

ARRANGEMENT

between the

the

**ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL ITALIAN CITIZENS ABROAD AND MIGRATION POLICY**

and the

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

WHEREAS, the United Nations Children's Fund (hereinafter referred to as "UNICEF") and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation - Directorate General for Italian Citizens Abroad and Migration Policy (hereinafter referred to as the "Donor" and together with UNICEF as the "Parties" and each one a "Party"), desire to strengthen their partnership and cooperation in the financing of programmes, projects and activities of a developmental or humanitarian nature which are consistent with and supportive of UNICEF's mandate, have agreed to cooperate in the implementation of a programme entitled "**Preventing drop-out in secondary schools, every young person matters**" (hereinafter referred to as the "Programmes"), as described in the programme documents attached as Annex I (the "Programme Document");

WHEREAS, the Donor and UNICEF wish to set out the principles and conditions that will apply to such cooperation.

NOW THEREFORE, UNICEF and the Donor hereby agree as follows:

Article I. The Contribution

1. The Donor will make available to UNICEF a contribution in the amount of EUR (3,998,160 Euros) (hereinafter referred to as the "Contribution").
2. The Contribution shall be transferred to UNICEF in full no later than 31 December 2021.
3. The above payments take into account the requirement that the payments will be made in advance of the implementation of planned activities. While any amounts due and payable by the Donor are outstanding, UNICEF will not be required to commence or continue implementation of the Programme activities.
4. The Contribution will be deposited into the following UNICEF bank account:
UNICEF's Euro Account:
Commerzbank AG, Business Banking,
Kaiserstrasse 30, 60311 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
UNICEF NY Cashiers
Account no. 9785 255 01
Swift: DRESDEFFXXX
IBAN: DE84 5008 0000 0978 5255 01

5. When making the funding transfer, the Donor will inform UNICEF Division of Financial and Administrative Management (for the Attention: Finance), by e-mail [gssccashier@unicef.org; cudfam@unicef.org; tnyhq-dfam@unicef.org], of (a) the amount transferred, (b) the value date of the transfer, and (c) that the transfer is from the Donor pursuant to this Arrangement. Upon receipt of funds, UNICEF will confirm the transfer by email to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation - Directorate General for Italian Citizens Abroad and Migration Policy (dgit-05@esteri.it).
6. The United States dollar value of the Contribution under this Arrangement will be determined by applying the United Nations operational rate of exchange in effect on the date of receipt of the Contribution. The Parties will not absorb gains or losses on currency exchanges. Such amounts may increase or decrease the funds available for the Programme activities.
7. UNICEF will receive and administer the Contribution in accordance with UNICEF's applicable regulations, rules, policies and procedures (including those relating to direct and indirect costs, interest, audit, intellectual property, procurement, monitoring, evaluation and oversight, reporting and its risk management framework, including (a) its policies for combatting fraud and corruption and (b) the terms of this Arrangement.
8. UNICEF will apply a cost recovery rate towards UNICEF's indirect programme support costs in accordance with relevant decisions of UNICEF's Executive Board, that rate being eight percent (8%) in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board decision 2013/005. Any identifiable interest earned on the cash balance of the Contribution will be used by UNICEF in accordance with UNICEF's Financial Regulations and Rules.
9. Pursuant to paragraph 10(a) of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, the donor agrees that an amount corresponding to 1% of the contribution to UNICEF shall be paid to fund the United Nations Resident Coordinator System. This amount, hereinafter referred to as the "coordination levy" will be held in trust by UNICEF until transfer to the United Nations Secretariat for deposit into the United Nations Special Purpose Trust Fund for the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, which has been established to fund the UN Resident Coordinator System and is managed by the United Nations Secretariat.

The donor acknowledges that once the coordination levy has been transferred by UNICEF to the United Nations Secretariat, UNICEF is not responsible for the use of the coordination levy and does not assume any liability. The fiduciary responsibility lies with the United Nations Secretariat as the manager of the Resident Coordinator system.

The coordination levy does not form part of UNICEF's cost recovery and is additional to the costs of UNICEF to implement the activity or activities covered by the contribution. Accordingly, there is no normal obligation for UNICEF to refund the levy, in part or in full, even where the activities covered by the contribution are not carried out in full by UNICEF. As deemed necessary by the donor - and especially where the scale of the resources concerned or reputational risk justify the refund transaction costs – the donor can submit a request for refund to the United Nations Secretariat directly

or through the United Nations entity. The responsibility to refund the levy lies with the United Nations Secretariat, and not with the concerned entity of the United Nations.

10. The coordination levy for this agreement is EUR 39,585.74 (thirty-nine thousand five hundred eighty-five Euros, and seventy four cents). This will be transferred along with the contribution as per art. I.2. Upon completion of the Programmes as provided for under Article VII or termination of this Arrangement as provided for under Article VIII, any remaining balance of the total Contribution shown in the final financial report not exceeding 5,000 USD (five thousand US Dollars) shall be credited to UNICEF's regular resources or to another UNICEF programme. Any balance exceeding that amount shall be dealt with in accordance to arrangement between the Donor and UNICEF at the relevant time.

Article II. Reports

1. UNICEF will provide to the Donor the following reports prepared in accordance with UNICEF's accounting and reporting procedures:
 - (a) a programmatic narrative and uncertified financial report which will cover progress achieved every six (6) months of implementation of the Programme, to be provided up to three (3) months after the end of each six-month period; in addition, and without setting precedence, UNICEF will also include a section on the incurred expenditures (provisional) with amounts converted into EUR, according to its usual accounting procedures.
 - (b) a final programmatic narrative and uncertified financial report, detailing activities undertaken and outlining progress achieved in relation to the Programme objectives, also stating challenges and constraints, to be provided within three (3) months of completion of the Programme; in addition, and without setting precedence, UNICEF will also include a section on the incurred expenditures (provisional) with amounts converted into EUR, according to its usual accounting procedures.
 - (c) a financial statement, certified by the UNICEF Comptroller showing income and expenditure as of 31 December each year of the Contribution to be submitted for the programme no later than 30 June of the following year.
 - (d) a final financial statement certified by the UNICEF Comptroller showing receipt and expenditure of the Contribution for the programme, to be provided within eighteen (18) months following the financial closing of the Programme.
2. Further to the reporting requirements stipulated above, UNICEF will keep the Donor informed of key issues, progress and problems relating to the Programmes, as appropriate.
3. All reports will be prepared in accordance with UNICEF accounting and reporting procedures. All financial reports and statements will be expressed in United States dollars. Expenditure in currencies other than United States dollars will be reported in United States dollars using the United Nations operational rate of exchange applying at the time of the expenditure.
4. If special circumstances so warrant, UNICEF may provide more frequent reporting at the expense of the Donor. The nature and frequency of this reporting shall be detailed in an annex to this Arrangement.

Article III. Evaluation

The evaluation of the Programmes will be subject to UNICEF's Evaluation Policy as from time to time approved or amended by UNICEF's Executive Board. Final evaluation reports and management responses are publicly disclosed in line with UNICEF's Evaluation Policy.

Article IV. Equipment, supplies and other properties

Ownership of equipment, supplies and other properties financed from the Contribution will be determined by reference to UNICEF's regulations, rules, policies and procedures. Transfer of ownership of such equipment, supplies and other properties will be done in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures of UNICEF, and agreements between UNICEF and the host Government.

Article V. Audit

1. UNICEF's financial books and records are routinely audited in accordance with the internal auditing procedures established in UNICEF's financial regulations and rules. Accordingly, any part of the Contribution will be subject exclusively to the internal and external auditing procedures provided for in the financial regulations, rules, policies and procedures of UNICEF.
2. External audit reports of UNICEF are public documents and are available on the website of the United Nations Board of Auditors. In the event that an audit report of the United Nations Board of Auditors contains an observation relevant to the Contribution, UNICEF will advise the Donor and provide it either with the relevant website locator address or copy of the report (if available).

