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Creating Better Lifelong Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships

Final Report

Contribution Agreement 2020 /417-449
Between the European Union represented by the European Commission
and
the United Nations Development Programme

Prepared for:

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Submitted: June 2024

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBLL	Creating Better Lifelong Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EntreComp	European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
DigiComp	Digital Competence Framework
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoLHSA	Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
MSY	Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia
NCEQE	National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
LLL	Lifelong learning
PPP	Public-private partnerships
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RPA	Responsible Partner Agreement
SSO	Sectoral Skills Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VSA	Vocational Skills Agency
WBL	Work-based learning

PROJECT BASIC INFORMATION

Reporting Period	17 September 2021 – 20 December 2023
Donor	European Union
Country	Georgia
Project Title	Creating Better Lifelong Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships (CBLL) Georgia
Project Contract Number Outputs (Atlas Project ID and Description) Strategic Plan and/or CPD Outcomes	Contract# 2020 /417-449. Strengthening employability for men and women in the capital and in rural areas through increased access to high quality services. which is achieved through the results chain comprising with 2 outcomes, 3 outputs and 14 activities designed around 3 pillars: accessibility, quality and relevance of skills. The project contributes to the UNDP Strategic Documents as follows: UNSDCF 2021-2025/CPD 2021-2025: Outcome 3: By 2025, all people without discrimination benefit from a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy in Georgia CPD 2021-2025 Output 3.1: Improved competitiveness of private sector and labour force, especially youth and vulnerable groups through labour policy, private sector development, social responsibility and skills development; UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Outcome 1. Advance poverty 2.1. eradication in all its forms and dimensions/Output 1.1.2. Marginalized groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets to build productive capacities and benefit from sustainable livelihoods and jobs
Responsible Partner	Non-Formal Education Youth Centre Sunny House
Target Regions	Ajara, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Tbilisi
Project Beneficiaries	Ministry of Education and Science (from January 1, 2024, renamed to the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth), Vocational Skills Agency, target VET colleges, secondary schools and VET providers
Project Start Date	17 September 2020
Project End Date	20 December 2023
Total Budget	€1,125,000.00 out of which EU - €900,000.00 and UNDP - € 225,000.00
Total Delivered	€1,125,829.79 out of which EU - €899,944.01 and UNDP - € 225,885.77
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creating Better Lifelong Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships (CBLL) project is a joint intervention between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and European Union. CBLL builds on United Nations and European Union core commitments and the wider mandate for supporting vocational educational training (VET) and employment sector reforms, including the EU Skills4Jobs programme.

The project aims at strengthening the employability of marginalized men and women, thus supporting their efforts to avoid poverty and marginalization through increased access to high-quality vocational education services in the rural and urban areas of Georgia. CBLL concentrates on two sectors of the care economy, namely tourism and wellness/health.

The combined impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fast-changing vocational education system policy landscape that resulted in the establishment of the Vocational Skills Agency (referred to as Skills Agency below) as the leading actor of VET reform affected processes in the vocational education system. CBLL addressed the challenges, responded to new realities and adjusted its approach to meet the needs of beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders.

The project developed strong cooperation mechanisms with other stakeholders in VET. In collaboration with the Skills Agency, the project team prioritized ongoing cooperation with various projects supported by donor organizations such as ADB, USAID, GIZ, EU, UNDP, and others. This was essential because several activities outlined in the project were linked to initiatives carried out by these organizations programme. The CBLL project promoted cooperation with other projects funded under the EU Skills4Job initiative, which had some thematic overlap. In addition to maintaining constant communication with various organizations implementing EU grant programmes (such as UNA Georgia, CSRDG, EDEC, and others), the project was actively involved in planning and participating in other projects funded under the programme. To ensure synergy with the activities of the CBLL project, the Skills Agency was actively involved, working within the EU TA component to develop career guidance services at the vocational education, which was also a main focus of the CBLL project. The primary goal of this synergy was to avoid duplications and foster close cooperation between projects to achieve common objectives.

The launch of the CBLL project coincided with significant systemic changes in vocational education, involving the formation and implementation of new management approaches. These changes culminated in the establishment of the Skills Agency, the result of several years of collaborative work among state, private, and international organizations. The creation of the Skills Agency signifies a new approach to managing vocational education, emphasizing active private sector participation in the development, planning, and evaluation of professional education.

In addition to transitioning to new approaches for managing and developing vocational education, efforts in this field have intensified in various directions. At this stage of developing the vocational education system, the project's main goal was to establish a strong presence within the existing processes and contribute to implementing new visions for the system's growth. During the same period, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia (MoESY), in coordination with the Skills Agency and with financial support from the EU, began working on several key strategies for vocational education. These include the Vocational

Education Development Strategy and its action plan, as well as the Career Guidance Development Strategy and its implementation action plan.

Simultaneously, alongside the transition to innovative system management approaches, the project's activities were significantly refined. This alignment was timely, as new methodologies were being developed within the vocational education system across various disciplines. The project emerged as the optimal platform for piloting these new approaches and mechanisms, providing a robust framework for developing and recommending implementation strategies.

Several activities envisaged by the project were directly aligned with the priorities of vocational education and were included in the draft strategy for the development of vocational education. Consequently, the project significantly contributed to piloting and implementing various initiatives at a critical juncture in the evolution of vocational education.

In considering both the immediate and subsequent priorities of vocational education, the project's main achievements can be summarized as follows:

The project focused on developing institutional mechanisms of cooperation between general and VET institutions to enhance vocational education within public schools. This initiative closely aligned with a crucial priority of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, which aimed to promote the accessibility and inclusiveness of vocational education in public schools. Implemented in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank under the initiative "Modern Skills for Better Employment Opportunities," the project facilitated the development and implementation of mechanisms to introduce vocational education into schools through partnerships with VET institutions.

To enable the authorization for offering short-term and long-term programmes, the project developed mechanisms to strengthen institutional capacities and designed training programmes. Working in conjunction with governmental bodies, the project also facilitated the preparation of material and technical infrastructure necessary for implementing two short-term programmes in public schools. This activity undertaken within the project framework provided valuable insights into the challenges associated with integrating vocational education into general education schools, highlighting key considerations and factors for future endeavors. At the same time, a new requirement for general education authorization, previously only for private schools, now applies to public schools. The authorisation also contains fire safety standards before offering short-term training and retraining programmes. Despite the process being underway for two years, no schools have achieved authorization due to limited state funding. Although the amendments proposed by the project aim to ease fire safety requirements for lower-risk programmes, they are still under inter-agency review. This hinders the implementation of VET services, which will be monitored by UNDP after the end of the project.

The project focused on developing institutional mechanisms to enhance the capacity of professional education teachers within the target VET institutions. Amidst the transition to a new vocational education management system, establishing mechanisms for the development of VET teachers emerged as a crucial priority for the system. In this regard, the project played a significant role in advancing the VET system.

Specifically, the project undertook important initiatives within the framework of the World Bank's developed standards for VET teachers. It involved the creation of a comprehensive **Pre-Service programme** tailored for VET teachers; alongside **In-House programmes** designed specifically for them. Furthermore, the project facilitated the piloting of these programmes within the targeted VET institutions, generating valuable recommendations to promote a culture of continuous development among teachers within the system.

Within the framework of the project, in addition to creating CB programmes, it was possible to pilot these programmes in the targeted VET institutions. Furthermore, significant recommendations were developed to enhance the system and promote the continuous professional development of VET teachers.

The project supported the development and implementation of student, non-formal, and extracurricular services in VET institutions. During the project's implementation stage, comprehensive approaches and concepts were developed for enhancing these institutions, to which the project made a significant contribution. Holistic approaches to managing and developing VET institutions involve reviewing their functions and goals and integrating community needs. VET institution should not only provide formal educational programmes but also offer student services tailored to the needs of young people and vulnerable groups in the community, as described in the authorization standard for student support services development. Considering the new authorization standards, VET institutions underwent the authorization process for the first time. The activities implemented within the project to improve student and non-formal education services provided substantial support to these institutions in meeting these standards.

The project focused on developing career guidance services to enhance the employability skills of young people and vulnerable groups. Throughout all phases of implementation, particular emphasis was placed on advancing career guidance services within vocational education, particularly tailored to the needs of vulnerable individuals and those with additional requirements. In the project's initial phase, a career guidance strategy and action plan were devised with financial support from the EU, delineating crucial priorities for enhancing career guidance services. As part of the project, novel career guidance services were established, including specialized ones for Special Education Needs (SEN) and People with Disabilities (PWD). Additionally, recommendations were formulated for the integration of these services at a systemic level.

Development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in VET institutions. Alongside the transition to new approaches in managing VET education, a key focus within the system has been on cultivating modern strategies for managing VET institutions and fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems within them. This effort has been paralleled by the establishment of regulatory frameworks governing economic activities within VET colleges, empowering these institutions to initiate the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in compliance with regulations. Aligned with this priority, the project has made significant strides in fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems within VET institutions. Specifically, it has facilitated the creation of organizational structures that support such ecosystems (in line with accreditation standards) in the project's designated VET institutions. Moreover, in adherence to the established regulations, the project has initiated pilot economic activities within VET colleges for the first time.

