donors/NGO's focused on green skills and green jobs

Experts/thought leaders/academics studying and/or working on the green transition

Interview Guide

Please see below some questions for green economy experts; not all questions may be relevant for all stakeholders; select the questions that are relevant for the specific individual you are speaking with.

How would you define "green skills" and "green jobs"? *[After hearing their response, provide Save theChildren definition to frame the discussion]*

Which green sectors in this region are currently strong?

What green sectors do you expect will grow in the next 5-10 years?

Are there any informal sectors contributing to the green economy but not recognized?

What is driving demand for these products and services?

What are the main entry-level job opportunities in these green sectors (both in rural and urban areas)?

Are there any green jobs for which youth would be particularly suited? If so, what are they?

What green skills/experiences would youth need to obtain these green jobs?

Do you know any barriers adolescents and youth are facing in accessing these green jobs?

What are the main small business opportunities in these green sectors (both in rural and urban areas)?

Are there any green jobs for which youth would be particularly suited? If so, what are they?

What green skills/experiences would youth need to obtain these green jobs?

Do you know any barriers adolescents and youth are facing in accessing these green jobs?

What is the general or average job quality (pay, benefits, working conditions, and degree of formalityof businesses etc.) in these green sectors?

Are there important programs, policies or regulations helping businesses in these green sectors growor expand markets? What are their active constraints and/or gaps?

Are there any programs, policies, or regulations inhibiting growth in the green sector? Please explain.

Are there any environmental regulations in the green sectors? If so, what are they?

Are there any specific grants or subsidies provided for youth development or workforce developmentin green sectors? Or for protection of the environment, climate change mitigation, or transition of energy sources? Please explain.

What social or community norms exist that encourage or discourage young women, young men, andyouth with non-binary gender identities from pursuing training or employment/business opportunities in the green economy?

How can green skilling and green job creation efforts effectively engage youth who face gender andsocial inequalities?

Are there programs, policies, or regulations supporting youth who experience the mostinequality (e.g., young women, youth with disabilities, etc.) in obtaining economic opportunities in green sectors? What are their active constraints and/or gaps?

Who are the most important or largest firms or market actors working in the green economy? Listtop five that you are aware of.

What firms, if any, demonstrate interest in providing job opportunities to trained youth?

Can you share any examples of businesses that have successfully undergone a green transition? If so,what made them successful?

Who are the most capable public and private sector workforce education and training institutions inthe green economy sectors? Name the top five.

What kinds of services do they provide?

Who are their clients (youth, adult, professionals, laborers, etc.)?

What are their current capacities and needs?

Where are the strengths and where are the gaps?

Who are the most capable public and private sector institutions supporting entrepreneurship and market linkages (e.g. business service providers, incubators, financial institutions, entrepreneurship programs, universities, etc.) in the green economy?

What kinds of services do they provide?

Who are their clients (youth, adult, professionals, laborers, etc.)?

What are their current capacities and needs?

Where are the strengths and where are the gaps?

What other organizations (including government, NGOs, etc.) are you aware of in your communitythat work in environmental protection and/or combatting climate change?

What programs or approaches are in place to promote youth-led action and innovation related to greeninnovations, skills and jobs?

What are the skills and supports needed for youth to promote their innovations and solutions?

What barriers and opportunities do youth who experience gender and social inequalities facein designing and implementing actions related to green innovations, skilling, and jobs?