Article VI. Completion of the Arrangement

1. UNICEF shall notify the Donor when all activities relating to the Programmes have been completed in accordance with the Programme documents.
2. Notwithstanding the completion of the Programmes, UNICEF shall continue to hold unutilized funds from the Contribution until all commitments and liabilities incurred in implementation of the Programmes have been satisfied and Programme activities brought to an orderly conclusion.
3. If the unutilized funds prove insufficient to meet such commitments and liabilities, UNICEF shall notify the Donor and consult with the Donor on the manner in which such commitments and liabilities may be satisfied, without any binding obligations to be borne by the Donor.

Article VII. Termination of the Arrangement

1. This Agreement may be terminated by mutual agreement or by one Party providing the other a written notice of termination of not less than sixty (60) calendar days. Upon receipt by one Party of the other Party's written notice of termination, the Parties will take all reasonable and necessary measures to conclude the implementation of the Programmes and complete their activities in an orderly manner.
2. Notwithstanding termination of all or part of this Agreement, UNICEF shall continue to hold and apply unutilized funds to permit an orderly conclusion of the Programmes, including the completion of final reports, the withdrawal of personnel, equipment and property, the settlement of accounts between the Parties, and the settlement of contractual commitments and liabilities incurred in the implementation of all or the part of the Programmes, including in respect of any implementing partners, contractors, subcontractors, consultants and suppliers.

Article VIII. Prevention of Corruption and Fraud

1. Both the Donor and UNICEF are firmly committed to preventing and detecting fraudulent and corrupt practices. Consistent with the UN Charter, the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, the UN Staff Rules and Regulations, and UNICEF Financial Rules and Regulations, UNICEF's Policy Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption, and UNICEF's Supply Manual, UNICEF will use reasonable efforts to ensure that the utilization of the Contribution conforms to the highest standard of ethical conduct and that every part of the organization, as well as all individuals acting on behalf of UNICEF, observe the highest standard of ethics and integrity.
2. UNICEF will continue to maintain regulations, rules, policies, procedures and directives, requiring that any allegations of fraud and corruption (as defined in UNICEF's Policy Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption) are reported to UNICEF's Office of Internal Audit and Investigation ("OIAI") in a timely and accurate manner. Credible allegations will be investigated by OIAI in accordance with UNICEF regulations, rules, policies and procedures. OIAI will give prompt notification on a confidential basis to the Donor of any investigations that it is undertaking or proposes to undertake in relation to allegations of fraud and corruption involving any activities funded in whole or part with the Contribution under this Arrangement, to the extent that such notification will not, in the opinion of OIAI jeopardize the proper conduct of the investigation into such allegations or the due process rights of those under investigation.
3. Following the conclusion of any investigation which identifies fraud or corruption involving any activities funded in whole or in part with the Contribution, UNICEF will:
 - (a) be responsible for taking reasonable measures to recover any part of the Contribution, which OIAI has established as being diverted through fraud or corruption;

- (b) in connection with (a) above, in consultation with the UN Office of Legal Affairs, where appropriate refer the matter to the appropriate authorities of the member state, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 62/63; and
 - (c) as required by the Donor, and following consultations between the Parties, reimburse to the Donor any part of the Contribution which UNICEF has recovered further to sub-section (a) above, or credit it to a mutually agreed activity.
4. Any information provided to the Donor in relation to any matters arising under this Article will be treated by the Donor as strictly confidential.
 5. Any action further to the above paragraphs will be consistent with UNICEF regulations, rules, policies and procedures, and directives.

Article IX. Differences in Interpretation

Any difference in the interpretation and implementation of this Arrangement will be resolved amicably between the Parties.

Article X. Privileges and Immunities

Nothing in or relating to this Arrangement will be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including UNICEF, whether under the Convention of the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, or otherwise, and no provision of this Arrangement will be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

Article XI: Confidentiality, Disclosure and Transparency

It is understood and agreed that each Party shall comply with its own disclosure and transparency requirements with regard to all external and internal information with respect to this Arrangement. As such, all information in UNICEF's possession is subject to the disclosure and transparency requirements of UNICEF in accordance with its organizational directives and administrative instructions. Each Party shall exercise an appropriate degree of care to prevent the disclosure of confidential information it receives from the other.

Article XII: Notice

Any notice or correspondence between UNICEF and the Donor will be addressed as follows:

- (a) For the Donor:
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
Of the Italian Republic – Directorate General for Italian Citizens Abroad and Migration
Policy
Piazzale della Farnesina, 1
00135 – Roma Italia
dgit-05@esteri.it
- (a) To UNICEF:
Attention of:
Cecilia Fantoni
Partnerships Manager
UNICEF Public Partnerships Division
3 UN Plaza, 10017, New York, USA
Email: cfantoni@unicef.org
Phone: +1-212-326-7043

Article XIII. Amendment of the Arrangement

This Arrangement may be amended through an exchange of letters between the Donor and UNICEF. The letters exchanged to this effect will become an integral part of this Arrangement.

Article XIV. Entry into effect

This Arrangement will take effect upon the signature by the Parties hereto, on the date of the last signature. It will remain valid until completion of the activities, unless earlier terminated by the Parties.

Article XV. Financial invariance

Any financial burden incurred during the implementation of this Arrangement shall not create additional expenses other than those currently foreseen in the Italian financial budget.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed the present Arrangement in the English language in two originals.

For the Donor:
Luigi Maria Vignali

For UNICEF:
Obia Achieng

Director General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation – Directorate
General for Italian Citizens Abroad and
Migration Policy

Rome

Senior Adviser
Public Partnerships Division

New York,



October 2021

Preventing drop-out in secondary schools “Every Young person matters”



*A project proposal
submitted to the Italian
Government*

by the

***UNICEF Office in
Albania***

*1 January 2022-31 December
2024*

Preventing drop-out in secondary schools
“Every Young person matters”

Albania

Planned project execution period:

1 January 2022 – 31 December 2024

Applicant

Name: UNICEF Albania
Address: UNICEF, Rruga Skenderbej Volkswagen building, Tirana Albania
Contact person: Roberto de Bernardi, UNICEF Representative, Albania rdebernardi@unicef.org
Italian Government contribution 3,998,160 Euros
UNICEF contribution. 905,000 Euros

1. Summary

Albania has strong EU accession aspirations and is heavily investing efforts to harmonize policies and legislation to meet European standards and realize higher levels of social development and social cohesion. However, despite important advances, a sizeable number of young people do not find any employment, training or education opportunities. Albania has the highest proportion of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET) of any of its regional neighbours (except for Kosovo*¹).

Young people are not provided with foundation skills, incentives, career orientation, critical thinking and other soft skills or innovative programmes boosting their creativity to enter confidently the job market and as such they find as a solution only education or employment and migration out of the country. Today the most prominent source of economic growth lies in cognitive capital². In a dynamic global economy with rapid technological advancements, Albania's human capital base needs to be better equipped to compete and innovate to remain relevant. Education is a powerful tool for raising skills for employment and productivity. High-quality learning is strongly linked with higher earnings, lower unemployment, better health and reduced crime. The need to increase the productivity of Albanian workers, and providing children, youth and adults with the skills and competencies needed to lead productive lives is becoming central to Albania's development agenda.

This project, "Preventing drop-out in secondary schools, "Every Young person matters", (henceforward "the project"), aims to advance the agenda of inclusion of young people in education and training in Albania through implementing an innovative and systemic three-pronged approach tackling policy level changes to including youths (NEETS) in education, employment training opportunities by improving schools' practices to prevent drop-out, and improving resilience, skills for life, and employability of young people.