The project focused on developing technology-based teaching approaches in vocational education and enhancing digital learning competencies among VET teachers. Throughout all phases of implementation, careful attention was given to studies conducted by various stakeholders in the vocational education system. The aim was to address the challenges and needs identified within the system while aligning with the project's goals and action plan.

Several studies conducted by the Skills Agency in 2021-2023, including the Vocational Education Development Report and Tracer Studies, underscored a significant challenge in vocational education: the integration of technology-based teaching approaches and the enhancement of VET teachers' competencies in this domain. In response to these findings, the project developed training modules on technology-based teaching as part of the teacher Pre-Service programme. These modules were incorporated into both the institution's In-House training programme and broader teacher development initiatives. VET teachers from the targeted vocational educational institutions underwent training in technology-based teaching

methodologies. Additionally, digital resources and courses were created for both professional students and VET teachers.

To foster synergy, the project actively collaborated with the vocational education initiative of the Asian Development Bank. As part of this collaboration, digital resources and self-directed online courses developed under the CBLL project were integrated into the Learning Management System (LMS) platform established within the framework of the collaboration.

The project significantly contributed to the pivotal priority of vocational education, particularly in the advancement and refinement of VET qualifications. In the initial phase of project implementation, a novel methodology and regulatory framework for the enhancement of VET qualifications were ratified. This necessitated a review and revision of the activities outlined by the project. Pioneering within the vocational education system, the project embarked on supporting the MoESY and the Skills Agency in developing new VET programmes focused on Tourism and Wellness, aligning with the emerging regulations on qualifications development. Consequently, it empowered the vocational education system to formulate and consider institutional recommendations based on piloting new approaches. During the qualifications development process, the project fostered synergistic collaboration with various donor organizations (GIZ, USAID), which later extended support to the Skills Agency in the realm of qualifications development.

Two outcome indicators – the percentage of students/project beneficiaries who report that high-quality programmes for lifelong learning are delivered through innovative approaches, compatibility with new authorization standards, and the enhanced capacities of institutions and human resources, including teaching staff (1.2. Number of teaching staff), who report that high-quality programmes for lifelong learning are delivered through innovative approaches – are achieved, as students and teachers report that high-quality programmes and competency development are available.

Two other outcome indicators that focus on network development and diversified services – 2.1. Number of youth, including job seekers and vulnerable groups, benefitting from institutional and intersectoral partnerships and networks, digital platforms and diversified services; 2.2. Status of establishment of diversified services enabling identification mechanisms of vulnerable groups for accessibility to flexible formal and non-formal learning applied – also are achieved.

As a results the project achieved the following major results at impact level:

1. needs-based institutional development plans for provision of diversified VET services have covered 1,516 VET students and schoolchildren, 16 college staff members, 34 HUB college staff members (15 women), 41 HUB college partners (20 women) are covered by Sunny House; 92 college and school staff members (60) and partners from local governments.
2. Two educational standards with modules in tourism and wellness, two modules for personal service programmes, three non-formal education courses, two self-directed digital courses, and one self-directed non-formal education course have been developed for provision of diversified VET services.
3. The LMS platform of the Skills Agency provides with the work safety and hygiene, first aid, and financial literacy courses.
4. 20 certificate courses for schools (2 courses per school), 2 VET programme in Tourism and Wellness, 3 non-formal education catch-up courses, and 2 courses for personnel services programmes.

5. two networks (school/colleges and teacher sectoral network) in health/wellness and tourism are set up for further cooperation.
6. 10 Schools are supported by 7 target colleges establishing partnership for delivery of the services. As mentioned above, due to the new regulations imposed by the Government on authorization for secondary education and fire safety, during the course of the project, and to limitations of the state funding needed for compliancy with these regulations, the regular delivery of the VET services in public schools is suspended. This is subject for permission for regular delivery.
7. 2 skills hubs in Kakheti (Prestige) and Imereti (Iberia) were strengthened.
8. catch-up Courses focused on key competencies were introduced in all 7 VET colleges targeted by the project and, in addition, in two public schools.

At Outcome level the project has achieved:

9. 483 beneficiaries benefited from digital and other services: 100 career education students and communities members, 56 professional orientation services beneficiaries (PWD and SEN, 20 women), 200 beneficiaries of open days (120 women), 61 beneficiaries of financial literacy (40 women), 66 digital literacy courses beneficiaries (30 women)
10. Stakeholder cooperation mechanisms to identify NEETs have been piloted in two municipalities: Telavi and Ozurgeti.

II. BACKGROUND

2.1. Economic and social context

The economy of Georgia surpassed the COVID-19 pre-pandemic level in 2021 and 2022 with the double-digit real GDP growth (+10.6% and 11.0%) and continued strong growth in 2023. The real GDP growth in 2023 was estimated at 7.5%. Strong growth for the last years was mainly driven from the stabilized macroeconomic environment, increased inflow of foreign currency and higher domestic demand. The increased domestic demand was driven from the recovery of the service industry (high recovery in the tourism and immigrants from Russia).

Georgia ranks 61 of 191 countries and territories covered by the Human Development Index (HDI). As in Georgia's HDI score slightly decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic but recovered at 0.814 in 2022. This places Georgia in a top group of countries with very high human development category. HDI is improving but loss from inequality is still important challenge in the country. The loss in HDI was 12.5% due to the inequality in 2022.

Georgia has made much progress over the past decade. As a result of sound economic management, GNI per capita increasing from USD 3,048 in 2010 to USD 7,629 in 2023 (constant 2015 USD). Also, the absolute poverty rate (measured by the national poverty line) has decreased sharply to 11.8% in 2023. Also, the unemployment rate has decreased by more than 3% for the last two years and was 16.4% in 2023. However, high emigration creates challenges for the country. The population has decreased from 3.73 mln in 2017 to

3.69 mln in 2023 due to the high emigration. The labour force decreased by the same number (0.4 mln), over the same period.

It should be mentioned that Georgia received candidate status from the EU by the end of 2023. Integration of the country in the EU leads to the improved market perception for the country's development process. However, the expectations for 2024 and the following years could worsen with the new law on foreign agents and depth of its negative effect on the fundamental factors is hard to estimate. The first signs display decreased FDI by 64% (YoY) in the Q1 2024 and GEL depreciation of nearly 10%, despite the NBG interventions by selling international reserves.

The development of the agriculture and service sector, by supporting more export-oriented firms, which are growing and becoming more efficient, is an opportunity for the country. In addition, the government announced a Black Sea transmission line to connect the Georgian electricity grid to the EU and it is exploring transit capacities from Azerbaijan, China and Kazakhstan to transfer goods through Georgian territory which could significantly support national economic development.

2.2. Vocational education – current trends and developments

The launch of the project coincides with the coming period of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, when Vocational education in Georgia was declared a priority area, contributing to increased linkages between human capital development and economic prosperity by the Government of Georgia. The system has been undergoing significant structural and policy reforms resulting in a new policy architecture, with the Vocational Skills Agency becoming a leading actor for the development of the system since 2021.

In assessing the current trends and challenges of vocational education, the project team relied on reports from local and international studies conducted during the project's implementation (ETF, Torino Process System Monitoring Report: Georgia, 2023). The Torino Process monitoring report holds particular significance in international studies as it evaluates Georgia's progress in vocational education compared to other countries, along with vocational education services for various groups based on diverse indicators. Additionally, to discern current trends, major accomplishments, and challenges, the report on the development of vocational education (Skills Agency, 2023) is noteworthy. This report assesses the implementation of vocational education reform in Georgia according to international indicators, including those from the Torino Process monitoring, highlighting significant achievements.

For assessing the trends in VET, we base on the research performed by the Skills Agency reflecting the trends in 2022, 2023 and 2024 for covering the period of impact generation of the CBLLL project.

The development of participative management approaches in vocational education stands out as a significant achievement. According to the monitoring report of the Torino process¹, notable progress has been made in recent years towards involving the private sector in the vocational education system. The ETF highlights the establishment of a skills agency as a pivotal achievement, ensuring the active engagement of the private sector in vocational education.

In order to meet the different and diverse needs of vocational education, it is critically important to introduce modern approaches and mechanisms of vocational education management. In the mentioned direction, it should be noted the approach of the VET system in the direction of the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in VET institutions. In addition to encouraging entrepreneurial ecosystems, the Torino Process 2023 report positively evaluates different approaches to the development of colleges, such as regional hubs

¹ ETF. 2023. Torino Process Monitoring Report: Georgia

and Excellence Centres. Encouraging economic activities in colleges and adjusting the regulatory framework for this purpose can be considered an important achievement for the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in VET institutions. In the CBLLL project, significant attention was focused on developing modern management models for professional educational institutions. Within the framework of the project, several activities implemented by Sunny House and the Skills Agency in the Skills Hubs aimed to promote novel approaches to college development.

Steps taken in the direction of developing VET programmes tailored to the labour market needs. In recent years, a plethora of international and local studies on VET education have underscored the imbalance between the labour market and VET as a primary challenge. In 2021, the MoESY, with the financial support of GIZ and under the coordination of the Skills Agency, developed and approved a methodology for the development and refinement of VET qualifications. According to the monitoring report of the Torino process, enhanced involvement of the private sector in this process signifies a significant stride towards aligning VET programmes with labour market demands. The CBLLL project has made a significant contribution to the qualification development process. Additionally, CBLLL was the first to start developing qualifications in tourism and wellness in accordance with the approved regulatory framework.

