

**2017**  
**2021**

**POLIS UNIVERSITY  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

**The Path from Student to Alumni  
Mission, Values and Objectives of Alumni  
Employment and Statistics  
Success Stories**

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# 1. THE PATH FROM STUDENT TO POLIS ALUMNI

## 1.1 POLIS University Profile

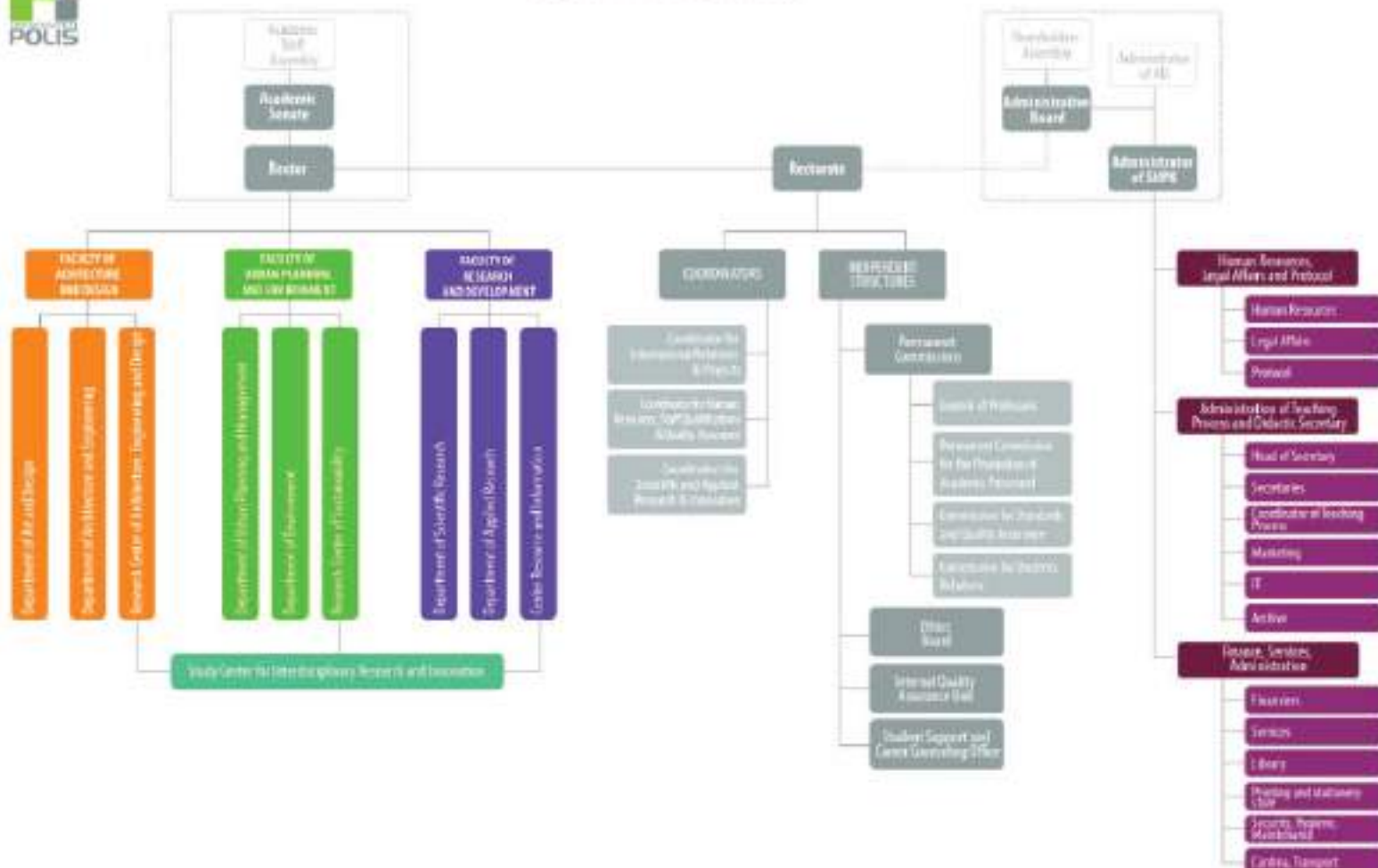
U\_POLIS is a regional educational platform in the territory of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean, aiming to create a new generation of “socially responsible” professionals and scientists. POLIS pays special attention to the involvement of students in education based on scientific research, engaging in community projects, concrete services for local government, as well as scientific research, development and innovation programs — for civil society, entrepreneurship and authorities.

In 2006, POLIS University opened the study program in MSc. Architecture and Urban Design, a discipline that was highly sought after by students at that time, but also in the following years. In 2007, the MSc. program in Urban Planning & Management was launched. In the upcoming years, new study programs were opened, in the branches BSc. Art and Design (2010), BSc. Environmental Studies (2011). In 2010, 6 new study programs were opened in the second cycle (joint Master's degrees with IHS/ERASMUS University, Rotterdam, as well as with the participation and contribution of Lawrence Technological University, Detroit). In 2012 decision No. 270, dated 20.05.2016, the Albanian Government approved the change of status of POLIS from “Private Institute of Higher Education” to “University. In the same year, MAS (Ministry of Education and Science) also granted the right for POLIS to offer Third Cycle studies, Doctorate (Joint Program with the University of Ferrara, Italy). Further on, new study programs were opened in U\_POLIS: BSc. Civil Engineering and Vocational School (2013) in the areas of interest of U\_POLIS. The Master MBA program, in collaboration with IPAG Business School in Paris (2014), MSc. in Civil Engineering (2016), BSc. In Computer Sciences (2019), MSc. in Computer Sciences (2022), BSc. In Business Administration (2022).

Today U\_POLIS has three large units (Faculties), nine basic units (Departments), and an inter-departmental unit, known as “IF, Innovation Factory”. Meanwhile, one of the 3 large units (Faculties) deals specifically with academic and applied Research and Development. POLIS has also established the “Project Mobilization and Administration Unit” where self-financed education and science projects are implemented, or financed by the Albanian authorities, the EU, and/or bilateral donors, etc. Meanwhile, all academic programs and the institution itself have been (re-)accredited several times both in Albania and in institutions abroad. The University also hosts: AUA, the Union of Architects, Urbanists and Planners of Albania; a multimedia art gallery (known as: MAD Center); and a UNECE “Centre of Excellence” for “Sustainable Housing and Resilient Planning and Development” (also known as: OMB — Mediterranean Basin Observatory). POLIS organizes “Architecture and Design Weeks” every year, publishes many publications within POLIS Press, including two international scientific journals. POLIS University is an institutional member and signatory of the “Bologna Charter” (Magna Carta), as well as having full membership in a number of European university associations, in its fields of interest



# Organizational Structure

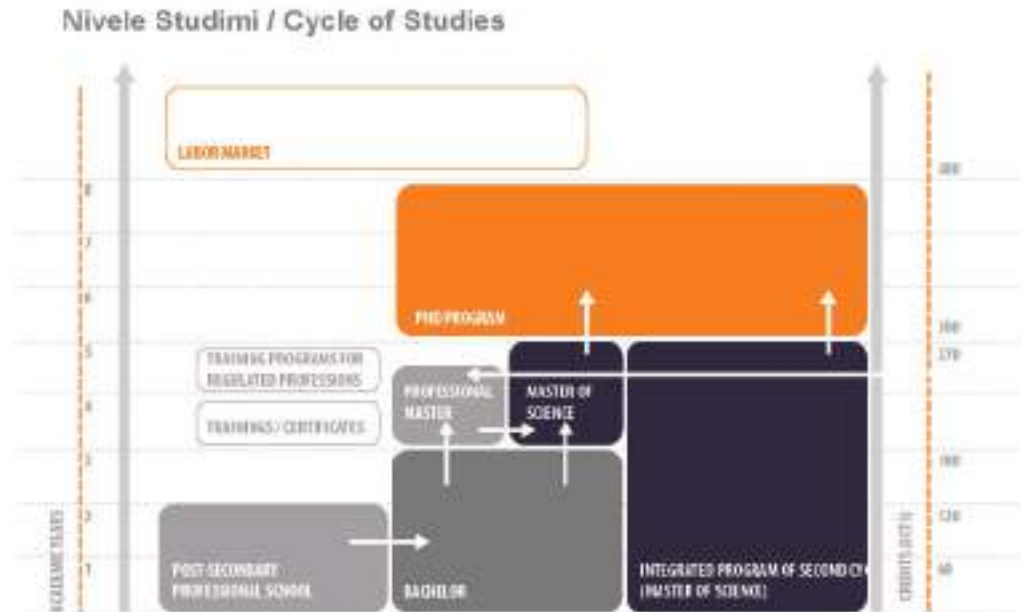


## 1.2 Study Programs

U\_POLIS offers a “focused range of studies” in Art-Design, Architecture, Urban Planning and Environmental Studies, Engineering and Technology, public and private administration, as well as other profiles. At U\_POLIS, studies are offered at four levels: Professional Education, Bachelor, Professional Master, Executive and Scientific, or Doctoral programs, as well as postgraduate training courses and certificates valid for licensing.