The territory covered by this project will be national for policies and system changes which will be reflected in all the system while more focused approaches in early warning system to prevent drop-out, career orientation school practices, entrepreneurship and start up support, will be focused on ten Municipalities with highest numbers of drop-out students³.

This project, builds on the recent evidence, which demonstrates that investments in education are cost-effective means for the realization of human rights and to address inequality, deprivation and economic stagnation, on the experience of UNICEF globally and in Albania in tackling issues of youth, education, skills for life and employability and on a positive policy environment which backs up this initiative

The project will reach directly:

- **10,000 young** NEETS benefitting from different project activities (50 % girls⁴);
- **2,800 teachers** and professional frontline workers to upscale their knowledge and skills;
- **At least 60,000** people through the communication for development campaign

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

² Samson, M. (2016) Cognitive Capital: investing in children to generate sustainable growth. UNICEF & Economic Policy Research Institute, East Asia and Pacific

³ The ten municipalities propose are Diber, Durres, Has, Kukes, Kamza, Kruja, Elbasan, Korca and Fier and Tirana

⁴ Particular attention will be devoted to inclusion of Roma NEETS

Indirect beneficiaries: The indirect reach of the project is expected to reach the whole system of upper secondary education as many of the interventions will be systemic interventions reaching the whole system, namely **103,000 students**

Partners will include Ministry of Education Sport (MoES) as the main partner, Ministry of Youth and Children, (MoYC) Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE), the Agency for the Assurance of Quality in Pre-university Education (AAQPUE), the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES), general upper secondary and vocational schools, municipalities, CSOs which will also take an important role in implementing elements of the program, adolescents and young people. The project will closely coordinate with the main development partners such as EU, SIDA, the Netherlands, Swiss Development Cooperation, Italian government' similar initiatives and others to find synergies and maximise efforts using as much as possible the donor coordination mechanism which are in place.

Government and non-government institutions, service providers and communities will be strengthened to deliver evidence-based interventions, develop inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration mechanisms, primarily between, education, professional education and training employment and social and child protection services, and ensure sustainability through capacity development and adequate policy and budget formulation.

The main activities of the project will include technical assistance and capacity building of national and local public authorities, quality improvement of services and establishment of new service modalities, training of education providers, community awareness raising, data gathering and strengthening to monitor drop-out. Project progress will be assessed through periodic monitoring activities and reports and project behaviour change will be assessed through a summative knowledge attitude and practices at the end of the 3-year project period.

2. Background

Investing in Education is a key driver of future development. It is one of the most effective strategies to address challenges of migration, harness the opportunities of globalization and ensure that young people can develop and contribute to the economic growth of their societies. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Albania faced many challenges in education. Latest PISA results, 2018, show improvement over time, however 50 percent of students perform below level two of basic proficiency in reading, lacking the capacity to understand, use and reflect critically on written information, or otherwise considered functionally illiterate. The Human Capital Index (HCI) ranks Albania at 56 out of 157 countries in 2018, placing it at the bottom of the top tier. The HCI reveals that children in Albania are expected to complete thirteen years of pre-primary, primary and upper secondary school by age 18. Yet, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is equivalent to only 8.9 years, resulting in a learning gap of 4.1 years. (World Bank, 2018).

Albania is facing a decline in the population and outward migration of its skilled workforce. The pre-university school-age population has decreased significantly during the last two decades due to lower birth rate and increased migration. Continued outmigration has also undermined the stock of human capital driven by high levels of unemployment and low education quality. Trends in the Migration Survey of 2018 indicate that one in two Albanians aged 18-40 intends to migrate from Albania. Moreover, the European Values Study (EVS) shows that people in general, and potential migrants in particular, are dissatisfied with the education system, social security, healthcare, civil service, justice system and political parties (to mention a few).⁵ The intention to migrate (on such a large scale) is related to the projections people have for their own future, especially for the future of their children.

⁵ Respondents were asked: Please look at this card and tell me, for each item listed, how much confidence you have in them, is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all?

The administrative data from the Ministry of Education reveal a disturbing situation in upper secondary school drop-out in a series of cities, where social economic challenges overlap with school drop-out. Among the most affected cities by drop-out as a combination of absolute numbers, high percentage of drop-out, concentration of Roma population who have a higher dropout rate are: Diber, Durres, Has, Kukes, Kamza, Kruja, Elbasan, Korca and Fier and Tirana

Some of the main reasons affecting drop-out in school are linked to:

Poverty is a key contributing factor in dropout and transition failure. After children complete mandatory education there are no incentives in place to keep them in education and families cannot afford to pay for education expenses or keep the children out of the working force of the family, particularly in agriculture. Financial cost of education in the form of supplies, clothing, activity fees also factor into decisions to quit education and have children join labour. Migration, both regular and irregular, is the most common contributing factor for school leaving.

Once students in high school are found to be in migration as part of family-based migration, teachers are instructed to mark their absences until they are considered expelled (over 30% of classes missed). While there are mechanisms in place to ensure **transition back to school** if the family experiences return to Albania from migration they are hardly used for the secondary education. The lure of migration, especially towards illegal activities is conversationally considered as a contributing factor towards loss of interest towards education among boys aged 16–20 in Albania.

Although a new competency-based curriculum is in place, in the Albanian Pre-university education system, **the skills for life, employability and soft skills are not given an ample space in curricula implementation or school practices**. The basic education or upper secondary schools do not offer a programme for career counselling and orientation which is key to supporting young people in the pathways of their career prospects.

While research indicates that one of the major reasons for young people to dropping out is linked to the **feeling of being powerless, of senselessness and extreme lack of motivation**, schools provide little stimuli or strengthening of socio-emotional skills and resilience. Programs such as Early Warning Systems for dropout prevention combining identification, reintegration, and resilience building of young people working with their social emotional skills, implemented successfully by UNICEF Albania in compulsory schools have not been extended to secondary education.

This situation of **education attainment** is exacerbated further by COVID-19 school closure and prolonged online learning, with a calculated learning loss predicted at 9 PISA points and with 11.000 children and young people remaining out of any form of learning during the academic year 2019-2020.

COVID-19 also revealed that the education system in Albania, to fully endorse 21-century skills and be on the same pace with other countries, **would need to undertake a huge technological revolution and leapfrog result in digital skills**. As per new draft Education Strategy 2021- 2026, the ratio computer–student in Albania is 1-27, which is far from the EU standard of 1 to 7 students. Moreover, 25 % of the total number of computers is not operational. The internet speed is not adequate for online learning and is mainly concentrated in only one laboratory rather than covering the whole schools. The COVID-19 situation and quick shifting to online learning also thanks to the UNICEF Albania support as for e.g. for the National Platform Akademi.al and a massive teacher training in ICT, revealed also the weaknesses of the system when it comes to teacher's digital capacities in blended learning, gaps in infrastructure and ICT equipment and connectivity, making as such **schools not proving a high quality instruction and as such being not appealing to young generation**.

The links of investment in quality blended learning and EDU-tech are known by world-wide research, highlighting the importance of scaling up of quality instruction, such as through pre-recorded quality lessons, facilitating

differentiated instruction, though, for example, computer-adaptive learning, expanding opportunities to practice and increasing learner engagement through videos and games.

Looking at the young people's employment in Albania, the low quality and relevance of skills towards the labour market remains an issue. The 2019's Albania Enterprise Survey indicated that a significant share of medium and large firms reported inadequately educated workforce among the top three constraints to business development.