Increase in the Employment Rate of VET Graduates. According to the survey of graduates of long-term programmes in 2022 (Skills Agency, 2024), there has been a positive trend in the overall employment rate in recent years. The employment rate of 2022 graduates continue the upward trajectory of the past 6 years, reaching a record rate of 81% in vocational education. However, the issue of horizontal incompatibility persists, with only 48% of employed graduates working in their respective professions, despite the majority (81%) being employed at the time of the survey.

Short-term training and retraining programmes boast even higher employment rates², with 86% of respondents from the 2022 cohort being employed. Of these, 41% are working in their profession, and 16% are self-employed in their field. Additionally, a sizeable portion of respondents (34%) are employed in other areas. Notably, 14% of respondents are currently not employed (Survey of graduates of short-term programmes, Skills Agency, 2024).

Positive Trend in Enrolment for VET Programmes. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in enrolment rates for VET programmes. In 2023, the highest number of individuals - 15,088 - were enrolled in VET programmes in the last three years. This represents a 7% increase compared to the previous year³. Notably, in 2023, the highest competition was observed for hotel, restaurant, and catering programmes, with an average of 4 applicants per place. This was closely followed by Information and Communication Technology programmes, where an average of 3 individuals expressed interest per place (Enrolment Process Survey, Skills Agency, 2024).

The studies listed above shed light on the challenges confronting VET education. To a considerable extent, both international and local studies concur that VET education in Georgia faces the following challenges:

Promotion of VET Education. The main challenge facing vocational education in Georgia today is the persistent struggle to enhance its prestige and popularity, despite the increasing public awareness reflected in rising applicant and enrolment numbers. This challenge is highlighted in both the Torino Process Monitoring Report (ETF, 2023) and local studies conducted by the Skills Agency. While a fifth of respondents (22%) view vocational education in Georgia as prestigious, four out of ten either agree or somewhat agree

² Skills Agency Georgia. 2024. Short Term Training and Retraining Programme Tracer Study

³ Skills Agency Georgia. 2024. Student Enrollment Research in VET Programmes.

with this statement (42%). However, a sizeable portion of respondents (29%) believe that VET education in the country lacks prestige⁴. Moreover, the same study indicates that awareness of vocational education is lower among young people and ethnic minorities.

Informing about vocational education is also a factor to be considered by employers. According to the 2022 Employer Satisfaction Survey (2022) conducted by ACT, coordinated by the Skills Agency and funded by UNDP, 39% of non-partner organizations and 38% of partner organizations strongly agree that VET education is prestigious. Conversely, this view is not shared by a third of non-partner organizations (30%) and a quarter of partners (24%).⁵

In response to the mentioned challenges, the CBLLL project included active measures to raise awareness about vocational education. Specifically, the activities carried out by the Skills Agency and Sunny House within the framework of the project focused on informal education, development of key competencies, and youth activities. These efforts aimed to introduce vocational education to target groups and develop active mechanisms to offer these opportunities within the system.

Strengthening the role of Sectoral Skills Organizations and other representative groups of employers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of learning outcomes of VET programmes is crucial. Despite significant attention focused on involving SSO's in the reform of VET education, this aspect remains a challenge at this stage. While the Torino Process Monitoring Report⁶ expresses positivity about the development of Sectoral Skills Organizations, it also underscores the necessity of ensuring a smooth implementation process.

The CBLLL project has made significant contributions to the development of Sectoral Skills Organizations (SSOs) in the country, particularly as the project's activities aligned with the initial steps taken towards establishing SSOs. Within the framework of the project, efforts were made to strengthen the capacity of SSOs in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

Development of infrastructure and services adapted to the needs of special groups is essential. The Vocational Education Development Report (Skills Agency, 2023) underscores the challenges regarding access to vocational education for vulnerable groups and those with additional educational needs. It is imperative to continue efforts towards developing special support services and infrastructure for socially vulnerable students, national minorities, as well as students and applicants with various special needs. Moreover, raising awareness among students and all stakeholders, including educators and administrators, about the characteristics and importance of an inclusive environment, along with effective strategies for its creation, is crucial. The necessity to develop services focused on vulnerable groups is also highlighted in the Turin Process monitoring regarding the challenges of vocational education. The CBLLL project deliberately addresses this challenge, with one of its key activities focused on piloting a specific career guidance service (Orientation Service) for individuals with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Persons with Disabilities (PWD).

The development of organized forms and services for employment promotion and career guidance at both macro and micro levels of the system is crucial. The necessity to enhance career guidance services has been emphasized in other national studies conducted by the Skills Agency. It is noteworthy that graduates are critical of employment promotion and career guidance services. Approximately a quarter of the respondents

⁴ ACT. 2022. Public Opinion Survey

⁵ ACT. 2022. Employer Satisfaction Survey

⁶ ETF. 2023. Torino Process Monitoring Report: Georgia.

either lack information about assistance from educational institutions in the employment/job search process or evaluate it very negatively.

Strengthening transferable skills and the extracurricular component in VET. According to the monitoring of the Torino process, a significant challenge in vocational education is enhancing transferable skills and key competencies, for which supportive services are essential. The need for developing key competencies is also highlighted in the Vocational Education Development Report (Skills Agency, 2023). Employer organizations also raise concerns about the lack of key competencies among graduates⁷. In response to this challenge, the CBLL project focused heavily on the development of new career guidance services, while also strengthening the capacity of both the target VET colleges and their career guidance specialists.

Enhancing the utilization of digital technologies in vocational education. In the Torino Process 2023 monitoring report (ETF), one of the key challenges at the vocational education level is the adoption of technology-based approaches in the teaching process and the insufficient level of digital competencies among VET teachers. These challenges are also echoed in studies conducted by the Skills Agency, particularly in the report on vocational education development⁸. According to graduates' evaluations⁹, e-learning approaches were underutilized during their programme, with less emphasis placed on problem-based learning. As per graduates' recommendations, theoretical materials could be delivered via email and in lecture formats. In response to this challenge, the CBLL project actively worked on the development of digital resources and on strengthening the capabilities of VET teachers at the target colleges in technology-based teaching.

Involvement of graduates and students in the development of VET institutions, development of networks of graduates. Recent research conducted by the Skills Agency clearly indicates a strong desire among graduates to participate in the development of the institution and to maintain contact with the VET institution after graduation¹⁰. The authorization standards underscore the importance of active engagement by VET institutions in this regard. Accordingly, the task of the VET institution is to offer graduates more diverse forms of participation in the decision-making process and more active involvement in the teaching process.

Lifelong Learning Opportunities and the difficulty of transitioning between education levels. Despite active efforts by MoESY, in collaboration with the Skills Agency and donor organizations, to establish mechanisms supporting Lifelong Learning, the rate of direct transition from school education to VET remains low. In the 2021-2022 academic year, only 1% of students transferred from the basic level to VET, while 95% continued their studies at the secondary level, and the remaining 72% discontinued their studies altogether. Only 5% of students enrolled in VET after completing secondary education. One-fifth of students with disabilities continue their studies in the VET system, comprising 18% of girls and 22% of boys. Additionally, the proportion of students who studied in the non-Georgian language sector and continued their studies in VET institutions ranges from 5% to 10%. Creating lifelong learning opportunities was the main goal of the CBLL project. This challenge was addressed through a series of project activities, including the development of vocational education and training (VET) in schools, the establishment of career guidance services, and the implementation of catch-up courses focused on developing key competencies.

⁷ ACT. 2022. Employer Satisfaction Survey

⁸ Skills Agency. 2023. VET Development Report

⁹ Skills Agency. 2024. Diploma Programmes Tracer Study.

¹⁰ Skills Agency Georgia. 2024. Diploma Programme Tracer Study

Low participation of NEET's, including in vocational education. Another important target group for vocational education is young people who are outside the education and employment system – NEET's (Not in Employment Education and Training) individuals, whose proportion in Georgia is twice as high as in EU countries (30%). Within the NEET's, the inactive subgroup comprises those who are neither working nor seeking work - this subgroup accounts for about one-fifth of 15-29-year-olds as a whole, and about two-thirds of the NEET's. In response to the mentioned challenge, within the framework of the project, cooperation mechanisms with stakeholders were developed in two municipalities to identify NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

2.3. CBLLL project positioning and Contribution to VET sector development

The Creating Better Lifelong Learning Opportunities through Local Partnerships (CBLLL) project was built on the success and lessons learned from UNDP VET-related projects and works in remarkably close partnership with the Non Formal Education Youth Centre “Sunny House,” newly registered “Skills Agency” providing them with expertise and knowledge resources accumulated in the VET sector. Within the framework of the CBLLL project, UNDP is concentrated in two sectors of the Care Economy: tourism and wellness/health with specific objectives, building three main pillars and addressing leading components of skills – Accessibility, Quality and Relevance – to labour market needs.

