

Connecting Albania's Remote Areas with E-School Program



EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY PROJECT

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Overview

Free movement and efforts for a better life near urban areas in the early 1990s caused intense migration of tens of thousands families from their local dwellings and areas of origin within Albania. As a result, education in a once large network of well-organized schools in those areas slackened and attendance dropped.

Challenge

Education is universally recognized as key to fostering economic growth and alleviating poverty, both local and nationally. The Albanian economy increasingly needs a more sophisticated labor force equipped with competencies, knowledge, and workplace skills that cannot be developed through only a basic education. While the quality of education and student performance is increasing in Albania, the progress for rural communities is not as fast as those in urban ones. According to the Ministry of Education and Science and to Matura exam results, rural children enrol less in secondary education and have lower exam results as compared to those in urban areas.

As a strategy to improve education outcomes while reducing the education gap between urban and rural areas, the Government of Albania introduced the E-school program with support from the World Bank and other donors. This program seeks to promote education excellence for all students, while diminishing the many differences that exist between urban and rural schools. In the rural areas, a particular problem targeted under the project are the overall degraded school facilities, including lack of laboratories, and insufficient teaching and learning materials.

Under the E-school program, a new curriculum on computer technology was introduced in schools, computer labs were purchased and delivered to schools all over Albania, schools gained access to internet services, and teachers were trained on teaching computer skills at basic and secondary schools. This was particularly important in terms of closing

MULTIMEDIA

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More Results



16,819

more computers were purchased for basic and secondary schools, doubling the number of computers available for Albanian students.

In 2009, one computer was available for 25 students, whereas in 2006 there were 61 students per computer on average, while in rural areas only 148 students per computer.

Over 520,000 students are benefiting from the Project, which has been implemented in 250 elementary schools,

the digital gap – according to UNICEF in 2006 only 20 percent of rural children knew how to use computers, compared to 50 percent of urban children.

1,477 9-year schools, and 380 secondary schools

Approach

People use communication technology as an effective way to meet new people, research, and work in a globalised society. The introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in schools through the E-Schools Program was chosen as a strategy to improve the education of primary and secondary level students, including connecting those living in remote areas to their peers in urban areas and to the rest of the world. Under the program, schools receive a computer lab with internet connection, and teachers are trained on how to use interactive tools with their curriculum. The World Bank is supporting this program by providing a credit in the amount of US\$15 million under the “Education Excellence and Equity Project” (EEE Project).

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Results

The objective of the e-school component of the EEE Project is to introduce ICT skills for all Albanian students in basic and secondary education. In particular, the component supports:

The development and implementation of a national ICT curriculum framework and computer textbooks for basic and secondary school level.

Equipping all schools with computer laboratories and internet connection and other ICTs facilities such as laptops, projectors, and digital resources.

Teacher training under the E-Schools Program. Presently, more than 1,380 basic education teachers and around 400 secondary school teachers have received training on informatics. Over the next year, the project will support the training of an additional group of teachers on incorporating technology into teaching methodologies.

“By helping to narrow the digital divide in Albania, this project is helping Albanian children to learn computer programs, to navigate the Internet, and to share and play with other children across the world. But, most importantly, this project prepares them to compete in the global labor market of tomorrow. This project will also help teachers to get closer to their students by offering them opportunities to learn themselves what they did not learn when they were students.”

— *Project co-Team Task Leader, Gentjana Sula*

“I can say that it was unimaginable to use photos or internet data as basic information in geography classes. For several years, teaching classes were routine every year, so the same information was transmitted to the students each and every year – everything was limited and tied to the same book and that

same text. But now the geography classes, during which the island of Japan is explained, can be associated with a variety of information downloaded from the informatics lab. It is the students who ask for it, starting from the simple photos up to the most complicated information, like the change of geological structures or even the latest most updated information.””

—*Klementina Ferhati, 9th grade geography and computer teacher, Fushas, Baldushk*

Toward the Future

The performance of the education sector would be a key determinant of Albanian's future competitiveness and economic growth. Given Albanian's aspirations to maintain growth, narrow regional disparities, and join the EU, the main challenge in the education sector is to develop a system and institutions which prepare school graduates to function effectively in labour markets. The World Bank has given US\$ 36.6 million through three projects to improve the education system in Albania.