At POLIS University, the study programs are organized in the following cycles:

1. Post-Secondary (Professional School),
2. Bachelor,
3. Master (Integrated Program of Second Cycle, Professional Master, Master of Science).
4. PhD Program.



Lifelong-learning experience is considered essential in the context of dynamic labor market

CERTIFICATE for "Appraiser for agricultural land, forest land, meadow and barren land"  
CERTIFICATE for "Real Estate Appraisal for Building, Land"  
CERTIFICATE for "Energy Auditor"

# LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMS:

## Post-Secondary (Professional School)

Professional Diploma in Energy Efficiency

Professional Diploma in Maintenance of Computer Networks

## Bachelor Studies of POLIS:

Bachelor in Art and Design

Bachelor in Civil Engineering

Bachelor in Environmental Studies

Bachelor in Computer Science

Bachelor in Business Administration

## Integrated Program of Second Cycle:

Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design

Master of Science in Urban Planning and Management

## Advanced Professional Master in Digital Architecture

Professional Master in Spatial Planning and GIS Application

## Master of Science:

Master of Science in Applied Design

Master of Science in Civil Engineering

Master of Science in Urban Environmental Management

Master of Science in Computer Sciences

Master of Science in Business Administration (MBA)

Executive Master in Restoration, Conservation and Valorization of Cultural Heritage

PhD Studies in Architecture and Urban Planning



## 1.3 Being a Student at POLIS

U\_POLIS is the “Space for Thought” of policies for spatial development, applied design and technology, as well as for leadership and entrepreneurship! The mission of U\_POLIS is to provide “Knowledge, Technology and Leadership”. Through scientific and applied research, U\_POLIS develops and promotes “scientific excellence and innovation”. Through academic education, it improves creative and comprehensive competence.

Students of POLIS University, beside their theoretical skills, are equipped with the qualities of professional leadership in the fields it covers in order to influence for positive development of the country and the region. The students are provided with theoretical and practical knowledge according to the highest and contemporary standards, aiming at their rapid integration in the domestic and international labor market. Polis University carry out study, research, scientific and practical activities to enhance the academic activity efficacy. Students are acquainted with the innovation in their studying fields and it’s developments in the region, by aiming to grow the university space into one regional platform and reference point in the Adriatic and Ionian region and furthermore in The Balkans.

During their studies, students are encouraged to push their thinking process towards finding solutions for actual problems, through different project collaborations with institutions, companies and enterprises. "

Students’ role in the academic and social life of the university, is enhanced and supported by the “Students Association” and the “Office of Student Support and Career Counseling”, which together manage to enliven the social life, discuss on their further career through professional counseling. Participation and collaboration with these units, as well as with the various activities that are organized on campus, complete the entire panorama of academic, professional and social life at POLIS, followed by “Alumni Association” after graduation



## 1.4 Graduation as a start

During the last two years of their studies, students are presented with entrepreneurship skills by: group working, presentation performances and specific courses designed to creating a virtual enterprise including all operational stages. This process is considered an important leap in the professional life of POLIS students, having achieved the proper training for their eventual working challenges as self-managed future professionals through freelancing or engaging in different corporations.

The moment of graduation, with a traditional ceremony in POLIS main hall is the main is the first milestone towards the career path of students. The new beginning is accompanied with the further on collaboration of Alumni with the university, through common projects, workshops or even teaching experiences to POLIS. The statement "Once a student of POLIS, always part of POLIS" is the philosophy which is unfolded into Alumni Association, which the graduates are part since they finish their studies.

POLIS University hence the main objectives to create, develop, forward and protect knowledge through teaching, scientific research and applied as well as innovation; provides the possibility of professional training and lifelong learning; The expanded portfolio of study programs and post graduate professional trainings, has empowered Polis students to think "outside the box" and explore interdisciplinary approaches towards the labor market, demonstrating leadership and professionalism in every step of their career.





## 1.5 What does it mean being POLIS Alumni

POLIS Graduates Community have important responsibilities. Between the individual need to represent themselves as a professional with a comprehensive training and qualitative educational background to the preservation of POLIS Community principles. Being a member of Alumni Association, allow each of the members to enhance their individual personality while complementing each other progress, by having a common space at POLIS.

Another tradition and consequence of the education at POLIS is the continuation of contribution of POLIS Alumni, to the further growth of the Alumni Community. With the university, growing each year, a considerable number of them naturally finds their way to stay at POLIS or Metro POLIS, Co-Plan after graduation, through engaging temporary partnerships, in Tirana Architecture Weeks or Tirana Design Weeks, different projects, part time staff or in some cases as full time staff.

### Members of the ALUMNI association have the right to:

- Actively participate in the social life and activities of the ALUMNI Association, as well as U\_POLIS, AUA, Metro\_POLIS, Co\_PLAN, and the network of POLIS partners, etc.
- To be informed about the activities of the ALUMNI Association and to participate in all social functions of the Association through competition
- To be potential beneficiaries of any of the assistance schemes or programs administered by the ALUMNI Association and the POLIS network.
- To benefit from scholarships and professional deepening from this network
- To exhibit their works in POLIS environments, conferences and activities, in the Gallery-MAD and other infrastructural assets of POLIS University
- Engage in various projects of U\_POLIS, Metro\_POLIS, Co-PLAN according to needs, and subject to selection/competition by U\_POLIS, Co-PLAN and Metro\_POLIS.
- To benefit from publications/magazines of POLIS University as well as participation in activities or further qualifications at a subsidized/reduced price.
- To be informed by Office of Students Support and Career Council and POLIS about the various employment opportunities and fairs or further qualifications, which come from other companies and institutions in the country and abroad.

## 1.6 Mission and Objectives of Alumni Association

The Association of Former Students (graduate students, or ALUMNI as they are known internationally) is established at POLIS in 2014. Together with the Students Association, they guarantee a very good long-term interaction between the (former) student community, administration, academic staff and the university itself, addressing many issues related to the quality of the learning process, infrastructure, staff, curricula, social, cultural and sports life, education for life after school, and the success/integration of graduates in the labor market, from local to international

Meanwhile, students are also very active in the public life of the country, in "social media", they open exhibitions, design and promote the image and quality of the University, or help in more detail with indirect marketing, employment opportunities in the network, POLIS Press publications, or the brand "I LOVE POLIS". The association of former students' "ALUMNI" consists of the Constitutional Assembly and the Executive Board that exercises its activity in close coordination with the governing bodies of POLIS University and focuses on the professional performance of individuals who have completed their studies at U\_POLIS. Through its meetings and activities, the Association helps in the transmission of ideas, initiatives, innovation, collaborations among each other in the community but also in the wider public. These are more than necessary for the students themselves after the graduation process, and especially when facing the labor market. The governing bodies of the Association are: the General Assembly, the Executive Board and the Chairman.

The Alumni Association has its own Statute and communicates with members through the e-mail/telephone database system declared by each member (updated periodically by Office of Students Support and Career counseling) as well as through social media.