The CBLLL project has established strong institutional and sectoral partnerships to respond to the above-mentioned challenges by contributing to three interlinked pillars: a) to increase geographical, physical and social accessibility thus enhancing the participation of vulnerable groups through delivering joint programmes, reaching out to NEETs and vulnerable groups to ensure their participation; and introducing distance learning, creating skills hubs locally to serve a greater share of the population; b) to strengthen the capacity of managing teams and stakeholders, improving service quality through development, introducing and supporting modern and innovative learning courses and services, providing extracurricular activities to youth and vulnerable groups in local municipalities, modelling a new entrepreneurial approach, among others; and c) to increase the employability of youth and vulnerable groups through special career education and orientation programmes and various innovative actions. All these three trends are in accordance with the MoES' policy to increase accessibility and to develop a network.

The CBLLL project addressed the primary challenges and priorities encountered in vocational education throughout all stages of its implementation, as outlined above through the analysis of data from various studies. In response to these core challenges, the project prioritized the listed below areas.

Transition between levels of education and promotion of lifelong learning. The international and national studies outlined above highlight the challenge of transitioning between education levels in Georgia, particularly evidenced by the notably low rate of direct student transfer from general education to VET, which significantly lags behind the benchmarks of European countries. One of the key initiatives of the project was the development of VET in schools, aimed at fostering closer collaboration between general and VET educational institutions. This initiative aimed to provide school students with enhanced exposure to information about VET, empowering them to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions about their educational paths. The activities conducted in the 10 schools targeted by the project facilitated enhanced collaboration between schools and VET colleges. Furthermore, the establishment of material-technical infrastructure and certificate programmes aimed to facilitate the widespread integration of VET into schools, in alignment with VET colleges.

Active involvement of the private sector in vocational education. The research conducted in recent years¹¹ in the field of vocational education reveals that despite significant progress, the engagement of the private sector in vocational education remains a recommendation to be addressed. The aforementioned Torino Process Monitoring Report also highlights the necessity of involving sectoral skills organizations and other private sector associations in vocational education development. In response to this challenge, the project was oriented in two directions: (1) in line with the new methodology for the development of VET qualifications, two new VET qualifications were formulated in the tourism and wellness sector with active participation from sectoral skills organizations and the private sector; (2) within the project's framework, the capacities of sectoral skills organizations in the agriculture and tourism and wellness sectors were enhanced. It is worth noting the collaboration with UNDP and the Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA) to strengthen the agricultural sector skills organization - AgroDuo.

Implementation of technology-based learning in vocational education. Several international and local studies mentioned above highlight that technology-based teaching at the vocational education level is a significant challenge. According to the surveys of graduates from 2022 to 2024¹², graduates also emphasize the need to develop digital competencies in VET teachers. In this regard, the project has undertaken important initiatives not only at the project level but also at the institutional level. Specifically, VET teacher Pre-Service and In-House training programmes were developed within the project. Each programme included separate modules on technology-based learning for VET teachers. Additionally, within the project framework, the capacities of VET teachers at the target VET colleges were enhanced. Before initiating activities outlined by the project for digital learning, UNDP, with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, formulated a strategy for the advancement of technology-based approaches in vocational education, outlining general approaches for the introduction of technology-enhanced learning in vocational education.

Development of student services and extracurricular activities. According to Tracer Studies conducted by the Skills Agency,¹³ one of the key challenges is the low level of development of student services in VET colleges. The enhancement of student support services is imperative in alignment with authorization standards. Student and extracurricular activities were extensively addressed in the project: (1) Sunny House has made significant strides in fostering the development of extracurricular activities in the targeted VET colleges and schools. Besides, Sunny House supported regional Skills hubs in institutionalizing student and non-formal education while also developing guidelines for colleges; (2) The Skills Agency devised non-formal education courses for the cultivation of key competences in schools and colleges, thereby addressing the identified needs outlined in research on the necessity to bolster key competences among students. The noteworthy initiatives undertaken by Sunny House to establish student clubs in regional Skills hubs, as highlighted in several aforementioned studies, deserve acknowledgment.

Development of career guidance services. Several studies presented in the previous subsection reveal that, according to students, career guidance services in VET colleges are poorly developed. In response, the project developed two new career guidance services - a new Open Doors Days service and a career education course for both VET students and community-based youth and vulnerable groups. Both career guidance services focus on developing youth employability skills.

¹¹ ETF. 2023. Torino Process Monitoring Report: Georgia.

¹² Skills Agency Georgia. 2022, 2023, 2024. Diploma Programme Tracer Studies

¹³ Skills Agency Georgia. 2024. Tracer Study

Development of services oriented to different groups in vocational education. Several studies mentioned above, including the Torino Process Monitoring Report (ETF, 2023), point to the need to develop services focused on different groups in VET. However, as mentioned earlier, a significant challenge for the country is the number of NEET's. In response to this, a specific career guidance service for SEN and PWD People was developed within the project - an Orientation Service, which was piloted in the project's target VET colleges. Additionally, stakeholder cooperation mechanisms were developed for two municipalities of Georgia (Telavi and Ozurgeti) in order to identify NEET's.

III. RESULTS REPORTING

1. Strengthening vet institutions for quality and accessible vocation education

Outcome 1. Strengthened institutions contribute to the delivery of high quality lifelong-learning provision in selected regions

Output 1.1. Accessibility on skills of youth, women and men, including vulnerable groups, in selected regions is strengthened through new types of formal and non-formal education-related service provision.

Indicator 1.1.1. Number of partnerships of VET colleges, public schools, municipalities and other service providers institutionalized and function to provide access to needs-based, targeted and diversified VET to all in formal and non-formal education settings in target regions.

Target 1.1.1. Fifteen institutions establish strong intersectoral partnerships enhancing access to skills development and provide diversified and targeted services.

Status: 1.1.1. Achieved: All 15 institutions identified and preparation for partnership is underway

Indicator 1.1.2. Number of special targeted programmes for youth, including NEETs and vulnerable groups, developed and introduced through new types of formal and non-formal education-related services in six target regions.

Target 1.1.2. Four special programmes and services developed and introduced, including extracurricular activities, catch-up courses and others, ensure participation of youth, NEETs and vulnerable groups in 6 target regions.

Status: 1.1.2. Overachieved: Three career guidance services, including for vulnerable groups, were piloted in all 7 VET colleges targeted by the project. Additionally, catch-up courses, including those for NEETs, were piloted in all 7 colleges and 2 schools targeted by the project.

Output 1.2. Quality of skills development is improved through institutional and human capacity strengthening of the service providers.

Indicator 1.2.1. Number of VET institutions in six regions that comply with authorization standards, transformed human resources prepared, and provision of high quality programmes and services for skills development.

Target 1.2.1. Seven VET colleges of six target regions strengthened to deliver high quality services on skills development.

Status: 1.2.1. Achieved: Trainings for staff and stakeholders accomplished at 7 colleges and 9 schools and their partners in 5 target regions

The achievements of the project under the outcome 1 are summarized below.

VET institutions institutionally strengthened to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for youth and vulnerable groups.

One of the main objectives of the CBLLL project was to strengthen the capacity of VET institutions and a wide range of stakeholders to facilitate the provision of quality vocational education to beneficiaries, including youth and vulnerable groups.

The purpose of the activity was to **promote the development of vocational education in schools** implemented through building cooperation between general and VET institutions, develop mechanisms and practices for sharing experience, and most importantly, promote the transition between education levels to support Lifelong Learning. Before the introduction of vocational education in public schools, a comprehensive capacity building programme focused on capacity building was developed within the project. This programme served as a guide for educational institutions seeking the right to offer short-term training and retraining programmes. The capacity building programme package, created within the framework of the project with supporting resources, is applicable not only to the project's target public schools but also to any institution planning to become a vocational education provider in the future. These institutions will be supported by the MoESY and the Skills Agency if they apply for relevant assistance.



Capacity-building programme in schools. Photo credit Skills Agency.

Within the framework of the project, the general education **regulatory framework documents were analyzed**, and a package of changes was developed to be reflected in the general education regulatory documents. This was done to enable the introduction of VET programmes in public schools.

Based on the capacity building programme developed throughout the project, supported by the beneficiary VET institutions, capacity building in public schools was conducted, both face-to-face and online. Project consultants prepared working versions of the internal regulations necessary for obtaining the right to implement short-term training and retraining programmes, serving as a guide for the 7 colleges and 10 public schools benefiting from the project.

With the financial support of the Skills Agency, representing the state's contribution to achieving the project's goals, the targeted public schools of the project were equipped with the material and technical resources necessary for implementing at least two certificate programmes. Additionally, within the project framework, short-term courses were developed for all 10 public schools targeted by the project, with the involvement of 7 beneficiary VET institutions, in various areas such as regional guiding, restaurant services, graphic design, computer software, and carpentry works.

Within the project framework, significant efforts were directed towards developing **entrepreneurial ecosystems within VET institutions**. Two main areas were targeted to support these ecosystems. Based on the new authorization standards, the **organizational structures** of the project's target VET institutions were reworked, and new structures with job descriptions were developed. This component is crucial for developing entrepreneurial ecosystems in the colleges, as the development of an entrepreneurial culture is often constrained by a vertical and strictly hierarchical organizational culture.