Only 70 percent of the workforce in Albania has upper secondary education. Albanian youth face **challenging employability prospects**. The unemployment rate for new labor market entrants in Albania (individuals between 15 and 24 years of age) is 30 percent, which is almost twice as high as the same rate of EU peers, at 17 percent for the EU28 (ILOSTAT, 2019). Albania has the highest proportion of youth neither **in employment nor in education or training (NEET) of any of its regional neighbors** (except for Kosovo*), which at 33 percent is almost twice as high as that of the Western Balkans (at 18 percent) and more than three times as high as the EU28 rate ILO, 2019. The National Employment and Skills agency has set up 10 professional training centers in Albania (two in Tirana, Elbasan, Fier, Vlore, Korce, Gjirokaster, Shkoder, Durres and a mobile center for North-East of Albania). While a lot has been achieved, gaps remain in the development of prevocational skills, job seeking services and soft training package for NEETS as well as covering the whole territory of Albania.

As reported in latest European Commission assessment of the Economic reform in Albania, within this age group, the share of NEETs was highest among upper secondary graduates (28.9%), followed by university graduates (26.5%), while young people with no more than lower secondary education fared the best (24.4%). This **indicates a very challenging labour market transition** for young people also highlights a potential need for additional actions to channel the increasingly skilled young workforce into entrepreneurship and social economy and upscaling education quality provision.

Many EU countries have implemented a program called **Youth Guarantee**,⁶ since 2013 offering multiple pathways to the needs of NEET-s, through well-tested, inclusive and ambitious activation schemes to provide a smooth transition for young people from school to work, support their labor market integration and ensure that no young person is left behind. The youth guarantee aims to address the challenge of youth unemployment and inactivity by committing to ensure that all young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, and apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. Albania is only at the first steps of designing such an initiative which would help shape sustainable mechanism for youth employment, education, and training. Designing evidence-based policies and models within the education system to sustain such an initiative will be crucial to ensuring a long term and successful youth and education policy.

3. Overall goal, intervention logic and proposed Action

Overall Goal: Reduce drop-out in upper secondary schools by improved evidence-based policy, school practices and strengthening young people's skills for life and employability

The initiative is built around three inter-related major results (see annex 1 Log frame)

Output 1: Improved data and evidence-based policy for preventing drop-out

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en>

Output 2: Upscaled school practices to boost education quality, innovation and reduced drop-out are in place

Output 3: Upgraded skills for life and employability of young people

Albania has a sound policy environment, sustaining Inclusive education and quality learning guided by International conventions such as Conventions of the Rights of the Child, Conventions of the Rights of People with Disability, SDG-4, Europe 2020 Strategy etc. While abiding by these conventions, global and European frameworks, the Ministry of Education and Sport in Albania, (hereafter MOES) recognizes through the new Draft Education Strategy 2021-2026 (awaiting approval from Council of Ministers) that for student learning outcomes in Albania to improve, the capacities of frontline actors teachers and school leaders need to be improved so they can respond to improved learning. Inter alia, this documents highlights the 2021-2026 priorities such as the need for focusing on inclusive education including ways to increase access and decrease drop -out by decreasing NEET, improving 21-century skills and digital skills of young people and children to ensure human capital development and a more prosperous future for young people in Albania.

On the employment side, the Ministry of Finance and Economy in Albania (hereafter MoFE), in charge of professional education and training has endorsed the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 – 2022, which among aims to offer quality vocational education and training to youth and adults; Promote social inclusion and territorial cohesion. Strengthen the governance of the labor market and qualification system.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) has well-established targets for an education system that offers conditions and opportunities for students to build and develop the knowledge, skills, and values required by society. The Economic Reform Program 2021-2023 prioritizes the quality of education, inclusion in education and skills building.

The upcoming Youth Strategy (2022-2028) will apply a holistic and cross sectoral approach to youth skills towards life skills and employability.

In relation to international Frameworks, this project would be contributing to:

SDG Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

SDG Goal 3 and EU Gender Action Plan: Girls and women participate as equals in the economic life and have access to all economic resources and social services

SDG Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Target: 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

In terms of EU integration, the project is fully aligned with the four strategic objectives of the Education & Training 2020 Framework [3] for education and training cooperation among EU Member States: 1) Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality 2) Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; and 4) Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Moreover, the project is in full alignment with the new European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning contributing directly to the competencies of (Literacy, Numerical, scientific and engineering skills , Digital

and technology-based competences, interpersonal skills, and the ability to adopt new competences, Active citizenship, Entrepreneurship, Cultural awareness and expression.

The projects also aligns with The EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027, based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018 with regards to participation in democratic life; social and civic engagement support and ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

Having a strong policy intent, but not yet well translated into concrete measures for young people 's education and training, UNICEF is proposing measures to address systemically school dropping out phenomena in Albania, by addressing as such not just immediate effects but as well a range of later consequences in life linked to school leaving such as for e.g. disadvantages of accessing further education, greater employment, employment quality, and broader societal outcomes.

UNICEF Albania is proposing a systemic three-pronged approach tackling policy level changes, schools' practices to prevent drop-out, and improving resilience, skills for life, and employability of young people.

The action will strengthen national capacities and systems to further improve and expand high quality and inclusive education settings to prevent drop-out in secondary schools. The intervention will bring together approaches in improving data and evidence-based policies to monitor and trace progression from one level of the education to the other. Expansion of financial mechanisms to support drop-out in line with international guidelines and models of youth guarantee to address NEETS needs will be aimed. Another aspect addressed by the program will be capacity building of teachers and schools in implementing an early warning system for school drop-out including strengthening of socio-emotional skills of young people, providing after school foundation skills learning and after school programs, as well as introducing in the system the career guidance and orientation to provide young people with multiple pathways of education and careers and avoid skills mismatch.

An important element of education quality will also be around improving innovation, digital skills, blended learning and reinforcing entrepreneurship and life skills of young people to ensure development of 21-st century skills both in general secondary and vocational schools. Behavior change towards perceptions of schools, parents, and policy makers towards education importance and drop-out will also be targeted.

Output 1: Improved data and evidence-based policy for preventing drop-out

Main interventions under this output are described below:

- **1.1 Inception workshop:** An inception report will be developed in the beginning of the project to validate and improve further the project with regards to geography of the interventions, logical framework, potential partners, new developments etc. A workshop with partners will be developed to kick off this work.
- **1.2 and 1.3 Conduct a KAP Study (baseline and end line) and implement a Communication for Behaviour Change Campaign)** Gaps in knowledge and practices with regards to drop-out will be identified through a Knowledge Attitudes, Practices study (KAP study) and communication for behaviour change campaign will be implemented nationally, focused in 8 Municipalities targeting policy makers, parents and schools and identifying their current practices and attitudes towards drop-out . The study will serve as a starting point for a series of interventions and for guiding the development of the communication as well for development campaign. At the end of the project an end line study will be

effectuated to measure the change/progress in KAP.60.000 people are expected to be reached by the Communication for Behaviour Campaign.