# Part of the staff of POLIS University, which are engaged in different roles at POLIS University

## FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN



**Xhoi Musliaka**  
Department of Art & Design



**Renis Batalli**  
Department of Art & Design



**Keti Hoxha**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Megi Sinani**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Avrili Meshi**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Arjola Gjeci**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Kejsi Veselagu**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Albi Alliaj**  
Department of Architecture  
and Engineering



**Flavio Cyci**  
Research Center in Architecture,  
Engineering and Design

# FACULTY OF PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN MANAGEMENT



**Sadmira Malaj**  
Department of Planning and  
Management



**Armela Reka**  
Department of Planning and  
Management



**Eneida Çela**  
Department of Planning and  
Management



**Françeska Korançe**  
Department of Environment



**Samel Kruja**  
Department of Environment



**Artan Kacani**  
Innovation Factory

## FACULTY OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



**Malvina Istrefaj**

Department of Scientific  
Research



**Amoreld Mio**

Department of Applied Design



**Kristiana Meço**

Polis Press



**Ermal Hoxha**

Polis Press

## OTHER UNITS



**Vjola Ziu**  
Marketing, Polis



**Kejt Dhrami**  
Co-Plan



**Imeldi Sokoli**  
Co-Plan



**Fiona Imami**  
Co-Plan



**Sara Korreshi**  
Co-Plan



**Rea Muka**  
Co-Plan

# 2. EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

## 2.1 University level statistics

POLIS University gathers Data for tracking students who have completed their studies for each study program that POLIS University offers. In this Alumni report, the employment data of each of them has been collected by contacting them via personal contacts generated by the periodical update through Alumni Questionnaire or even through conversations or meetings, thus highlighting some cases as more successful than others.

POLIS University has a special and independent unit for student support, which is called the Office of Students Support and Career Counseling. This unit performs a dual function. First, assisting students during their studies by supporting student social life in POLIS, with annual cultural, sports and artistic activities in cooperation with the Student Senate. Second, by mediating spaces for professional practices and employment. This process is carried out by Students Support and Career Counseling by maintaining constant communications with businesses, companies and various institutions, by implementing cooperation agreements, career fairs, etc.

This unit has created a database since the first generations entered the labor market and maintains periodic contact with students while simultaneously updating this database. OSSCC traces the professional progress of graduates, tracking their employment, achievements, difficulties and adaptation to the labor market; through which it enables the recognition of the dynamics of the labor market, the processes of lobbying and the protection of professional rights, as well as the procedures of state exams or licensing.

The data generated by this Office, identify the percentage of employment of graduates related to their profession, the nature of their employment in private — public institutions; the percentage of graduates who pass the state exam and are licensed, when the study program is related to a regulated profession etc.



UNIVERSITETI POLIS





## 2.2 Total number of graduates from 2011 – 2021 calendar year, in relation to employment

The overall summary about the employment of the graduates, the sectors where this employment takes place and whether graduates are currently pursuing further studies can be found in the table below.

Data on graduates until the end of the academic year 2020-2021												
NR	STUDY PROGRAM	N. of graduates in the end of A.Y 2020-2021	Employment		Employment in relation with the profession		Employment Sector		Engagement in Private Business		Further studies	Without answers
			Employed	NOT Employed	According to their diploma	Not related with their Diplomas	Public Sector	Private Sector	Freelancer	Owning a Private Business	Continue (just graduate studies)	
1	Vocational School (Energy Efficiency and Computer Network Maintenance)	190	158	8	112	44	9	147	3	8	4	28
2	BSc. Art Design	226	204	12	202	9	8	193	24	18	15	12
3	BSc. Civil Engineering	102	80	4	11	8	6	83	0	5	27	9
4	BSc. Environmental Studies	37	24	12	45	29	11	63	1	4	19	11
5	MSc. Architecture and Urban Design	362	317	16	304	13	11	286	91	47	15	29
6	MSc. Management and Marketing Studies	122	97	11	16	11	15	28	0	5	5	14
7	PM in Digital Architecture (PAD)	132	116	3	307	9	15	94	11	8	5	13
8	PM in Spatial Planning and GIS + MBA (PPJ/M)	194	204	11	250	19	10	219	0	7	0	27
9	Master of Science (Applied Design, Urban Management, Civil Engineering)	206	235	13	224	11	11	204	14	4	6	18
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1792</b>	<b>1539</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1186</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>1314</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>163</b>

Notes:

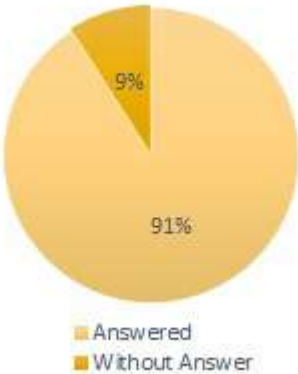
- 1: For ease of calculation, some study programs are grouped by cycle/profile. This means that the number of the Programs presented in this does not correspond to the nr. of Study Programs that POLIS University offers.
- 2: The above data pertains to graduates until the end of the academic year 2020-2021, collected until September 2022
- 3: The total number of employed graduates is not equal to the total number of all other employment positions, as a graduate may be double-employed / engaged in private business.
- 4: The calculation of student's responses regarding the employment sector includes the total number of responses, while in the Engagement in Private Initiatives category, students positioned in the private sector, who find themselves as freelancers or as individuals who have founded / are part of private or family businesses.
- 5: In tabular calculations, third-level (doctorate) students have not been taken into consideration, given that their employment situation is 100% (of which approximately 95% in higher education institutions) and are a category with independent academic and professional progress.
- 6: New study programs of POLIS that have not yet graduated students are also not included in this process

## 2.3 Level of employment in the profession, based on data collected from EE to Master of Science, PhD

Regarding the information that the Office of Students Support and Career Counseling accumulates, starting from the month of July until the month of September, it refers to the self-declared information of graduated students, collected through a questionnaire that OSSCC uses to generate information from ALUMNI. Graduates until the end of the academic year 2020-2021, during this period of data collection, have answered the questionnaires to the extent of 90.9%, which in numbers translates into the ratio: 1629 / 1792 students. Of this population that has successfully completed the questionnaire, 94.47% of them declare that they are employed (1539 students). This figure could be presented with small fluctuations, if the percentage of responses from students was 100%.

From overall table, is evident that from the total number of students who answered the questionnaire (of 90.9%), 94.47% are employed, from which 90.05% of them declare to be employed in accordance with their profession.

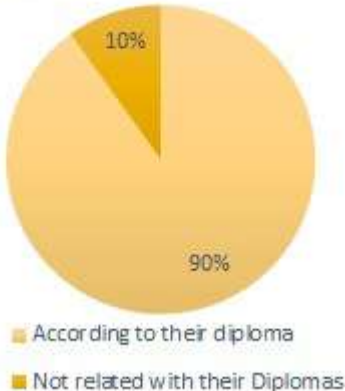
**Response Ratio**



**Employment Status**



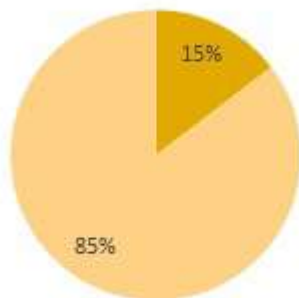
**Employment in relation with the profession**



Based on the statistical processing and the population that responded with the status of employed, most of them (85%) are mostly integrated in the private sector of employment and only 15% in the public sector. This main factor contributing to this ratio is the applicative nature of the majority of the study programs combined with the quick accessibility, which allows the students to explore more in this market. From the data related with private initiatives, it is found that 19% (288 students) have declared that have initiated their own startups or private businesses from which 37% in the form of freelancer comparison with 63% who have initiated a Startup Business or have taken upon the responsibility of managing their small family businesses.

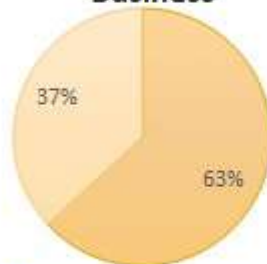
In continuation of professional growth, 9% of POLIS graduates have chosen to currently follow another study program immediately after graduation, which generally consists on following the second cycle of studies (for the ones who have just concluded a bachelor studies), in relation with the ones who firstly engage in the labor market, to further on explore the post graduating qualifications.