The approval of the regulatory framework for economic activity in VET institutions provided the project team with the opportunity to enhance the capacities of these institutions, aligning with the regulations. Five beneficiary VET colleges of the Project: Aisi, Iberia, Horizonti, New Wave, and Black See, were involved in measures supporting **economic activities**. The project team, comprising specialists with diverse competencies, assisted the colleges in generating business ideas and ensuring compliance with the regulations. A group of beneficiary colleges selected two areas for economic activities: wooden children's products and sewing children's products. With the support of the project team, involving teachers and students from the colleges, a model collection was created and exhibited at the project's concluding event, held at Stamba Hotel in December 2023.

Sunny House, operating in Iberia and Prestige colleges, played a significant role in promoting the functionality of the **regional skills hubs**. Sunny House has established task forces consisting of the colleges and local and national counterparts and devised a concept and guidelines for advancing student and extracurricular services in the skills hubs. Student services for skill hubs was a novelty for the VET colleges. Therefore, the documents developed by Sunny House, alongside with the trainings, bolstered the capacity of Skills Hubs to implement student services and extracurricular activities.

Two VET providers (Prestizhi from Kakheti and Iberia from Imereti) were selected as beneficiaries of this support based on the following criteria: available educational programmes, learning/teaching conditions, teaching staff, number of students, infrastructural context and resources availability. These colleges formalized their commitment in a memorandum of cooperation. Moreover, 34 Staff members (20 of them women) of 2 VET colleges participated in the capacity-building activities organized in two stages.

The initial training courses included the following topics: vocational education youth work, effective communication, conflict-resolution, team-building and cooperation strategies. The second advanced course conducted for staff members of two Hub Colleges covered the following themes: the paradigm shift and mindsets of change, effective team management, time management tools and motivation and self-esteem. As already noted, the Hub Colleges performed significant work for partnering with public sector representatives and for advocating for municipal support for youth initiatives.

The capacity of VET teachers enhanced ensuring quality development and fostering digital competencies.



Sectoral network meeting. Photo credit Skills Agency

At the stage of project implementation, strengthening the institutional capacity of VET teachers was a key priority for MoESY, aligning with the project's main objectives. As such, the project undertook significant efforts to address both project-specific goals and broader enhancements to the vocational education system.

Based on the standards of VET teachers developed by the World Bank, a **Pre-Service Programme** was developed within the project, which will be necessary for all novice VET teachers entering the system after the standards are approved. In accordance with the standards, the pre-service programme consists of 8 modules: (1) review of the VET system, (2) planning of the teaching and learning process, (3) management of the teaching and learning process, evaluation, incentive and motivation systems, (4) **inclusion and gender mainstreaming in education**, (5) technology-based teaching, (6) development and management of learning resources, (7) formation and management of interpersonal relationships, (8) professional teacher self-evaluation and professional development.

The **inclusive development and gender mainstreaming** module developed by the Skills Agency is particularly important in the Pre-Service Programme. These issues were never highlighted in any regulatory framework or document for VET teachers previously. The module emphasizes the competencies that are essential for teachers to develop in the teaching and learning process, integrating inclusive development and gender equality issues.

In the Pre-Service Programme, significant attention was dedicated to **technology-based learning**, which has been identified as a problematic issue in several recent studies. The training module focuses on developing technology-based and digital competencies in teachers to enhance the learning process.

Because the mentioned module represents an innovation in vocational education, the project focused on **enhancing the capacities of up to 60 teachers from all 7 beneficiary VET colleges (out of which 35 are women)**. Prior to the capacity building activities, project consultants prepared a supporting resource pack and a Training of Trainers (ToT) module. Following the piloting of the training programme, systematic recommendations were developed for further enhancing teachers' capacities in technology-based teaching.

The **In-House Training Programme** is designed for existing VET teachers comprising the following modules: (1) Creating a Motivating Learning Environment, (2) Effective Teaching Strategies, (3) Assessing VET Students, (4) Self-Assessment and Professional Development for VET Teachers, and (5) Technology-Based Teaching. The aim of in-house teacher development initiatives is to empower VET institutions to autonomously identify and address VET teachers' needs. Thus, the training programme created through the project is intended not only for the 7 beneficiary VET colleges but also for all accredited vocational education institutions.



Sectoral network meeting for VET Teachers. Photo Credit Skills Agency

The project bolstered the establishment of **sectoral networks of VET teachers** constituted a significant institutional initiative in vocational education. These networks provide a platform for VET teacher collaboration, enabling them to exchange experiences, collaborate on resource development, generate ideas, and offer recommendations for programme development, among other activities. A **sectoral network of teachers** specializing in personal services was established, featuring a range of face-to-face and online engagements. Drawing from the personal services network's insights, a document outlining guidelines for setting up teacher networks in other sectors was developed.

The capacity of stakeholders strengthened to promote policies based on local partnerships and shared responsibilities

As outlined in the initial sections of the report, despite notable progress, **private sector engagement** in vocational education remains a significant challenge and priority. Within its scope, the project bolstered the capacities of private sector organizations in the selected sectors. The objective of these capacity-building endeavors was to furnish sectoral skills organizations with the requisite competencies for their full pledge functioning. Collaboration with the Georgian Farmers' Association proved crucial in this respect as it chairs the Agricultural Sectoral Skills Organization Agroduo, targeting rural youth.

With regards to the partnership platforms, a network of partner 10 public schools and 7 colleges have been created to enhance **institutional support and sharing of experiences**. This is a professional platform for peer support and learning that assists in operationalization of the action plan. The network conducted meetings to agree on an action plan and the selection of VET coordinators for the public schools.

At the initial phase of the project Coordination/Consultations groups were created with the stakeholders in 10 municipalities of the five target regions of Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi to form

support groups for the project interventions. In addition to information-sharing meetings with mayors, 76 stakeholders participated in awareness-raising workshops on labour force and labour potential, elements of the labour market, employment and unemployment, labour market structure and its regulation. Another part of the programme focused on vocational education, vocational education and economic development, planning in vocational education and effective management of financial resources in vocational education.

Project activities focused on NEET's also entailed extensive stakeholder engagement. As highlighted in the initial section of the report, the prevalence of NEET's in the country presents a particularly concerning issue compared to other European countries. This challenge is compounded by the absence of mechanisms for **identifying and collaborating with NEET's** in the country. Within the project framework, exemplified by Telavi and Ozurgeti, two municipalities in Georgia, mechanisms for stakeholder collaboration were developed to identify NEET's. A wide array of local stakeholders participated in this project activity, including state agencies, local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and various donor projects operating within the aforementioned municipalities. Within the project's scope, with the involvement of the aforementioned stakeholders, a joint action plan was devised to identify NEET's. Additionally, a network cooperation document was crafted, based on the experience of the two targeted municipalities, aimed at facilitating implementation in other municipal areas.

A Study to analyse the situation of NEET and vulnerable youth groups in the Targeted Regions was conducted by the Social Research and Consultation Centre in cooperation with Sunny House. The study covered the five municipalities of Ambrolauri, Batumi, Kutaisi, Ozurgeti and Telavi. Online meetings introducing the findings of the study were arranged several times and were attended by the representatives



of Sunny House, the Skills Agency, UNDP and beneficiary education institutions. Feedback from the participants was reflected in the final document.

Study on the attitudes of youth towards vocational education was conducted by Sunny House to inform the action framework for the local partners. The research findings suggest that in the five target municipalities vocational education is understood as an alternative to higher education. **Public attitudes towards vocational institutions is not positive and higher education remains a**

priority. The participants think that main reason for such an attitude is the lack of public awareness about vocational education. Public schoolteachers perceive vocational education as a weak alternative and this negatively impacts the students' opinion. The majority of school graduates are not informed about the meaning and importance of vocational education: there are no separate professional orientation classes or meetings organized in the schools.

Youth worker training. Photo credit Sunny House

The partnerships were formed between Skills Hub Colleges and representatives of municipalities. "Iberia" (Kutaisi) and "Prestige" (Telavi) collaborated with representatives of local municipalities within the Hub Colleges model through a series of workshops with the aim of developing a shared vision for strengthening municipal support for youth services. In total, 41 participants were engaged (18 in Telavi (15 female, 3 male), 23 in Kutaisi (14 female, 9 male)) in the first round of trainings, and 42 in the second round (20 Telavi (15 female, 5 male), 22 in Kutaisi (16 female, 6 male)).

After each round of trainings, the participants reviewed and helped to finalize four strategic documents separately for Kutaisi and Telavi: 1. A framework document of targeted measures to be implemented in the long-term outlining the vision of municipal-level interventions for increased access of education and employment of Hub Colleges; 2. A communication strategy of hub colleges with partner organizations defining the types, channels, forms and relevant communication plans; 3. An implementation strategy of student services for hub colleges detailing the specific strategy and relevant logical framework, with results, indicators, targets, timelines and the responsible parties; and 4. A communication strategy outlining communication strategies and interventions with potential/future beneficiaries of the Hub Colleges.



Hub College partnering workshop. Photo credit Sunny House

Although the documents were not formalized, the process created space for aligning plans and defining future collaborations. Moreover, based on the document and respective discussions, Kutaisi Municipality even allocated GEL50,000 of public budget money for youth projects and interventions within 2023 commitments.

