Practice-Integrated Study Programs in Agriculture Sciences for A Better School to Work Transition in Albania and Kosovo: A Stakeholders Overview

Dorjan Marku¹, Myqerem Tafaj², Ardita Hoxha-Jahja³, Petri Kainulainen³
¹Fan S. Noli University, Korçë, Albania
²Agriculture University of Tirana, Albania
³Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Iisalmi, Finland

Abstract

The quality of study programs in higher education is a significant determinant for facilitating the transition of graduates from university toward the labour market. The risk of losing qualified human resources due to a knowledge-based society and economy and offering a “university product” not in compliance with the labour market needs, has called the attention of governments and higher education institutions (HEI) in Albania and Kosovo to rethink the academic offer and the content of study programs curriculums, for a better and earlier integration of higher education graduates in the labour market. This study explores how stakeholders (private and public institutions) perceive the level of practical orientation delivered from higher education study programs in agricultural sciences. Through quantitative research instruments were analyzed the opinions and expectations provided by company and public institutions toward the skills, especially practical skills, that should possess graduates in agricultural sciences. The findings revealed the significance of competencies acquired from graduates through work-based placement, continuous training, and trainings abroad for fulfilling the demand of the labour market according to the needs of the employers. Also, the findings revealed that more efforts should be devoted to the cooperation with work-life-partners (WLP) in the process of reform of study programs aiming to develop practical skills and increase the quality of scientific and professional education level of graduates in agricultural sciences.

Keywords: competencies, work-based placement, labour market, stakeholders, HEI