**Employment Sector**



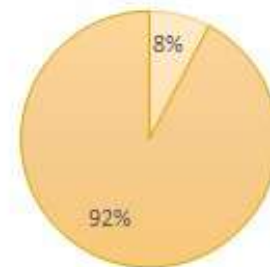
■ Public Sector ■ Private Sector

**Engagement in Private StartUps and Business**



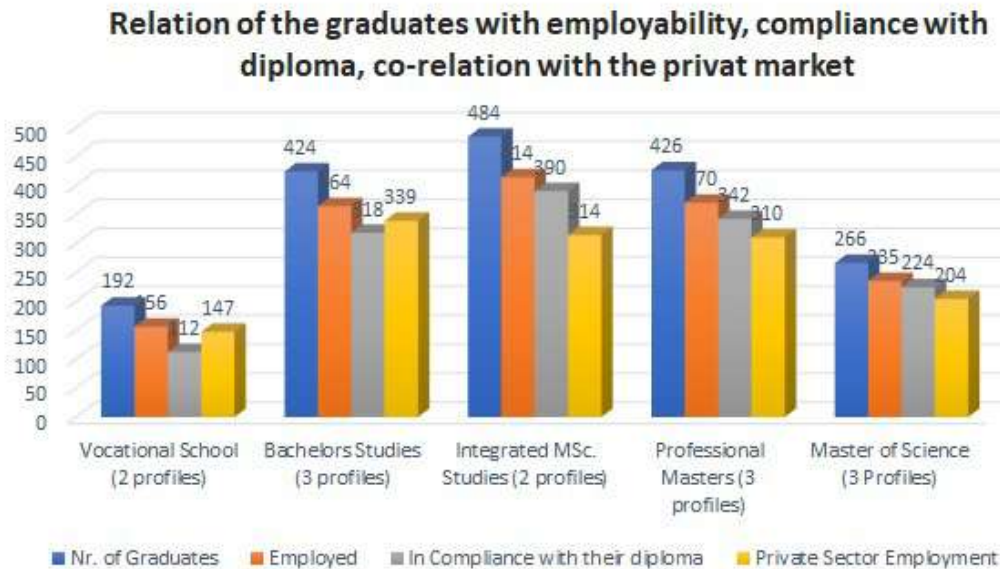
■ Freelancer  
■ Owning a Private Business

**Post Graduate Studies**



■ Continue post graduate studies  
■ Not further studying currently

## 2.4 Statistics of employment divided by cycles of studies



Regarding the Relation of the graduates with employability, compliance with diploma, co-relation with the private market:

Since this data is the overall accumulation information for the graduates from 2011 to 2021, the larger number of graduates is related with the two Integrated Master Studies Programs; being the first programs of POLIS University, followed by Bachelor studies in the expanding process. The number of graduates appears differently in the second level of study, respectively being larger in the Professional Master rather than Master of Science. This can be understood with the specific professional focus of Professional Masters like GIS applications, parametric design etc., and the possibility of attending these types of masters during the weekend by working on the meantime.

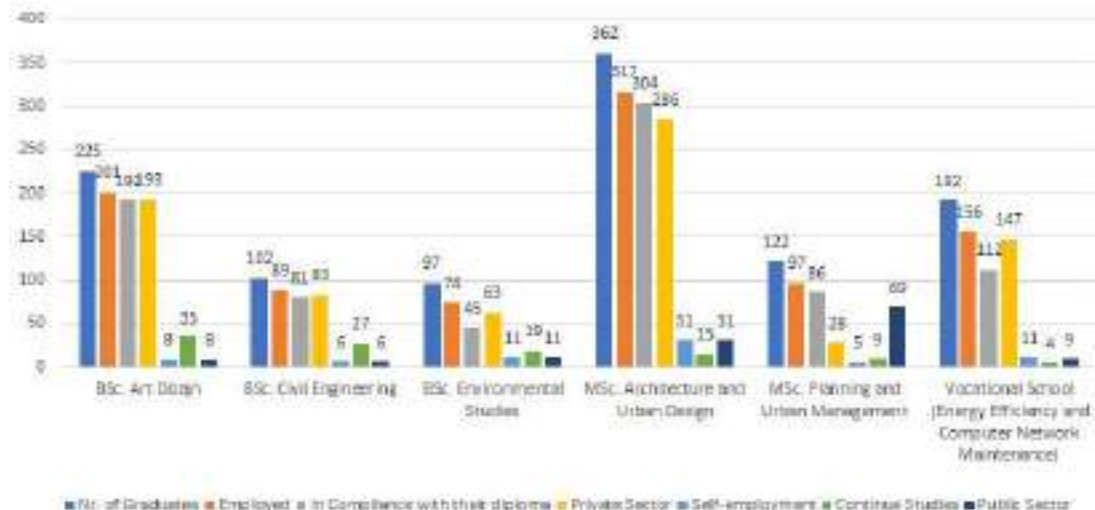
The employment rate (excluding the freelancing and private initiative) in every cycle varies from 81% to 86%. If freelancing were included, the overall employment rate of Alumni till 2021, the total employment rate raises up to 95%.

This professional occupation is in the majority of cases directly related with diploma achieved. The highest ratio is attributed to the Integrated Master of Science and Master of Science profile, which represents till 91% conformity with the diploma achieved.

## 2.5 Statistics of employment in graduate programs and vocational school

In the context of Study Program, the highest number of graduates is attributed to the Program: Integrated Master of Science in Architecture and Urban Design, followed by the Bachelor program in Art and Design. Whiles, the study course which display the higher connection with employment in conformity with the degree earned is Bachelor in Civil Engineering. The most self-employment high rate is visible in the Integrated Master of Science and Urban. The majority of Programs, have found the needed professional space in private working alternatives, excluding the graduates of the Integrated Master Program in Planning and Urban Management which find occupational working alternatives almost 60% in the public sector, due to the nature and competency of their studies. The Study Programs, which are more inclined to continue post-graduate studies are the Bachelor Programs in Art and Design, Civil Engineering and Environmental Studies which is a logical and understandable approach towards completing their studies. It is important to emphasize that the ratio on the table does not an indicator of how many students have attended a master program or plan to, is a data related with the actual enrollment of students in Master Programs, in the moment of data collection. Otherwise this ratio would be higher.

Employment in Graduate Study Programs



# UNIVERSITET POLIS

## 3. ALUMNI SUCCESS HISTORY

From communications with Alumni, but also following their professional careers in other forms, some of the most significant experiences and their journeys become part of a Special Brochure, which is published once every 4 years. This Alumni brochure serves as a basic summary for the creation of other forms of cooperation between graduates and current students of POLIS such as: open conversations in the auditorium, tutorials on specific topics, cooperation for various workshops, experience sharing etc.

Referring to the above information, which gives us a better picture of the employment of Alumni 2017-2021, the first observation is related With the majority of Alumni employed in the private sector. This is understood as a positive indicator which undermines that the Alumni are highly oriented and successful in a dynamic labor market, extending also in the management of their own businesses or initiating start-up initiatives. Also the employed in large firms and the continuity of their employment in the same workplace for more than two consecutive years indicates that their results at work have been acceptable to the employer.

In this session of this brochure, some of the Alumni experiences are brought, to give a better comprehension of the professional activity of POLIS graduates. These experiences are categorized by its employment nature into four groups, which includes success stories as professionals, in politics, in postgraduate programs and in creative social activities.

## 3.1 Success in the profession

### 1. STUDIOARCH4



1. Gjergji Dushniku (arch)



2. Rezart Struga (arch)



3. Klaudio Cari (arch)



4. Lorin Çekrezi (arch)

In this group are mentioned those Alumni, who in their years of professional practice, have managed to succeed in their professional fields. StudioArch4 was founded in 2011 in Tirana (Albania) by four Architecture POLIS Alumni who complement each other to create a synergy of ideas. Some of them also attended Professional Master Studies at POLIS University, as a professional growing option. The studio offers design services from the small scale of interior, to the architectural, urban design, housing, industrial, landscape, sports facilities and overall project development.

The basis of their work is always innovation for creating architectural spaces and solving different problems at the same time. Competitions are also a tool that they use a lot to test themselves and cooperating with the international studios. Some of the competitions where they participated, can be mentioned: Suola Borgo San Giuseppe (Cuneo, Italy); Osumi River Park (Berat, Albania); The hub of Mediterranean taste Tirana, Albania); Hybrid Student City (Tirana, Albania) where they were positioned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place etc. The studio has been recently qualified as one of the 17 representatives of Albania in the Mediterranean Biennale.