2. Accessible formal and non-formal learning for youth

Outcome 2. Youth and selected vulnerable groups have access to the flexible services of formal and non-formal learning in targeted regions

Output 2.1. Employability of youth is enhanced through developed key competences, including digital and entrepreneurial competencies

Indicator 2.1.1. Number of designed new, high quality, innovative, distance and blended programmes that contribute to the development of key competencies of youth, leading to higher employment rate of participants.

Target 2.1.1. Two of high-quality distance and blended programmes are institutionalized to develop digital and entrepreneurial competencies of all, including youth, women and vulnerable groups leading to 50% rate of immediate employment of participants.

Status: 2.1.1 Achieved: 81% employment in achieved in the target colleges as a result of the implemented services

Indicator 2.1.2: Number of new, high quality, innovative, distance and blended programmes implemented.

Target 2.1.2: Two new programmes are implemented

Status: 2.1.2. Achieved: Two modules in *Tourism and Wellness* and *catch-up course* hosted on the LMS platform were used in the piloting process

Indicator 2.1.3 Rate of increase of youth employment, who attended distance and blended programmes.

Target 2.1.3: Fifty percent of youth, who attended new programmes, find employment

Status: 2.1.3 Overachieved. 76% (168 out of 220) got employment (110, 65% women) through the institutional partnerships among the colleges and private sector established by the project

Quality and Innovative VET Programme for Improved Competencies

One of the main goals of the project was the development of innovative and new programmes at the level of vocational education and the promotion of technology-based approaches. The project envisaged the development of **new vocational programmes in the field of tourism and wellness** and the development of digital resources in the tourism and wellness sector, which in turn contributes to the availability and quality of education.

The two target sectors of the project: tourism and wellness can become one of the profitable and lucrative directions of Georgia's economy, considering the country's historical potential in this field. Nevertheless, long-term and short-term programmes in the tourism and wellness sector are underdeveloped in vocational education.

As mentioned above, at the initial stage of the project, **the regulatory framework for the development and processing of VET qualifications was approved** by the Minister of Education, Science and Youth. This framework defined the stages of development and processing of VET qualifications. The **methodology emphasizes active stakeholder involvement** in the process, aligning with the goals of the CBLL project. Following the approval of this regulatory framework, the project's activities were adjusted accordingly, and the process was carried out in compliance with the approved methodology.

With the active involvement of the industry and sector skills organizations, two programmes were identified within tourism and wellness as the top priorities. Within the framework of the project, **educational and occupational standards for massage therapists and esthetics and skin care specialists were developed** with the involvement of the private sector, sector skills organizations, VET institutions, VET teachers, and industry experts. For clarification, the development of the educational standard includes the development of all modules within the programme.

In order to promote technology-based learning on wellness tourism and personal services VET programmes, two modules were developed within the project: **work safety and hygiene, and first aid**. The mentioned two modules will be part of all VET programmes of wellness tourism and personal services as a necessary module. Within the framework of the project, supporting resources for the modules were developed, as well as a package of evaluation tools. In order to promote digital learning in the sector, **self-directed digital courses on work safety and hygiene and first aid have also been developed for both VET teachers and students**. The process of developing the modules was inclusive and involved the private sector, SSO's, VET institutions, VET teachers, and industry experts. The self-directed digital courses developed within the framework of the project have been placed on the digital learning platform of the agency and are available to all interested parties.

To contribute to the employability of young people, Sunny House, within the CBLL project, **developed a blended learning course on entrepreneurship**. The course is based on the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) and took its approach into account in developing entrepreneurship competences in young people. The Digital Learning course consists of seven chapters on financial management, branding and marketing, communications, networking, analysis, automatization and learning to learn. Theoretical and practical resources are accompanied with relevant videos based on the chapters, and are accessible to youth workers on the Sunny House YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/@user-ky2km7wc9d>). These resources will be uploaded on the Learning Management System currently under development for the Skills Agency.

The project has developed the **concept paper for gamification approach** for the Entrepreneurship Education Module developed by Mindworks team and supported by the Skills Agency. The approach is built upon the entrepreneurship competencies and educational module and is compatible with the digital learning concept and platforms created within the VET system under the leadership of the Skills Agency. Various guiding materials and handbooks as well as videos are produced and ready for the **gamification of entrepreneurship modules** is a crucial step for facilitating introduction of digital and scenario and quest/game based teaching methods introduction.



In order to promote the introduction of technology-based approaches at the VET level, the **concept of technology-based teaching development was developed** within the project. The concept document outlines a basic framework for how technology-based learning approaches can be introduced at the vocational education level and how the digital competences of VET institutions and VET teachers can be developed. UNDP involved international and local experts in the process of developing the concept, and the document's development process actively engaged experts, VET institutions, and

VET teachers to validate the concept. As early as 2023, the **Skills Agency has already begun taking actionable steps based on the concept**. For instance, in 2023, considering the concept's recommendations, the Skills Agency announced a grant competition to develop digital resources for teachers.

To obtain reliable data on labour market dynamics and respectively define the areas for vocational programme development, **UNDP commissioned a Labour Market Study to Identify Highly Competitive Vocations in Tourism and the Wellness/health sectors** and the Most Vocations in demand in the Five Regions of Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi. The report was presented and publicized and largely attracted the main policymakers, CBLLL project partners, stakeholders, the beneficiaries, especially from the target regions, and the donor. The results of the studies were presented at the national workshop and used for design of the project's activities. The study revealed warning facts, such as low expectations of the VET colleges benefits, low motivation for professional growth or the low skill workers, shortage of labor force in growing services sector and low level of cooperation among the employers and VET colleges.

Student and non-formal education services developed to promote the involvement of youth and vulnerable groups

As emphasized in the initial sections of the report, various studies conducted in recent years consistently highlight a significant challenge within vocational education: the inadequate development of student support services and non-formal education activities¹⁴. Recent research conducted by the Skills Agency echoes these findings, indicating that graduates express dissatisfaction with the current state of student support services¹⁵. They express a desire for colleges to be more attentive to student needs and to actively engage in student life - a sentiment that aligns with the evolving accreditation standards.

Both local and international studies¹⁶ highlight a concerning trend: graduates often lack transferable skills and key competencies essential for success in the workforce. Students themselves report feeling

¹⁴ Skills Agency Georgia. 2023. VET Development Report

¹⁵ Skills Agency Georgia. 2022, 2023, 2024. Diploma Programme Tracer Study

¹⁶ ETF. 2023. Torino Process Monitoring Report: Georgia

inadequately equipped with these skills during their programme of study. Additionally, employers share the sentiment, observing that graduates from vocational programmes frequently demonstrate deficiencies in these crucial areas required for employment¹⁷.

Moreover, possessing transferable and key competencies is paramount for young people transitioning into the job market. These skills not only facilitate their employment but also offer greater opportunities for vulnerable groups to integrate into the workforce.

The Skills Agency has undertaken significant work in **fostering the development of key competencies**. Initially, a concept for cultivating these competencies at the VET level was developed, drawing insights from international best practices and the local context. This concept outlines actionable recommendations for nurturing key competencies within formal programmes as well as through non-formal education opportunities. Notably, leveraging this concept, the **Skills Agency has developed a programme to enhance extracurricular activities in VET institutions**. Additionally, a grant component has been established to invigorate student life and bolster non-formal and extracurricular activities aimed at fostering key competencies.

Based on the concept note and recommendations crafted within the project, two courses were formulated to enhance key competencies, with active collaboration from VET educators. These courses concentrate on **digital literacy and financial literacy**.

The digital literacy catch-up course were piloted across four project-affiliated colleges: Iberia, Akhali Talgha, Aisi, and Horizonti. A total of 61 participants successfully completed the course. To ensure the quality delivery of the course, the expertise of seven VET teachers (trainers) from all seven project-affiliated colleges was bolstered.

The financial literacy catch-up course was conducted in four targeted VET colleges of the project (Blacksee, Horizonti, Erkvani, Iberia) and two public schools (2nd Public School in Korboli and 30th Public School in Batumi). Throughout the project duration, 66 participants successfully completed the course, while 12 teachers/trainers from the project's designated VET colleges and schools engaged in capacity-building activities to enhance the course's quality.

Comprehensive supporting resources for both trainers and trainees, including a Training of Trainers (ToT) module, trainer guidelines, and a set of exercises for course participants, were developed for both the financial and digital literacy courses.

To enhance accessibility to non-formal education courses, **a self-directed digital literacy course was developed** as part of the project. This course serves as an interactive tool equipped with exercises and resources, accessible via the Learning Management System (LMS) platform to all interested individuals.

¹⁷ ACT. 2022. Employer Satisfaction Survey



Entrepreneurship training for youth club. Photo credit Sunny House

In addition to the blended course, **Sunny House trained youth workers to support the entrepreneurial learning of youth club members.** For this purpose, Sunny House developed two modules for youth workers on the “Fundamentals of entrepreneurship and business idea development” and “Business plan preparation and fundraising strategy”.