- **1.4 Conduct a youth profile study on drop-out:** A study on out of school children profiles will be developed to have a full understanding of who are the out-of-school youth, why they leave school and what are the barriers (administrative, social, financial etc.) they face as they try to re-enter schools. Follow up advice and technical discussions on policy measures will take place with MoES.
- **1.5 New methodology for drop-out developed:** Drop-out measurement methodology for secondary education will be updated based on international methodologies. Technical assistance will be provided to MOES to unify the methodology and ensure that the capacity of national government and local education offices is in place with regard to drop-out including tracing of students from one level of education to the other or to employment pathways;
- **1.6 A multisectoral agreement on out of school youth reached:** The mechanism and three partite agreement on Out of school children existing between three ministries for basic education will be extended also to secondary schools. Capacity building of service providers to identify early school leavers and work cross-sectorally is conducted(300 service providers from different sectors trained).
- **1.7 A financial mechanism for out of school youth set up and implemented:** The financial mechanism offering support for out- of -school children in basic education will be expanded in upper secondary education. This will be aligned and feeding into the developments of Youth Guarantee schemes in Albania and aligned with EU policies and recommendations to ensure sustainability and harmonisation of the approaches. Technical assistance will be offered along with modelling of the interventions in four local department of education/ municipalities, in parallel with outreach work in identifying out of school youth who are out- of -school by working cross-sectorally with health, child and social protection, local governments, civil registration units etc.
- **1.8 Review of the curricula from life skills perspective:** Curricula is reviewed from life skills and entrepreneurship perspective to identify the gaps in curricula and its implementation. The activity will be carried out in cooperation with AAQPUE and findings will be used to inform further improvement in the curricula and its implementation with reference to life skills, improvement of 21-st century skills, digital skills and career orientation programs to mention some.
- **1.9 A Study on identifying ways of communication among young people developed:** No major understanding of young people reactions, trends in thinking, who are the young people's influencers, social media channels used the most etc. exist in Albania. Many issues young people face do not find a receptive and professional adult response as young people would simply not connect to them. Adults and policy makers continue to use the same old-fashioned methods of non-meaningful participation which young people do not value or use. Identifying these channels of communication with adolescents and young people will help identify how young people, think, act communicate and how can we help boost their skills and improve their decision-making and participation in the social and political life.

Output 2: Upscaled school practices to boost education quality, innovation and reduce drop-out are in place

The approaches used under this outcome will entail lessons learnt and experiences from other countries who have had successful experience in addressing Drop-out such as Ireland, The Netherlands etc. Using these lessons learnt, approaches used throughout this output will be characterized by a high level of coordination and integration of services at local levels using a two pronged approach: (i) Prevention in schools through Early Warning System and resilience building (ii) Second-chance education and training/out of school measures; career orientation opportunities guiding towards multiple pathways based on talents and market needs.

Currently, a gap in the system, **national career orientation programs** will be developed for basic education and upper secondary education. The basic education will serve to provide early pathways to choosing education alternatives such as making education choices for vocational education as well as equipping young people and adolescents with the tools and self-awareness to identify their skills and talents versus offers provided by the system. A career orientation programme towards markets needs and university offers versus the skills and talents of high school students will be developed offering realistic and viable perspectives to them. An advisory board will be set up as part of this output with increased presence from private sector with the aim of creating linkages with the Programme, showcasing positive successful models of businesses and startups, and benefitting from their experience and internship opportunities. The program will be developed in full cooperation with MOES and AAQPUE to have full ownership by the MOES by the end of the program a minimum of 10,000 students would be reached by the program

Main interventions under this output are described below:

- **2.1 Design a career orientation program:** Technical assistance will be mobilized to design the program and provide a sound concept based on national inputs from the counterparts and experience from other countries
- **2.2 Development of career package for school staff:** Technical assistance will be mobilized to develop a career package for school staff to guide students.
- **2.3 Purchase tools for career orientation:** Tools recognized internationally for career orientation to be used by schools for identifying different profiles of youngsters and orienting them towards next steps in their studies or training and employment.
- **2.4 Upscale capacity of school staff in career guidance:** 600 school staff will be trained on the career orientation and supported with on the job mentoring; 200 schools in 10 target areas will benefit a focused support of the program
- **2.5 Compile a package with information on the universities and job market:** An assessment of offers from universities and markets' offers will be compiled and used as a reference for the career guidance in upper secondary schools.
- **2.6 Organize career fairs and orientation days:** Career orientation days (30 days) and (3) Career fairs will be developed to link young people with future employers. Links of young people with business will be sought specially to promote internships.
- **2.7 Policy paper and advocacy on career orientation:** The experience will be documented and a policy paper on how to mainstream the experience and showcase it. Advocacy with MOES will be undertaken and a final event to present policy options will be developed.

- **2.8 Provide professional development in EWS** for 1,200 teachers in target areas to use the Early Warning System for preventing and addressing drop-out (including mentoring, coaching and supported communities of practices);
- **2.9 Support 1,500 young people at risk with Socio-Emotional Skills building** to reinforce their resilience and support their foundational skills in Math and Literacy through catch-up courses and individual learning plans;
- **2.10 Support 100 schools with seed funds:** Support 100 schools with implementation of the Early Warning System plans with small seed funding to use as incentives for young students who need to return back (courses, individual learning, sport for development opportunities and championships etc);
- **2.11 Provide professional development to 450 social workers and social administrators** in target areas to be able to support the Early Warning System for preventing and addressing drop-out through innovative training methodologies including on the job training and mentoring. Provide clear and comprehensive tools and information packages for Municipal Social Welfare Staff to support poor and vulnerable households with the right information and support so that they adopt positive behaviours when it comes to supporting young people continue schools and vocational education. Work will be done partnering with the Order of Social Worker, State Social Services and municipalities;
- **2.12 Conduct outreach work in target areas** to identify the out of school youth and work with the multi sectoral mechanism set up by the project (output 1) to provide out of school youth with learning or training and employment opportunities;
- **2.13 Provide a documentation of the experience on EWS,** lessons learnt and best practices and share it widely for all upper secondary schools in Albania.
- **2.14 Set up Tech-hubs in 25 schools in Albania:** The project interventions will aim at setting up 30 new schools with Tech Hubs (tablets with keyboards that teachers and students can use in school and at home to maximise their use, whiteboards internet connectivity).
- **2.15 Conduct training session for teachers' digital skills:** A dedicated training in digital literacy for 600 teachers will be delivered
- **2.16 Coding skills for young people and methodology developed:** Coding skills training and provision of entrepreneurial and technology solutions hand on training will be provided for 1,000 young people at risk including preparation of methodology.
- **2.17 Support the national online learning platform Akademi.al:** Akademi.al, the national online learning platform will also be supported to expand the lessons plans as per official curricula and provide solutions and learning especially for remote schools unable to attract the best teachers through offering individualised online courses, professional training courses etc. Short training courses developed by the project in the area of ICT, digital skills, communication, critical thinking will be offered as well through Akademi.al to be used from general secondary and vocational schools.

Output 3: Skills for life and employability for young people

The interventions part of this outcome will aim at increased access of young persons to a decent livelihood –by building sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems and scaling-up world-class entrepreneurship solutions that meet young people’s unique levels of ability and context. These solutions primarily include entrepreneurship skill-building programmes through general and VET education system as well as innovative financing for youth start-ups— efforts that promote entrepreneurial ecosystems, networks, and business social capital

Main interventions under this output are described below:

- **3.1 Support 1000 NEET with prevocational foundational skills:** In cooperation with general education schools and VET system, support 1,000 NEET with prevocational foundational knowledge and courses so that they are ready to embark successfully in vocational education;
- **3.2 Develop a curriculum for training on ICT skills and soft skills for employment/VET system:** Technical assistance will be mobilised to develop the training curricula
- **3.3. Provide higher skills training through ten professional training centers:** Provide higher skills training (digital literacy and soft skills, communication, entrepreneurship skills, media literacy, critical thinking cooperation etc.) through the ten centres offering professional development as part of the Vocational Education System (so far, they train limited number of people in very basic skills). The interventions will aim at development of curricula for training on ICT skills and a package of soft skills training containing critical thinking collaboration, entrepreneurship, communication and media literacy benefiting more 3,000 young people);

3.4 Support job searching for NEET with employment offices

This component will target young jobseekers out-of- education, training or employment to provide them with the needed information on job market opportunities or vocational training. Among the activities part of this component will be: development of tools and manual for the Employment officers in supporting young people seeking opportunities for employment and training (40 employment offices), capacity building of employment offices and centres for professional development (200 people), development of counselling packages, including online briefs and counselling protocols, joint activities among employment offices, centers for professional training and schools, awareness targeting young people on the possibilities of training and employment in Albania through employment offices, provision of two training centers with the needed technology to increase their training capacity.