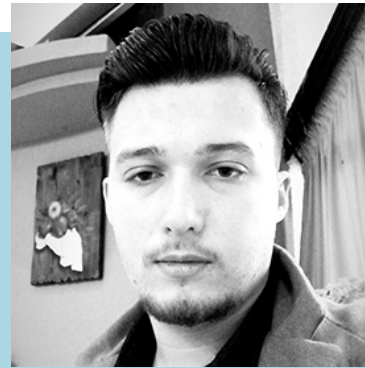
Studioarch4 after a decade of experience, is now well known for the focus in innovation, research and project managing in the fields of Architecture, Urban Design, Engineering and development and are collaborating with some of the best international studios. Their dedication to contribute professionally and with integrity in the built environment is highly noticeable. Through the lens of viewing architecture as an impactor of social behavior, economic income, cultural impact and extended possibilities, these professionals have created a longing relationship with other Alumni and POLIS University. The trust in their higher education has been a strong point in the further selection of their staff. Attracting like-minded other alumni, with whom they share the similar vision and ambitions; has resulted in a sustainable and excellent relationship with Alumni Association and POLIS. From 16 staff of STUDIO ARCH 4, half of them, including the founders are from POLIS Alumni



1. Erazmia Gjokopulli (arch)



2. Donald Daberdini (arch)



3. Hekuran Bendaj (arch)



4. Gerti Struga (arch)



## 2. FAAS ARCHITECTS STUDIO



1. Armand Prelezi (arch)

2. Klevis Bregu (arch)

3. Aleksander Jushi (arch)

4. Qëndrim Gashi (arch)

It is an architecture and interior design studio, which was opened as a collaboration of a group students. From their graduation period to this date, this studio has grown with an intense success by reaching in less than one decade, a portfolio of 128 projects. The concept after FAAS is about an architectural design studio that creates spaces for life, that carry the message of a qualitative transformation of the environment, centered around human. By sustaining on the clear understanding of space use scenarios, rational approach to architecture and how the function serves form, these young professionals have brought the innovation needed in the market, in interior design, architectural design, urban design and branding.

## 3. HSEM ALBANIA – Klevis Bregu (arch)

The Project Manager of FAAS Architects, Klevis Bregu administers also his own company “The HEALTH SAFETY ENVIROMENT MANAGEMENT (HSEM). This company offers a wide range of services in forms of trainings, consulting, ISO certifications and other projects. This Company, is part of the italian companies “Prevenzione e Sicurezza” and of ZETA Vu S.r.l, which are focused on services related to safety in the workplace, safety coordinator, emergency management, evacuation plans, first aid in the workplace, risk assessment etc. The company of eleven with POLIS Alumni as CEO, is the first of this nature in Albania.

## 4. Loft Architects / Kulla Creatives / Loft Construction



Fatjon Molla (arch)

Fatjon, is one of the POLIS Alumni with a brilliant career in just a decade. Co-Founder of Loft Architect in 2013, Co-Founder of Kulla Creatives in 2018 and Co-Founder of Loft Construction, his professional career has been expanding in Albania and beyond. Fatjon's interview: My story as an architect began in 2011, at NOVA Architect Gallery where I worked for two years with very interesting and important projects at the same time, that have taught me a lot from the technical side of development of projects as well as in the relationship with clients. My experience in architecture expanded rapidly in Paris, where for 8 months I was employed at Atelier Martel, an architecture studio in Paris.

During these months I had the opportunity to work with large projects such as: the Swiss Hospital in Paris; 35 Collective Housing; Competition of 120 Collective Apartments in NYON, Switzerland; Specialized apartments for people with special needs; Restoration and expansion of a re-educational professional center in Saint-Etienne, etc. My experience at POLIS has been very nice and intense. During my stay in Paris, with the easy integration in the studio, it became clear to me, that my experience at POLIS University have been intense and based on a European philosophy of teaching and culture of work, which has been decisive for my growth as an architect. From the preparation at POLIS, to other work experiences, I have managed to establish as co-foundation three companies, which has been my dream.

## 5. Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York

Erinsa is of the architects of the first generations graduated from POLIS. After a one-year work experience at the Ministry of Urban Development in Albania, she decided to test herself overseas. In New York, she started to experience working in architecture studios as a junior architect at Nobutaka Ashihara Architects and further on at Jefre Cole Architects Pc, soon to find her infinity as Associate Transitand Recently as a Project Manager at New York City Metropolitan Area, where she manages the restoration processes of the underground infrastructure of New York. She has expressed her gratitude for education at POLIS several times, which has helped her in the career in USA, but also for the easy process of Diploma Recognition in New York.



Erinsa Shehu (arch)

## 6. Deco2Studio



Tomorr Mezelxhiu (arch) Shega Erebara (arch)

Deco2Studio is a vibrant architectural and urban design practice founded in 2013 with a reputation in offering committed, thoughtful and creative solutions. POLIS Alumni Tomorr and Shega, from classmates, to joining their personal lives together, has managed to combine their professional skills in a unique studio which is engaged to offer the expertise, originality and professionalism. Today Deco2Studio develops its design activities in architecture, interior design, residential, commercial and urban planning. The two architects support a project based on a multi-talented team work starting from the conception stage to the implementation phase, including concept and construction. Their main drive is to design sustainably, environmentally friendly and well-crafted practices focused on people, communities and culture.

## 7. Civil Engineering at Alufloor

Adrian Bershini, a graduate of POLIS University, is part of the technical team of the Alufloor company, which operates in the construction sector for the design and processing of facades. At Alufloor, Adrian has worked with very important projects in which he has shown dedication and professionalism. This employment relationship has been the basis for strengthening the relationship between the University and the Alufloor company for other ways of collaboration in the partnership business — university.



Adrian Bershini (engineer)

## 8. Urban Planner in Sweden



Ervis Lila – Graduated from Polis in the Urban Planning department in 2013!

In his recent communication, Ervis gave a very inspiring and sincere interview for his professional and life path which initiated at POLIS University: It's been 5 years as a student at U-Polis, but also a solid experience, experience that would accompany me in every step I take. Because Polis is really a "Space for thinking"! Now I will dwell a little on my experience after school... where I passed from a "small" world like family, society and high school, where the desires were initially small. But quite suddenly one day I found myself in a "big" complex universe, first in Polis and then in Sweden! I was often confused, disoriented, and unprepared for the big challenges in life and the harsh Albanian reality.

After graduating in Albania, I was no longer finding myself with the knowledge and education I had received in Polis, so I decided to leave with the claim I had to attend a 3-month workshop in Sweden! In fact, it wasn't true at all and I just wanted to face what awaited me: "the unknown" That's how I arrived in Sweden, without a plan, without a support, without an orientation, even though I was trained as an urban planner! By putting to work the potential I had and the good education in Polis, this kept my hope and faith alive for better days! After a long period of work and investment, I made it! Polis experience of not losing hope and working hard was worth a lot to me. In Sweden I struggled to get an opportunity, but when I got it the experience of Polis was worth a lot along with my strong will. I was sure I had the education and skills, but I created the opportunity for myself through work! Success then came naturally to me. I'm happy but I never forget how I started! I never forget the place I come from. I can't forget the fantastic and very valuable education I received in Polis to be responsible and hard working. Today I even have my own independent business. I work hard because I know that only a very thin line separates success and failure where personal values and hard work, as well as quality education make the difference.

## 9. Appa Architects



Persida Shkrepa (arch)

Persida is one of the graduates of the first generation of Integrated Master Program in Architecture and Urban Design, graduating in 2011.

After a great experience in the public sector, in the Aluizni (Agency of Legalization of Informal Settlements) and the Directorate of Government Services, from 2018 she established her own architecture studio "APPA Architects".

As the CEO of the studio, Persida's Fresh and creative ideas are part of the articles in the country's most popular magazines, such as "Who", "Bordo" or "Anabel Magazine". Her projects are selected by online forums and blogs for the architectural and aesthetic qualities they convey, such as the "pikark.com" forum.