Subsequently, 17 youth workers (13 female, 4 male) were selected and trained to develop competencies for club-based entrepreneurial activities and instruction. Two-step trainings included entrepreneurship topics – definition, types and trends, advantages and challenges of

Entrepreneurship training for youth club. Photo credit Sunny House

entrepreneurship, entrepreneur and entrepreneurial thinking, entrepreneurial competencies; creating an entrepreneurial team; analysing customer problems and discovering business opportunities; ideas generation, creativity and innovation, value proposition canvas; problem-solution and product-market fit; and forming and brainstorming ideas at an early stage.

Market research competences included segmentation, user persona, competitor analysis and entrepreneurial activity in the form of start-ups, MVP and experiments. A capacitated youth worker conducted 76 mentoring sessions with club members with the support of three business consultants.

The efforts to develop and **institutionalize extracurricular services in vocational education institutions was led by Sunny House**, the Responsible Party in the CBLLL project. On the one hand, these efforts were focused on the institutionalization of extracurricular activities within the partner VET providers. On the other hand, they aimed at supporting the actual functioning of the extracurricular services in the partner institutions. The framework for the institutionalization of the relevant services was derived from the concept paper, “Development of Extracurricular Services at the Vocational Education Level”, created with UNDP support. Sunny House elaborated and implemented the action plans, mechanisms, capacity-building interventions and activities to introduce extracurricular activities in partner schools and colleges.



The project interventions resulted in the following milestone achievements:

- Training and consultancies were conducted to increase awareness and the competencies of the school and college administration and teaching staff in the significance, approaches to and activities of extracurricular activities in VET institutions.
- Institutional capacity was enhanced through trainings and practice demonstrations of extracurricular activities and non-formal learning of students in VET providers. Eighteen youth workers (14 female, 4 male) were trained and gained experience through a well-defined professional development approach, consisting of methods and tools essential for the on-job development of youth workers.
- Nine effective and structurally organized clubs (seven in VET colleges and two in schools) were established with sustainable mechanisms for systematically recruiting new members. This is an especially significant issue given the shorter time-frame of the programmes and high turnover of the student body.

- A total of 360 (228 female, 132 male) students from VET colleges and schools were trained and capacitated, thereby benefitting from non-formal education activities on youth work, leadership, entrepreneurship, business project development, community project development, among other topics.
- Community projects and initiatives were conducted which served a threefold purpose – they provided experiential educational opportunities for club members; enhanced students’ attitude to serve and contribute to the community and common good; and raised awareness and created a positive public disposition towards VET institutions in their communities. A total of 1,516 beneficiaries were covered through the community projects and initiatives conducted by club members.
- Vet students enjoyed access to an improved and more inclusive institutional climate within the partner institutions. For instance, availability of the extracurricular activities helped to attract NEET youth to VET programmes in Racha, with these youth subsequently enrolling in formal VET programmes. While in Adjara, in order to accommodate the special needs of the current students, the youth club at the Black Sea college worked on a specific project to educate their peers in sign language.
- Entrepreneurial education was provided through extracurricular activities and it enabled students to acquire knowledge and practice skills through business project development. Although colleges most frequently offer courses on entrepreneurship through formal programmes, incorporating entrepreneurship in extracurricular activities proved to be an effective approach for effecting a mindset shift, for gaining hands-on experience and for effectively embarking on economic activities.
- The youth spaces and activities that were established helped to attract school students to VET colleges. As the studies suggest, regardless of the increasing availability and quality, students and families opt for higher education rather than for vocational programmes. Activities implemented within the CBLLL project at the Colleges of Aisi (Kakheti), Akhali Talgha (Adjara), and Erqvani (Racha-Lechkhumi) helped to attract those school students to vocational programmes who had applied for the programmes parallel to their school education.
- A practical manual of extracurricular activities was developed and printed by the Sunny House to enhance sustainability of the activities and to transform learning from the field into a practical and helpful resource for individuals, teachers and VET providers in delivering extracurricular services to students.
- To enhance and consolidate learning from the field and across other ongoing projects, youth workers accessed and used manuals –the Self-Assessment and Self-Development Tool for Youth Workers, the Practical Guide to Youth Activities and A Compendium of Examples of Good Practices in Youth Work – created within the Skills for Success project for youth workers.

Diversified and innovative services for employability

The research conducted by the Skills Agency indicates that enhancing career guidance services at the VET level stands as a significant challenge. Alumni often express a lack of information regarding these services or dissatisfaction with the support received¹⁸. Given that lifelong guidance is integral to lifelong learning in today's world and that career guidance services serve as vital tools for fostering employment, improving the quality of such services at the vocational education level and bolstering the capabilities of career guidance specialists become paramount.

¹⁸ Skills Agency Georgia. 2022, 2023, 2024. Tracer Study

Simultaneously, both international evaluations and local studies indicate that specialized services for various groups, including SEN and PWD People, NEETs, socially vulnerable individuals, and other vulnerable groups, as well as women, are underdeveloped at the vocational education level.¹⁹

One of the primary objectives of the CBLLL project is to cultivate employment-ready skills among young and vulnerable individuals, necessitating the development of **diversified career guidance services**. Notably, significant efforts were invested during the project's duration to establish institutional perspectives on career guidance services at the systemic level. Specifically, with backing from the EU, **a strategy for enhancing career guidance services** across all three level of formal education, along with an implementation roadmap, was formulated. Additionally, a **strategy for vocational education development** and a corresponding action plan were devised, both emphasizing the imperative need for robust career guidance services.

The Skills Agency has spearheaded pivotal initiatives within the project to foster the development of career guidance services aimed at fostering employment opportunities and social integration for youth, adults, and vulnerable groups.

The project introduced a **career education non-formal course**, providing a standardized curriculum for participants to develop essential career management skills crucial for a successful transition into the workforce. Implemented in two phases, the career education course underwent piloting across six project-targeted VET colleges (Prestige, Horizonti, Blacksee, Aisi, Iberia, and Erkvan), attracting 100 students. Notably, this course caters to both enrolled **students and young community members**. Enrollment was open to residents of the targeted municipalities, ensuring accessibility for all interested individuals.

Within the project framework, crucial preparatory steps preceded the pilot phase of the career education course. This included developing a career education course module, comprehensive guidelines for career guidance specialists, supplementary resources and exercises for course participants, and a Training of Trainers (ToT) module for course facilitators. Ensuring the quality of the pilot programme, career guidance specialists from **all seven project-targeted VET colleges** underwent training provided by the project. Throughout the pilot course implementation, the project offered expert evaluation and continuous support.

Informing the public about vocational education poses a significant challenge, as highlighted in numerous local and international studies²⁰. Likewise, the direct transition rate of students from general education to vocational education remains low²¹. Addressing these challenges, the project team extensively examined existing practices of **Open Door Days in VET colleges**. Subsequently, based on identifying these challenges, they initiated the development of a new service aimed at providing comprehensive information to visitors about vocational education and the college before the registration announcement process.

All 7 VET colleges targeted by the project participated in piloting the new Open Door Days service: Prestige, Horizonti, New Wave, Black See, Erkvan, Iberia, and Aisi. Open Door Days encompass a range of activities and service provisions involving various stakeholders from the VET colleges, including career guidance specialists, faculty, alumni, partner private organizations, programme leaders, and college management. Therefore, before piloting the service, significant efforts were directed towards capacity building of college staff. **A total of 30 specialists from all 7 VET colleges**, including career guidance specialists, PR specialists, and VET teachers, were engaged in this initiative.

¹⁹ ETF. 2023. Torino Process Monitoring Report: Georgia

²⁰ ACT. 2022. Public Opinion Survey on VET

²¹ Skills Agency Georgia. 2023. VET Development Report

To enhance the quality of piloting the new Open Door Days service, a comprehensive **guideline for VET institutions** was developed prior to the pilot phase, along with a Training of Trainers (ToT) module for specialist training. The piloting process of the service was facilitated by a project team consisting of seasoned career guidance specialists.

To institutionalize Open Door Days, a **technical specification for the service registration platform** was also crafted. As outlined in the technical document, the Open Door Days platform will facilitate the organization of the process by the colleges. Registration for the service will be limited to public schools, social organizations, and individuals. During the piloting phase of Open Door Days, students from the 200th graduating class of 20 public schools across all 7 municipalities targeted by the project benefited from the initiative.

One of the primary objectives of the project was to develop a range of career guidance services tailored to vulnerable groups. Drawing from statistical data and situational analyses concerning SEN and PWD people in VET programmes over recent years²², a dedicated career guidance service was devised within the project framework. Prior to its development, a comprehensive examination of the hurdles faced during the registration process for SEN and PWD people was conducted. This study engaged professionals from VET institutions, inclusive education specialists, and beneficiaries themselves.

The Orientation Service is designed to provide comprehensive assistance to SEN and PWD individuals, offering them detailed insights into VET programmes and colleges through a variety of activities.

To institutionalize The Orientation Service, a **technical specification for the electronic platform** supporting it was developed as part of the project. According to the project's technical specifications and service concept, registration for The Orientation Service is open to SEN and PWD individuals throughout the year, enhancing their access to information and informed decision-making. Additionally, to ensure the service's institutional sustainability, revisions were made to the Minister of MoESY's approved guidelines on inclusive education. These guidelines serve as the primary regulatory framework governing principles of inclusivity in formal education.