- **3.5 Update and implement UPSHIFT methodology:** UNICEF has been providing a world class solution for young people social innovation and entrepreneurship based on human center design implemented successfully in Albania as well as in more than 30 other countries in the world called UPSHIFT. Through this program, UNICEF Albania (<https://upshift.al/>) aims to empower most vulnerable young people (5,000 young person’s 15-24 years old) to identify challenges in their communities and create entrepreneurial solutions to address them. UPSHIFT will be adapted to different contexts ranging from youth innovation labs to schools, VET schools and non-formal education centers. Through a combination of Outreach & Inspiration, Human Centred Design workshops, Mentorship & Coaching and, in seed funding, participants,

NEET young people will gain valuable transferable skills, including problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and leadership. Once being equipped with skills by organizing 7 Upshift workshop cycles young people will start implementing their innovative social ideas (30 small project seed funds) with the goal to enhance their community life, coached by experienced mentors. Business communities and local government will be encouraging to support financially the youth designed ideas adding to the ownership and sustainability of the project.

- **3.6 Support and mentor 20 start-ups** encourage start-ups, of the most esteemed ideas that have a solid basis for a start-up will be supported towards developing a sustainable start up. This process will be guided through 2 cycles of START-UP program (a social venture workshop) focused on Business thinking approach, Key Success Factors and Lean Canvas Methodologies. To guarantee programme sustainability the successful UPSHIFT curricula will be accredited by the MOES and, schoolteachers will be trained on how to implement it with the young people in 50 schools. EU4Innovation, ERASMUS+ project etc, will be called to coordinate on this intervention.
- **3.7 Accredite the Upshift curricula** as a means to ensure project sustainability and increase the numbers of teachers to use the methodology
- **3.8 Provide media literacy PONDER training:** Young people with a focus on youth from VET schools and NEET-s, will be provided with media literacy training PONDER (<https://ponder.al/>). Anchored in human-centred design, ethnographic research, and participatory action research, PONDER is a strategic response that harnesses the potential of critical thinking in youth to analyse the information and messages received from social and traditional media. UNICEF in collaboration with implementing partners will organize 10 workshops with youth between 14-21 years old from target municipalities. The workshop will enhance 1,000 youth with critical thinking while 100 participants are expected to benefit from a 1-month internship having the opportunity to be transformed as influencers. PONDER currently has developed an application where youth can challenge their ideas toward the social and traditional media which will be enriched further with more information. 1000 other adolescents and youth to be targeted in participating in an Essay competition through the Innovative Ponder Mobile App



Youth Ponder workshop

- **3.9 Organise a national debate:** A national debate tournament with youth from the target areas will be organized involving more than 3,000 young people. The debate tournament will involve 100 schools in 61 municipalities and will kick off with outreach work, training, and mentoring on the critical thinking process, preparation of the topics (research packages), coaching schools, school debates, local debates and national debates. The debates topics will gain knowledge and feed youth activism regarding local issues and of investing in education, benefits of education, the role of youth participation in social life, etc.

- **3.10 Visibility materials and events:** Promotional materials and events with regard to the project activities will be developed. The inception workshop and report will provide guidance for this activity respecting donors perspective and instructions

4. Strategies of implementation

UNICEF will adopt a cost-effective but potentially high impact strategy of working with key stakeholders in its role as knowledge broker providing credible evidence, good practice, and tools deriving from the experience on the ground and partnerships and added value partnerships. The evidence and knowledge products will be adapted and refined with MoES, MoYC, MoFE to allow for replication at scale through existing and sustainable structures. This focus on investing and strengthening existing structures and processes will increase the likelihood of reforms being accepted and will create a sense of ownership amongst existing schools, teachers, young people education officials and policymakers.

The following methods of implementation will be at the heart of this initiative, in line with UNICEF overall programme strategies in Albania and aligned to country needs and priorities:

Improved quality of service provision embedded in national capacity will be aimed - including an improved professional development package for career orientation, ICT digital skills and entrepreneurial and soft skills of young people. Strengthening the capacities of existing teachers equipped to meet the needs of vulnerable youth, namely NEET-s will increase the potential of a sustained service provision beyond the lifespan on this initiative.

Introducing an approach to teaching aligning different levels of education-The evidence from around the world is clear. When students from marginalized groups are included in education, the changes in education systems that this will require will mean that all learners benefit, leading to improved socio-economic well-being of all. The program will develop a new mindset of doing business in education, namely following the needs of youth NEET-s, by investing in basic education (UNICEF supported), continuing to upper secondary education to vocational education, following the needs of young people. As such the program will aim at setting up a model where skills build on skills, starting with foundational skills, to transferrable skills and then to skills for life and employability. Without the former two, it is difficult to have a sustainable earning in vocational educational and have young people be able to apply transferrable knowledge in the long run.

Addressing knowledge, practices and attitudes of public at large as well as teachers, parents and policy makers toward the inclusion of NEETS in schools will create a critical mass of people, from different levels of education able to input and provide their support to policy reforms and practice of including NEET in schools and training programs.

Innovation will be used extensively used as a means to reach more young people and improve the service quality. Innovative approaches will be promoted throughout the project with young people being not just passive receivers but contributors in these approaches.

Regional cooperation – knowledge exchange/smart transfer of models with Western Balkan countries on improvement of quality of skills building in formal and non-formal learning will be facilitated through UNICEF offices in these countries.

5. Coordination other programs

The proposed action does not constitute a follow up of any previous Italian funded programme or action, but it builds on a multi- year engagement of UNICEF Albania with MOES as the main counterpart as well as with youth sector, currently under MoYC and employment services with Ministry of Finance and Economy as an important counterpart.

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in 190 countries through country programs and UNICEF national committees. UNICEF works with and for disadvantaged children and adolescents in 21 countries and territories across Europe.

UNICEF Albania has a presence and active programs in social inclusion of vulnerable children through promoting and supporting programs on Child and Social Protection, Education and Early learning, Health and nutrition, Child rights monitoring etc. UNICEF works with children and adolescents, who are the most excluded from participation mechanisms and has programs and technical assistance to address these barriers. The interventions developed through this project will be designed taking into consideration the wealth of knowledge coming from UNICEF experience working in education sector in Albania while the interventions will also take stock of UNICEF experience and technical expertise in the region through tapping into the expertise of UNICEF's headquarters, regional office in Geneva as well as other countries in the region.

With regards to Edu-Tech and skills building ,UNICEF boasts some comprehensive global initiatives where Albania adheres too such as Generation Unlimited which enables young people to become productive and engaged members of society (<https://www.generationunlimited.org/>), Giga Initiative, connecting every school to internet (<https://www.unicef.org/innovation/giga>) Re-imagining Education, facing the learning crisis through offering digital learning as essential service (<https://www.unicef.org/reimagine/education>) which will be a sound source and technical support for the smooth implementation of the project.

In Albania, UNICEF is recognized as the partner of choice for Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth in quality and inclusive education. UNICEF is currently engaged in major education projects with MoES in Albania such as the development of the new sector strategy, designing a series of policies and standards to boost the equal participation of children and young people in education, support digital skills of children and young people through blended learning and development of the first national platform Akademi.al etc. UNICEF has been successful in implementing innovative projects in reducing drop-out such as Early Warning System for compulsory education, supporting breakthrough agreements among three Ministries on identifying and integrating Out of School Children, supporting competency based curricula implementation and its evaluation as well as a series of other projects in Early Childhood Development, skills building for young people's such as UPSHIFT, Ponder, U-report, debate and critical thinking, ICT in schools etc.