## 10. Arjana Hasani (civil engineer)

Arjana Hasani is one of the talented civil engineers who have graduated from POLIS. Continuing her master studies at New York City College of Technology (City Tech), Arjana has managed simultaneously to achieve the recognition of her diploma and working as a Structural Engineer at NYC Department of Buildings.



## 11. Nandia Myrtaj (design)



Senior Graphic Designer, BEA Marketing.

Nandia is a talented designer, graduated from POLIS who has been investing for three years now to BEA Marketing Company.

Starting to work as a Junior Designer, she is now Senior Graphic Designer. Her colleagues describe her as: "Talented, creative and hardworking" who has managed to list hundreds of graphic projects in a short time and always looking out for the best solutions.

She is still very young in age but yet very grown up professionally. It seems that she always finds a solution for everything and is always there to help her colleagues...

## 12. Ira Aga, Century 21

Successfully graduated from Polis University, Ira Aga is now an experienced architect in the construction industry. For 5 years now, she has become the key point of the organization of the 'Century21 Cooperate' team. Ira is characterized by dedication, passion and energy, being an ideal support for the Cooperate team in the sector of real estate projects and sales.



## 3.2 Success in politics

### 1. Iva Tavanxhiu (plan)



Iva Tavanxhiu is graduated as an Urban Planner at POLIS University. Her ambition and hard work have oriented Iva to work extend her expertise and professional career, from MetroPOLIS studio, at the Ministry of Urban Development, “Green House” organization, Institute of Publik and Private Policies and National Agency of Territorial Planning. To enhance her professional background, she undertook interesting initiatives like: 2019 Seminar for Primary – Level Rural Officials from Albania (for two months at China Agricultural University) and a 10-month training course “Citizen participation and inclusive governance” as a Local Government Specialist at the Hague Academy for Local Governance.

From 2017, Iva have joined the staff of the Municipality of Tirana, where she is part of different processes and projects like: planning and development of the areas damaged by the 2019 earthquake, development of the guidelines for professionals and citizens that serve as a guide in the process of territorial units development and building permissions, Green Financing Roadmap (GFR) Tirana, Tirana Orbital Forest project, SUMP Tirana (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan), Green City Action Plan (GCAP) of Tirana, Implementation and monitoring of General Local Plan of Municipality of Tirana etc.

### 2. Orkida Hoxha, (environment)

Thanks to the university education obtained in Polis and the continuous social and political engagement, Orkida is part of the management team focused on one of the most powerful maritime and tourism economic development projects in the Balkans. The academic experiences including group work during her studies, have developed her management skills with a focus on urban and environmental development issues.

Interview:

My academic experience at POLIS has been the main guide for defining my professional goals for the future. The professional skills acquired from the courses developed in Bachelor Environmental Studies and the lecturers have helped me in articulating, judging the current environmental problems as clearly as possible and drawing up detailed reports to solve these problems. Sustainable urban development is one of the most important objectives for the country today, that said, POLIS has been, is and will remain a very valuable door of values, knowledge and culture.



Executive Assistant, Albanian  
Seaports Development Company sh.a

### 3. Brixhilda Biçaku



head of FRESH in Librazhd district

Brixhilda is an Alumni who left after university studies at U\_POLIS in America for several years. In USA she converted her degree, applied her profession as an architect and also managed to get the license for practicing the profession. After a period of time there, for family reasons she returned to Albania where she administers successfully running her family restaurant-hotel business, showing good skills creative and managerial. In addition to other commitments, in the city of Librazhd, she has been successfully leading the Youth Forum of the Socialist Party for several years.

### 4. Nevin Bilali (arch)



Municipality of Tirana, adviser to the mayor of Tirana, Erion Veliaj

Nevin's position in the Municipality of Tirana comes as a result of her engagement in Albanian politics, but also of her professional and managerial growth, since university education. Her position as a consultant focuses on architectural issues and urban planning, thanks to the diverse knowledge and experience gained during university studies, of the culture of group work organized during courses studios and workshops organized with foreign and local lecturers. Interview:

The innovative spirit during my studies at POLIS has helped me to have one cleaner and richer perception about architecture and urban design. Architecture is a process... a non-linear but interactive process, not static but dynamic, not only intellectual but also abstract, also organic and concrete. Light, space, stillness, form, all these have the power to transform the most common space. These are notions for which POLIS is a co-founder of my beliefs today. POLIS has been and remains one of my personal inspirational reference points, even and at a distance and in any time frame.



## 5. Joleza Koka (arch)

Ex. President of FRESH TIRANA, currently member of the Municipal Council, Tirana; Joleza, is an architect who has been quite active in cooperation with her fellow Alumni of the same year. After her university studies, she began her Master's in "Urban Social Development and Human Resources" near POLIS University, which has helped her more understand the issues in management and urban policies. Thanks to her professional preparation and her activation in the Youth Forum of the Socialist Party in Tirana, she managed to be elected president of this FRESH Forum in the years 2013 - 2016. Her experience in politics is still quite active today inside and outside Albania as a representative of youth. Today she is also a member of the Tirana Municipal Council. For 2 years Joleza has been part, as an editorial staff on the newspaper "Le Monde Diplomatique" and from 2017 has had the responsibility of the Project Manager in the Institute of Social Studies and Humanities.



Municipality of Tirana



Director of the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Berat

## 6. Jurgen Pushi (arch)

Jurgen is one of the Alumni of Architecture program, from the city of Berat, who has been very involved in the socio-political life of this city. Except his professional practice in architectural design, he has been actively part of the politics, first by presenting his candidacy for the local election in 2021, further on in 2022, by taking charge as a Director of the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Berat.

Jurgen loves so much its community, appreciates his city's values and heritage and has big dreams for this city. These factors are the ones that motivate him in his commitment to the architectural heritage of this unique city.

## 3.3 Success in the postgraduate programs (Master & PhD)

### 1. Sadmira Malaj (plan)



ongoing PhD studies at Hasselt  
University, Belgium

Sadmira Malaj, has completed her studies in the 5-year Integrated Program in Master of Science in Urban Planning and Management at POLIS University, and is now a well-developed expert in Placemaking, Streetscape, Mobility & Transportation. For 4-years, Sadmira has been engaged at German University of Technology in Oman as Assistant Lecture and Researcher. During these years she was co-author and contributing in different publications on architecture and urban planning field about topic such as: Green City Urban Farming during COVID19, Housing, Mobility, Transportation, Place-making; Co-designing, etc.

Furthermore, Sadmira was entitled as a researcher and project coordinator on two research projects such as;

- Demand Oriented, Culture Sensitive-Housing in Oman founded by TRC (The Research Council) and GUTech (German University of Technology)
- Where Oman Walks? founded by TRC (The Research Council), Municipality of Muscat, WHO (World Health Organization) and GUTech

She is currently pursuing an international PhD at the Transport Research Institute at Hasselt University, Belgium; in the area of Future Mobility and its Impact on Urban Form. Her research topics interest is on Placemaking, Streetscape, Mobility & Transportation.

## 2. Sonia Jojic



Head of the Art and Design  
Department at POLIS University

Sonia finished her studies in 2008 in Photography and Digital Image at Wayne State University, Michigan, USA. In 2013, she continued her master studies at U\_POLIS in Applied Design and then PhD studies at POLIS University in the Joint Degree program with the University of Ferrara, Italy. She is engaged in teaching at POLIS in the subjects, Multimedia Design, Graphic Design, City Marketing, Photography, has successfully curated as well various exhibitions and is directing for a few years no the Department of Art and Design.

## 3. Joana Dhiamandi (arch) – PhD in Architecture and Urban Planning

Joana Dhiamandi is an Architect, POLIS Alumni, Glass Artist and lecturer of Architecture and Design, with a Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Planning on “Sacred Architecture. Analysis of the Bektashi Tekke in Albania”. During her studies in architecture, she showed a particular interest in the paradigm of Information Architecture.