UNICEF is currently negotiating large scale projects with major investment banks around education to boost interconnectivity among schools, improve blended learning and ICT skills and ensure inclusive learning for all children and young people.

UNICEF will be continuing to partner in this initiative with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the Agency for the Assurance of Quality in Pre-University Education (AAQPUE), Ministry of Finance and Economy, 10 target municipalities and the Local Departments of education in target areas. UNICEF has a long-standing relationship with all the above entities around education and social inclusion.

UNICEF will continue the work supported by the Netherlands Government with regards to earthquake recovery on the areas of EDU-tech, blended learning, capacity development of teachers, etc. safeguarding the principles of The Team Europe approach. UNICEF will closely align the work with EU delegation in Albania with regards to youth Guarantee, Erasmus plus as well EU4Innovation and EU4schools run by UNDP etc. Alignment will be sought as well with "Leave No One behind "project supported by Swiss government and implemented by UN towards a

more cohesive society as well as with an upcoming funding on youth and environment supported by SIDA implemented by UNICEF. GIZ and Austrian Development programs on VET and professional education will be consulted as well since the start of the program. UNICEF will continue to work in the framework of this project closer with the private sector expanding on successful partnerships already built in the past as for e.g. with the private sector, for e.g. with VODAFONE Foundation on STEM with a focus on gender.

The project outputs and results are directly linked with the UNICEF Country Program Document and UNSDCF Document of the UN in Albania agreed with the Albanian government.

6. Organisational structure and the team proposed for the implementation of the action

UNICEF Representative leads the overall programme and UNICEF office in Albania and will represent UNICEF in this project ensuring a smooth and quality delivery of the program and regular reporting and consultation with the Italian Government.

The project will be overall supervised by the Deputy Representative of UNICEF. On the everyday basis the project will be implemented through an Education Specialist overseeing the overall project design implementation and monitoring (UNICEF supported), a Youth and Adolescent Officer (project supported and UNICEF supported) who will ensure smooth implementation of youth programmes and ensure convergence with other programmes related to youth and adolescents and a national coordinator (Project supported). The project assistant will be offering the need administrative and programmatic support and facilitation to the programme (Project supported and UNICEF supported). The finance officer will support the administrative and financial procedures of the programme (UNICEF supported). A communication specialist will also help cover issues of visibility, communicating results, preparing information packages, and managing relationships with the media for this project. (UNICEF supported). A child rights monitoring specialist will provide assistance and technical expertise to monitoring and research component.

7. Monitoring of the project

Monitoring of the project results will be one of the main tasks of the team. The logical framework of the project will be used as a live document to be populated in continuity with fresh data. Gaps and identified at risk of not being achieved targets will be identified in advance to mitigate and take measures. Continuous feedback from the beneficiaries, teachers and schools will be integrated in all project activities in due time to provide a chance to improve the products. A KAP baseline and end point will be developed to measure the progress of the project towards selected behaviours. U-report, a free and anonymous digital tool, created by UNICEF Globally that interacts with young people aged (15 to 24), who sign up to become U-Reporters, will extensively be used to gauge the pulse of young people on different activities and major decision-making involving youth. The monitoring framework and logical framework will be revised in the inception workshop with the main partners.

8. Visibility

Visible recognition and adherence with guidelines for the Italian Government support to the initiative will be part of all programmed deliverables, printed and online materials.

UNICEF will make sure that all the relevant project activities are promoted through local media national media and social media. The UNICEF communication specialist will attend to this important task. Visits to project sites and special events will be used to attract the media attention. Special attention for the media and visibility will also be sought for the school events as part of the communication for social change campaign.

Media briefs to and other partners will be organized on a regular basis to update local audiences on the progress of the initiative. Special focus will be paid to reporting on the number of NEETS included in education or training, and the number of schools and teachers benefiting from improved skills investment. Human stories will also be shared with the media to feature in main media outlets.

9. Risk analysis and contingency plan

The risks analysis will facilitate the project implementation by providing already planned solutions to some risks. The situation with COVID-19 is volatile and the risks table will be updated in continuity to be able to mitigate the risks in due time

Potential Risks	Probability	Impact	Contingency Plan
COVID-19 situation might worsen and schools close can follow suit	Medium	High	UNICEF will facilitate online training sessions and meetings through offering the needed platforms
COVID-19 situation worsens, and commitments already taken by MOES/MoEF change	Medium	High	UNICEF will continue to advocate with MOES/MoEF /MOYC that even during a crisis, the propose approaches offered through this action will continue to be very much needed also during online learning.
Turnover of staff especially of the headmasters, local department of education and central ministries	Medium	Medium	UNICEF through this action will create a critical mass of teachers and other education specialists; will increase focus at technical level to ensure that internal demand for this service is requested also by schools and teachers
3. MOES does not make transparent critical data or allow access to schools	Low	Medium	Advocate for data transparency to inform actions, use alternative sources of data such as INSTAT, UNESCO Institute of Statistics etc. or use triangulated data between sectors.
5. Post – COVID Economic crisis in a country level prevents government to make sound investments in education.	Medium	Medium	Refocusing efforts towards low cost alternatives

10. Main preconditions and assumptions

- MOES/MoFE continue to demonstrate commitment towards teacher professional development, NEETS, and inclusive education (to coordinate, engage, invest in, and promote quality inclusive education).
- Socio-economic situation in Albania remains stable after a difficult year for the economy struck by last earthquake and COVID-19.
- Education authorities engage technically in reviewing and provision of feedback for project outputs.

- Adequate financial resources and human resources to sustain project activities are in place
- Staff turnover during project implementation does not occur
- No major Covid-19 lockdown or any major disaster happens
- Commitment of school administration, teachers, parents, and community members to engage in project activities exists

11. Sustainability

The proposed activities are not stand-alone activities of this action but rather integral part of the national priorities as outlines in the Draft Education strategy 2021-2026, Youth Strategy (2022-2029) upcoming, or National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2020-2022. The action proposed by this project, match the objective and budget support of this strategy, paving as such the way to potential financial sustainability of the interventions. The documentations of the project will also shed light to the costing of such interventions to ensure their integration in government budget allocations. The interventions of the project will also be aligned as mentioned in the previous sections with the IPA III, EU4Youth, Youth guarantee etc. to ensure further their financing and continuation of the activities as part of the financing of these mechanisms.

Efforts towards institutional sustainability include ownership of the products from the national partners. Being part of the planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating the actions, the national counterparts, schoolteachers, MoES, MoYC, MoFE, AAQPUE, will continue to use the experiences and products of the project. Moreover, the training methodologies is expected to be accredited so as such it will enter in the training catalogue with additional teachers requesting to take this accredited training in order to enrich their career progression portfolio, even after the lifespan of this project.

12. Dissemination plan and the possibilities for replication and extension of the action outcomes

This action will conclude with models for reducing drop-out which would have been modelled, tested, implemented at large scale, and disseminated widely to benefit to other school and teachers from the positive experience and lesson learnt. The sustainability of initiatives and their future replication will be considered from the outset by focusing on maximizing the use of existing systems rather than creating new ones.

As the products of related to NEETS integration, drop-out etc. will be a joint product of UNICEF and MoES /MoFE /MOYC and will be accredited, as such this models and tools will be easy to replicate by the national authorities. The fact that the areas of teacher professional development, reducing drop- out and skills for life and employability, are among top priorities of MoES will also help the channeling of funds to continue to support these activities at scale. The career orientation model will also be extremely important for the future of NEET's youth policies in Albania.

Human stories, lessons learnt, and best practice will be documented to provide more teachers, schools, local policy makers etc., the chance to benefit and replicate the experience.