Co-founder of “WeWomen”

She has been involved in architecture and interior architecture projects as founder of DHIAMANDI STUDIO and she is interested in creating glass artworks in the studio “DHIAMANDI GLASS”. During the last decade, she has been involved in academia as a lecturer, at the Department of Art & Design at POLIS University, and currently is teaching as a part-time lecturer at Politechnic University of Tirana, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. Joana has been actively involved as a member of civil society in Albania, also working to engage communities and develop a common platform for discussion in architecture and design. Joana is also co-founder of “WeWomen”, an initiative to establish a platform for inspiration, support, networking, and empowerment of girls and women. In recent years she has been part of several scientific and academic conferences. At the same time, an element that she considers vital in terms of architecture and design is creating a unique human experience in time and space.

#### 4. Fiona Imami

Fiona is an Urban Planner, working in this field since 2014. Holds a master degree in Housing and Land Development and a Master of Science in Urban Planning and Management, both from Polis University. In 2021 she gained a PhD Degree from both 'Università degli studi di Ferrara' and POLIS University, with the research focused on "Land use decision making and fiscal policies approaches: Land use Decision Making, Effectiveness of Land Use approaches toward fiscal policies under uncertainty". Fiona has been working in Co-PLAN since October 2014 in a various of projects and since 2017 is involved as Local Expert on Regional Development, in Regional Development Program in Albania (RDPA). During her research career Fiona has authored & Co-authored numerous publications.



Full time Expert at Co-PLAN,  
Institute of Habitat  
Development



#### 5. Kejt Dhrami (plan) — PhD in Architecture and Urban Planning

Kejt, finished her studies bachelor and master in Planning and Urban Management, POLIS University, Faculty of Planning, Environment and Urban Management. After graduation she continued professional master's degree at POLIS, in cooperation with IHS Erasmus University, Rotterdam (2014-2016) in Housing and Land Development and afterwards gained a PhD degree in Joint the program with the University of Ferrara, Italy, IDAUP (2016-2019).

Immediately after graduation, in parallel with her master studies, Kejt was engaged in projects related to planning territorial at the level of the region and municipality, near Co-PLAN and Institute of Research. Extensive experience gained from exchanges academic, international trainings and conferences organized on urban and environmental design, transport, research methodologies in planning, land management, urban audit, etc., has made possible for her to give assistance for several years in teaching, as well as contribution in scientific research at the Faculty of Research and Development

... Immediately after graduation, in parallel with her master studies, Kejt was engaged in projects related to planning territorial at the level of the region and municipality, near Co-PLAN and Institute of Research. Extensive experience gained from exchanges academic, international trainings and conferences organized on urban and environmental design, transport, research methodologies in planning, land management, urban audit, etc., has made possible for her to give assistance for several years in teaching, as well as contribution in scientific research at the Faculty of Research and Development.



Doctor of Technical Sciences from  
University of Wien

## 6. Miranda Rashani (arch)

Miranda finished her bachelor studies at the University of Pristina and was transferred to complete her studies, in the Integrated Master Program for Architecture and Urban Design POLIS. After graduation, she practiced her profession as Architects in Albania and Kosovo. In parallel with the profession of the architect she develops activity as an adjunct lecturer University of Pristina, Kosovo.

Currently she holds the degree of Doctor of Technical Sciences (Dr. Techn. / Dr. Sc.) Technische from Universität Wien Vienna for her research in "Exploring the energy performance improvement potential of apartment buildings in Kosovo"

## 3.4 Success in creative social activities (start up, creative business)



a successful architect and entrepreneur!



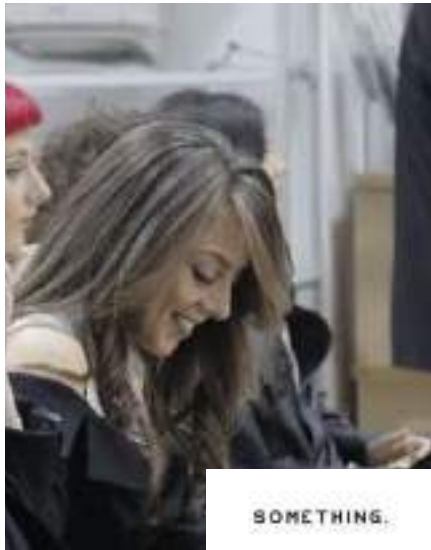
### 1. Juxhin Balliu (arch)

Juxhin graduated as an architect at POLIS University. Meanwhile, since he was a student, Juxhin joined the family business, giving his unsparing contribution. Studies at POLIS educated him to be creative, aesthetic and entrepreneurial in spirit and ideas. Family experience took this talent further. Together with their family members and staff they founded, marketed and branded one of the most original and well-known companies today as “Balliu Group” - which includes businesses, brands and products with different specialties such as “Nova Home”, “Mon Cheri”, “Papa’s Bakery” etc., where creative knowledge is required for design, interior, furnishing, lighting, aesthetics, innovation, services, business plans, etc.

With the formation skills in architecture but with entrepreneurial talent, Juxhin managed to join beautifully, his profession as a as architect and interior designer with the business, thus creating environments with a special architectural design. One of the successful brands “Nova architect Studio” is another line of business furnishing, the successful interior products shop which design furniture’s but also offers interior design and implementation.

With its successes in the market, this studio managed to hire many colleagues Juxhin, former Almuni of POLIS. “Mon Cheri” and other brands have expanded in other cities of Albania, other than Tirana, making the logos and names recognizable very easy, due to this young visionary.

## 2. "Something" — Jewelry Design



Ester Nuriu (Designer)

Ester is the creator of "Something", that is conceived as a jewelry store, designed to stand the test of time. When you ask Ester why she chose the name "Something", she answers by explaining that you can find something or many things inside. "Something" is a personal product, which is decided to feel good and above all, when we give this feeling to someone, that is, something for someone. True values are thought and desire. An atypical interior of jewelry stores, where luxury appears casually and unexpectedly, "Something" comes in minimalist and brutalist forms at the same time, from the choice of using contemporary and full of life materials. The project was realized in the form of a concept store where the product, interior and visualization are coherent with the identity of this brand.

Something - A jewellery store that embellishes the look and reveals the soul In the alleys of ex-Blloku, between the luxury shops, there is a window that stands out from the others: something different; cold but attractive at the same time. On the mirrored facade, created with a minimalist architectural vision, is written 'Something.'. Like the brand itself, there is something that invites you to discover what is hidden behind the holographic facade. 'Something.' is conceived as a jewelry store, designed to resist in time. At first glance, when you enter it, a cold and raw space is perceived, similar in concept to the bunkers, where in its heart lies the concrete counter, which exhibits "Something" jewelries, A brand created by Ester Nuriu, interior, concept and brand designer. 'The environment here looks like a big bunker, where a key element of this space stands out at first sight — the 'island', inside which every product is exhibited, a work of 2 years. The hard concrete floor and walls stand in the background, to emphasize the concept of simplicity of an abandoned environment, where the jewelries are placed and all the attention goes to them.(pikark.com)

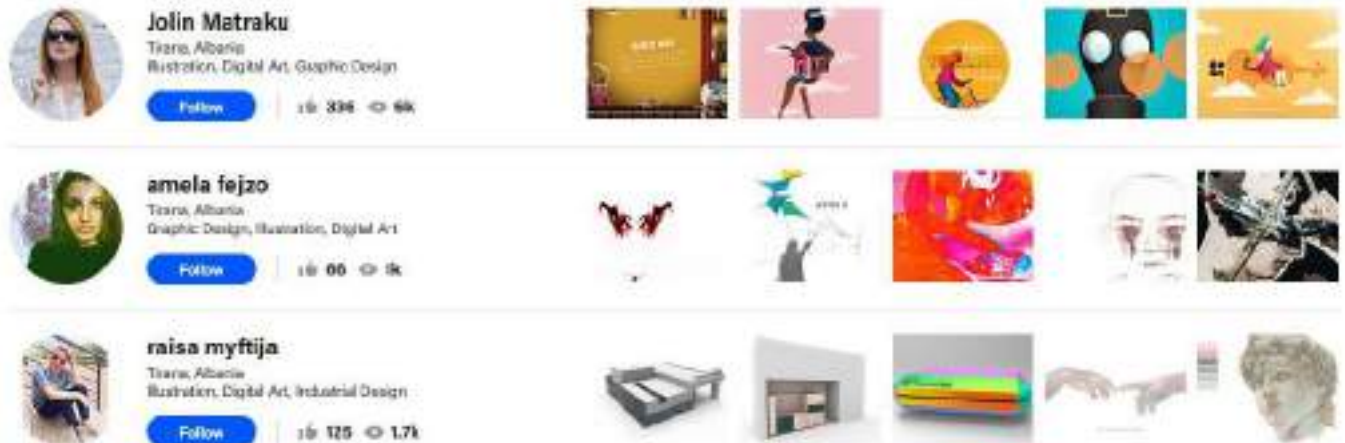


### 3. Tak Fak



This Professional Services Agency came as an initiative of a group of girl students who graduated in Bachelor in Art and Design. They have managed to create a business which combines their profession with contacts with different firms or businesses to ensure the implementation of interior projects or and other electrical or hydraulic services, through an employed staff.