Preventing Drop-Out in secondary schools "Every Young Person matters"

ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS	Budget for three years in (Euro) from Italian	Budget first year from Italian Government	UNICEF for three years (Euro)
Output 1: Improved data and evidence-based policy for preventing drop-out			
Activity 1.1 Inception workshop to validate and update the workplan of the project	10,000 €	10,000 €	0
Activity 1.2 Conduct a KAP-study	50,000 €	25,000 €	
Activity 1.3 Implement a Communication for Behavior Change Campaign	120,000 €	30,000 €	
Activity 1.4 Conduct a youth profile study on drop-out	25,000 €	25,000 €	
Activity 1.5 New methodology for drop-out developed	30,000 €	30,000 €	
Activity 1.6 A multisectoral agreement on out of school reached	70,000 €	45,000 €	20,000 €
Activity 1.7 A financial mechanism for out of school youth set up and implemented	80,000 €	40,000 €	50,000 €
Activity 1.8 Review of the Curricula from life skills a perspective	20,000 €	20,000 €	
Activity 1.9 A study on identifying ways of communication among young people developed	25,000 €	25,000 €	
Subtotal	430,000 €	250,000 €	70,000 €
Output 2: Upscaled school practices to boost education quality, innovation and reduced drop-out are in place			
Activity 2.1 Design a career orientation program	40,000 €	20,000 €	
Activity 2.2 Development of career package for school staff	30,000 €	20,000 €	
Activity 2.3 Purchase tools for career orientation	60,000 €	10,000 €	
Activity 2.4 Upscale the capacity for school staff in career guidance	110,000 €	50,000 €	50,000 €
Activity 2.5 Compile a package with information on the universities and job market	45,000 €	45,000 €	
Activity 2.6 Organize career fairs and orientation days	60,000 €	0 €	
Activity 2.7 Policy paper on career orientation	12,000 €	0 €	
Activity 2.8 Provide professional development in EWS	180,000 €	70,000 €	50,000 €
Activity 2.9 Support 1500 young people at risk with Social Emotional Skills buiding	100,000 €	50,000 €	60,000 €
Activity 2.10 Support 100 schools with seed funds	200,000 €	0 €	80,000 €
Activity 2.11 Provide professional development for 450 social workers and social administrators	200,000 €	80,000 €	
Activity 2.12 Conduct outreach work in target areas	130,000 €	50,000 €	
Activity 2.13 Provide a documentation of the experience with EWS	15,000 €	0 €	
Activity 2.14 Set upTech-hubs in 25 new schools in Albania	320,000 €	80,000 €	100,000 €
Activity 2.15 Conduct training sessions for teachers for digital skills	140,000 €	50,000 €	60,000 €
Activity 2.16 Coding skills for young people and methodology developed	160,000 €	80,000 €	
Activity 2.17 Support the national online learning platform Akademi. al	200,000 €	90,000 €	50,000 €
Subtotal output 2	2,002,000 €	695,000 €	450,000 €
Output 3: Upgraded skills for life and employability of young people			
Activity 3.1 Support 1,000 NEET with prevocational foundational skills	180,000 €	50,000 €	20,000 €
Activity 3.2 Develop a curriculum for training on ICT skills and soft skills training for employment/VET system	30,000 €	30,000 €	
Activity 3.3 Provide higher skills training through ten professional training centers	133,346 €	50,000 €	16,654 €
Activity 3.4 Support job searching for NEETS with employment offices	150,000 €	35,000 €	
Activity 3.5 Update and implement UPSHIFT methodology	140,000 €	60,000 €	120,000 €
Activity 3.6 Support and mentor 20 start-ups	160,000 €	30,000 €	20,000 €
Activity 3.7 Accredite the UPSHIFT curricula	5,000 €	2,000 €	
Activity 3.8 Provide media literacy PONDER training	80,000 €	60,000 €	50,000 €
Activity 3.9 Organize a national debate	50,000 €	20,000 €	
Activity 3.10 Visibility materials and events	35,000 €	10,000 €	
Subtotal output 3	963,346 €	347,000 €	226,654 €
0			
Project coordinator (30,000 per year)	90,000 €	30,000 €	0
Youth and adolescents' officer (60,000 per year co-shared with 25% by UNICEF)	135,000 €	45,000 €	45,000
Programme assistant (30,000 per year co - shared with 50% by UNICEF)	45,000 €	15,000 €	45,000
Education specialist (50%) 35, 000 year (financed by UNICEF)	0 €	0 €	105,000 €
Subtotal 4	270,000 €	90,000 €	195,000 €
TOTAL (1+2+3+4) Programmable amount	3,665,346 €	1,382,000 €	941,654 €
Overhead cost 8%	293,228 €		
Levy (1%)	39,586 €		
Total amount requested from Italian Government	3,998,160 €		

Time schedule for the project - Preventing drop-out in secondary schools. Every young person matters

Result statement ¹	Performance indicator/s	Location	Baseline 2021	Target 2024	Means of Verification ²
Reduced early school leaving in upper secondary schools by improved evidence-based policy, school practices and strengthening young people's skills for life and employability	Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, by sex	Albania	Total: 25.8; M: 25.3; F: 25.3	Total: 24; M: 24 F: 24	<i>ILO report MoES Mid term report of the national strategy of education</i>
Programme Output 1 Improved data and evidence-based policy for preventing drop-out	# policies supporting NEETS inclusion	National	0	3 (Policy on financial mechanism for out of school, joint intersectoral agreement, new data measure policy for drop out)	<i>Official gazette MoES records</i>
	# of studies on NEETS challenges (KAP Study baseline and KAP endpoint, OOSC profile study, channels of communication with youth study)	National	0	4	<i>UNICEF records</i>
	Number of people reached through the communication for development campaign	Target areas of the project	0	60,000	<i>UNICEF records</i>
Programme Output 2 Upscaled School practices to boost education quality, innovation and reduced drop out are in place	# of new established practices used in secondary education in support to NEETS (Career orientation, EWS, ICT, PONDER, UPSHIFT)	Target areas of the project	0	At least 5	<i>UNICEF records MoES records MoYC records School records</i>
	# of teachers benefitting from capacity building in	Target areas of the project	0 teachers in career orientation	800 teachers	<i>MOES / AAQPUE records of training</i>

¹ The logical framework will be revised in the inception workshop and changes will be submitted with the inception report

Time schedule for the project - Preventing drop-out in secondary schools. Every young person matters

Result statement ¹	Performance indicator/s	Location	Baseline 2021	Target 2024	Means of Verification ²
	new practices in support to NEETS		0 teachers in EWS 1200 teachers in ICT skills	1200 teachers in EWS 600 teachers in ICT skills	
	# of programs accredited	National and Target areas of the project	0	At least 2 (career orientation, EWS)	MoES records
	# of schools benefitting small grants to implement Early Warning system		0	100	MoES, project records
	# of youth (males/females) benefitting direct support for foundational and emotional skills		0	1,500 (50% girls)	Project records
	# of social workers capacitated to support NEETS and families		0	450	Social services records
Programme Output 3	# Nr of NEETS (males/females) receiving prevocational knowledge and foundation skills	Target areas	0	1,000 (50% girls)	Project records MoEF records MoYC records
Upgraded skills for life and employability of young people	# of NEETS (males/females) benefitting increased knowledge in 21 Century and ICT skills		0	8,000 (50% girls)	MOEF records MOES records
	Existence of curricula for training for 21-st century skills	National	No	1	MOEF records
	# of starts ups and projects implemented with seed funds	Target areas	0	40	Project records, LG records

Time schedule for the project - Preventing drop-out in secondary schools. Every young person matters

Result statement ¹	Performance indicator/s	Location	Baseline 2021	Target 2024	Means of Verification ²
	# of Techubs set up	Target areas	0	25	<i>MOES records</i>