Ester Nuriu (design), Amela Fejzo (design), Raisa Myftia (design).





## 4. Tali Events

Two Sisters, two different talents. One Dream!  
One graduated from Bachelor in Art and Design and Following the Master Program, the other still a student in Bachelor Art and Design.

Initiated as a dream, first steps in the social Media, now "Tali Events" has two offices, a network of followers and collaborators and a wide portfolio of events organizations, by offering unique services and authentic arrangements



Krisilda Tali (design), Kamela Tali (design)

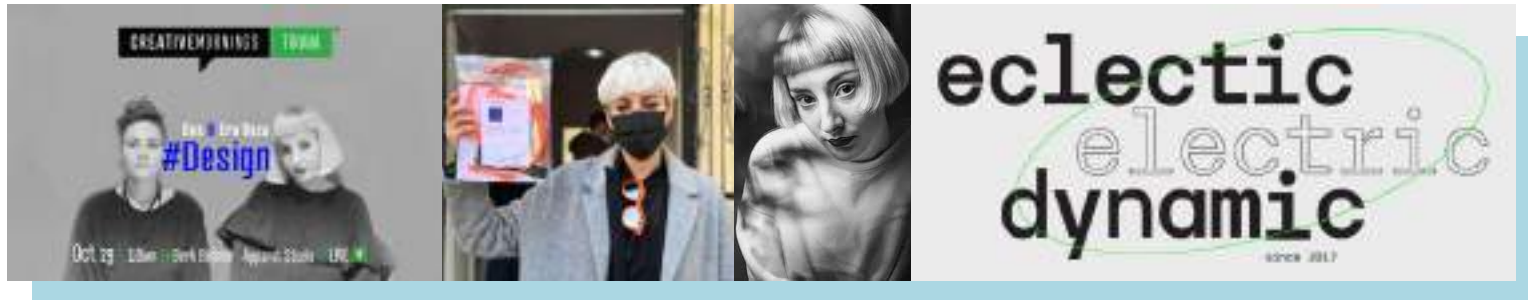


## 5. Urban Sketchers

Mario Shllaku (plan.), Anduena Dragovi (arch.), Klajdi Dinellari (arch.), Viola Deti (arch.), Klaudia Sorra (design), Jona Osmënaj (arch.), Felisia Veliu (arch), Iva Tavaxhi (plan) etc. Urban Sketcher is an international organization which came also in Tirana and spread throughout Albania with the initiative of architecture, planning and design students or alumni. These alumni, who had a passion for painting, came together and decided to share their sketches which had fragments as their main theme of different cities throughout Albania.

They are young, eager to interpret the world around us not just to observe them, but also with passion to promote the values of our country, through the field sketching technique. They are represented also as organized to create shared travel experiences as well Workshops where, in addition to promoting this technique, they create opportunity for young people who want to acquire this technique.

## 6. APPARAT STUDIO



Dea Buza (arch), Era Buza (design)

Apparat is a new Architecture and Design Studio created by two sisters who graduated at POLIS. The eclectic and dynamic styles of Tirana and Pristina serve as an inspiration to bring forward and develop new ideas and approaches leading to positive changes. Looking at the everyday challenges of Tirana and Prishtina Apparatus tries to make use of new approaches in technology, architecture, design and materials to achieve high quality and unique designs.

Apparat projects are mostly architecture and visual designs but the team is always ready to “break the rules”. Inspired by the word: apparātus [lat.] - i.e., in simple words a complex machine, the studio aims to offer a new creative and technological solution which redefines the rules of the game. Apparatus Studio tries to provoke and provide different approaches in design issues. Each project of apparatus has his own identity providing a unique style in it.

What makes these two sisters unique are also their individual paths. Dea finds its way to integrate her innovative ideas, like the project “Faceshield Masks Albania”, where she managed to design and produce 900 masks for the Health Service workers through 3D printing technology during the pandemic in 2021. While Era also also develops her passion as a DJ.

## 7. Destil Creative Hub



[Renis Batalli \(arch\)](#), [Qendrim Gashi \(arch\)](#), [Sonila Abdalli \(arch\)](#), [Edjon Myftaraj \(arch\)](#)

An alternative community center, initiated at an Italian-style villa on Elbasan Street, designed by an Albanian in 1938. After its demolition the four the young architects invested into a larger space conceived as a center for the organization of artistic exhibitions, national and international architecture, as a place of study in Tirana open every hour of the day and night. Design is used as an instrument to produce comfort for Destil visitors. Now Destil is known in Tirana as a project that combines architecture, cultural initiatives & sustainable economy as a response to the fast transformation of the city at the form of a Community Center. Recently, the Hostel in "Block" area has been added to the expanded services of Destil. The Alumni has also been very collaborative with POLIS for hosting different activities.

## 4. REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Polis University, since 2006 has been preparing professionals, able to attend to the market's needs, to adapt to the dynamics while preserving their individuality and creativity. The dynamics of today's market necessarily require multidisciplinary training and able to face the new challenges of the time. Thus, the students of this level of studies come from a certain background, are in a working relationship and are looking for an improvement and professional growth.

Half of the programs, which were open first, like: Integrated Master of Science in Architecture, Integrated Master of Science in Urban Planning and Management as well as Bachelor in Art & Design have consolidated their position in the labor market. The education of students which is curated from the discipline, space for expression, public presentations, technical formation and entrepreneurial skills, enables the majority of the graduates to engage immediately in employment after graduation. In these programs, students value highly the consistency, discipline, academic preparation, but above all, practical and professional engagement. A considerable amount of students from these programs, has the opportunity to engage in professional internships in the 4 th year and in the 5 th year of studies near Co-Plan and Metropolis, which represents certainly a very good opportunity for these students to work on concrete projects during their studies.

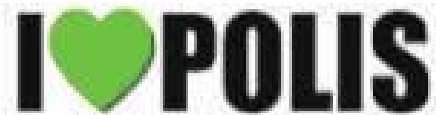


The programs of Civil Engineering, Environmental Studies or Vocational programs, since they are relatively new, have produced few professionals in the market, even some of them are still pursuing their master's studies, so the number of their employment is considerably lower. As for the professional masters, follow the master's at POLIS in parallel with their work..

Professional masters, having a specific field of application in most cases, represent a new re-orientation for professionals in the labor market. Cases where topographical engineers are specialized in Spatial Planning and GIS Applications or construction engineers who have chosen to focus on digital architecture are clear examples of a multidisciplinary training that have enabled these specialists to lay good foundations towards a better orientation within the labor market.

The University, through the Office of Students Support and Career Counseling, follow these Alumni in the advancement of their careers. Support in the employment of students has also been provided by the career office, which through its contacts with various companies; architectural, engineering, or design studio, construction company, NGO, etc., has connected graduate students with market requirements.

These connections have been successful as a large part of the students have been employed leaving very good impressions and professional growth in their careers. A new and easily accessible form that is now available for POLIS Alumni, Gradua Platform, is a tool that students are using since their last year of studies to be connected with the labor market in the last 4



The feedback of these students about Polis University and the academic experience in the relevant fields is highly positive. They have expressed in many cases that the experience in POLIS has helped them in their professional growth, in the work culture and at every discussion table. For these reasons, POLIS Alumni wear proudly identity revealing symbols like the brand "I LOVE POLIS" in their offices, cars, laptops etc.



**POLIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:**



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