The Orientation Service was piloted at six out of project targeted seven VET colleges: New Wave, Black See, Horizonti, Erkvan, Iberia, and Prestige. Given its focus on SEN and PWD individuals and its diverse activities, the piloting spanned several months and engaged **60 beneficiaries**.

Prior to the piloting phase, significant efforts were made within the project to ensure quality assurance. This included the development of an implementation guideline for VET institutions, a training programme for professionals supporting service implementation, support resources for the training programme, occupation-specific assessment forms, practical testing guides, and assessment protocols. Before the piloting commenced, **19 specialists from all seven colleges targeted by the project participated in face-to-face and online capacity building activities**, which included inclusive education specialists, career guidance specialists, and VET teachers. Project consultants provided specialized support throughout the piloting process, which encompassed site visits, online and face-to-face meetings, feedback mechanisms, and recommendations.

To ensure that vulnerable groups with challenges of mobility and accessibility still have access to various opportunities of employment, a **paper on distance and home-based work opportunities and adaptation of the model** in the fields of e-commerce, call-service and social media is being finalized. The draft was

²² Skills Agency Georgia. 2024. VET Programme Enrollment Survey

submitted and is currently under review with stakeholders for recommendations on adaptation of the model.

IV. GENDER MAINSTREAMING, MANAGEMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND MONITORING

4.1. Gender mainstreaming and cross-cutting issues

High-quality education is one of the key requirements for women's economic empowerment. Therefore, it is essential to improve the educational system so that women can continuously learn and advance their skills. Additionally, providing inclusive learning environments and opportunities tailored to women's needs would help dispel social conventions and prejudices about women's roles and eliminate discriminatory attitudes. The gender segregation of the labour market reflects gender stereotypes in vocational education and employment, which poses significant obstacles to women's economic empowerment.

One of the major barriers to access vocational education for women remains the burden of family care. This problem is closely related to family affairs performed by women, which minimizes the time spent on their own development as well as the opportunity for professional growth to the maximum extent.

Women face several challenges that hinder their engagement in vocational education and training (VET). These challenges can vary depending on socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and institutional barriers. Professions in Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions can vary significantly in terms of gender disaggregation. Some fields traditionally have a strong gender imbalance, with certain professions being predominantly male or female. However, efforts made by the project to promote gender equity and diversify these fields addressed the following challenges: Access to information and guidance, Lack of supportive policies and infrastructure.

The CBLLL project aimed promoted gender equality, ensuring equal involvement of women and men, and eliminating gender barriers during the selection of beneficiaries through its developed and piloted services. These services included specific career management services, catch-up courses focused on developing key competencies, activities to strengthen the capacities of representatives of VET institutions, non-formal education activities, and initiatives to develop entrepreneurial ecosystems. Women's involvement and the protection of gender balance were strongly encouraged throughout these activities. To this end, the project provided capacity building for representatives of VET institutions to ensure they understood the importance of gender mainstreaming while delivering services.

Additionally, the project significantly influenced policy documents regarding gender mainstreaming. This was particularly evident in the continuous professional development (CPD) mechanisms for VET teachers. With the involvement of project consultants, the standards for VET teachers were revised, and a new standalone standard—gender and inclusive development—was developed. This standard, as the main document regulating the teacher's profession, emphasizes gender and inclusion, sending a strong signal to the VET system and VET institutions. It clearly states that VET teachers must possess competencies in gender equality and inclusion. Based on this standard, a Teacher Pre-Service Programme was created within the project to promote its widespread implementation. Moreover, a gender and inclusion training module were independently developed for the Pre-Service programme, defining the minimum competencies required for beginning VET teachers in this area.

Gender mainstreaming was considered by both partners of the CBLLL project (Sunny House and Skills Agency), which resulted in every service and/or product being developed in consideration of the principles of inclusive development and gender mainstreaming. In connection with the CBLLL project, for instance, this is manifested in the development of separate training modules on inclusive education and gender mainstreaming of capacity-building programmes carried out by the Skills Agency.

The project targeted the economic sectors, such as tourism and wellness which are an attractive employers of women. The project's results will ensure better skills matching and consequently, employment of women. In addition, the project has developed employment supporting mechanisms benefitting 168 women (65% from total number) out of 220 were employed through the colleges and employers partnerships created by the project.

The project ensured high outreach of women, including from VET institutions participating in the project supporting institutional capacities development activities. The Project has collected evidence about barriers for women employment through the studies of labour markets analysing gender disaggregated data in the target areas.

4.2. Project Management and steering

Under the current Contribution Agreement 2020/417-449, (NPLe) - Non-formal Education Youth Centre "Sunny House" (having role of co-applicant) is responsible for implementing and/or contributing to the CBLLL project's Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1, namely Actions 8, 9, 10 and 11. The Sunny House was actively engaged in the implementation with the non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) legal entity (NNLE) - the Skills Agency which, as the strategic partner of the CBLLL project, joined the latter on 4 January 2022 after signing the Standard Letter of Agreement after undergoing the HACT micro-assessment with low risk rating.

The Skills Agency's mandate in the project was linked to its statute and functions. Under this project the Skills Agency was responsible for implementing and/or contributing to the project's Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1, namely Actions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7. The Actions assigned to the Skills Agency resulted both in achievement of the performance indicators of the project and to strengthen its institutional capacities.

Given that the project was focused on systematic initiatives in vocational education, coordination was carried out at all stages of the project implementation with various donor organizations and their funded projects - UNDP, USAID, GIZ, EU - in collaboration with UNDP and the Skills Agency.

The project prioritized engaging stakeholders and direct beneficiaries in various activities to ensure that the products created, and services implemented within the project framework could be validated by a wide group of stakeholders. Based on the nature of each activity, stakeholder groups were identified and involved in different stages of planning and implementation. For instance, in the development of new qualifications for tourism and wellness, SSO's of the same sector and the private sector were engaged, while representatives of VET institutions and VET teachers participated in teacher-oriented activities, and so forth. The overarching approach of the project was to involve those parties in the activity or product development process for whom the final product or service was intended, thus ensuring direct participation and shared ownership of the project's initiatives among stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The final/summary events of the CBLLL project, held in December 2023, were characterized by collaborative support and synergy from various donor and state projects. These closing events drew a diverse array of stakeholders, including representatives from numerous donor projects and representatives of state agencies.

During the panel discussions convened as part of these events, participants delved into the significance of leveraging the synergies of outcomes attained across projects.

The major steering mechanisms were Project Board meetings. The Board reviewed the progress and steered the decisions. It set key priorities, approved workplans, no-cost extensions and steered various adjustments. The Board also approved the revised budgets. The last project board minutes are attached to this report. Major stakeholders and implementing partners (Sunny House, Skills Agency), as well the MoESY contributed to the Board meetings with the reporting on the implementation support and technical expertise.

The project was extended two times (on no-cost extension basis) as a result of the project board decision to address the challenges impeding achievement of the planned results.

4.3. Enhancing coordination to the EU skills4jobs project implementers and added value to EU support.

The CBLLL project has established a cooperation platform of partner organizations and the projects implemented within the framework of the "Skills for Jobs" programme through the support of the EU Delegation in Georgia. The founding workshop, with Skills4Job as the implementing partner, took place on 24-26 October 2022 in Telavi. The purpose was to initiate the cooperation platform for the Skills for Jobs projects and promote and facilitate communication, cooperation and coordination among the projects having similar activities, services, regions/municipalities and beneficiaries. Another reason was to either complement each other's efforts and/or avoid duplication of project actions. The first meeting was focused on three main areas:

1. Youth work
2. Entrepreneurial learning and trainings
3. Cooperation with professional colleges

The participants provided each other with information about their work, achievements, the difficulties and challenges faced and the remaining activities in all these spheres. The participants agreed on the following:

1. Important issues/resources related to cooperation platform projects should be mutually shared:
 - Textbooks, manual and other educational resources created within the framework of projects.
 - Documents created within projects.
 - Reports of studies conducted within the framework of projects.
 - Brief summaries of projects
 - Contact information of local project partners
 - Contact information of experts/specialists involved in projects.
 - Schedule of remaining activities within the projects
 - Contact information of responsible persons participating in the meeting
2. For communication between projects included in the cooperation platform:
 - Create a closed Facebook group, through which the persons responsible for the projects included in the cooperation platform can be informed about mutually beneficial activities, initiatives and news within the projects.
 - Create a Google Drive folder where documents to be shared with each other will be placed.
3. Other partners involved in the cooperation platform and/or their beneficiaries were invited to each other's project activities.

Work meetings of the cooperation platform will be held using both online and in-person settings. The format will include presentations, plenary discussions, work in thematic groups and general discussions.

4.4. Key Challenges Encountered

During the first year of implementation, the CBLLL project encountered several challenges which were addressed during the project implementation:

- The greatest challenge was caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which brought emergency regulations and new rules to working and learning processes for remote work and study and constrained the project in its ability to host thematic events and missions and in printing visuals for public events, among other issues.
- On 22 June 2021, an Amendment to Order №733 of 4 August 2016 "Framework Document of occupational Standards, Educational Programme and Approving the Rules for Module Development, Modification and Cancellation" was issued by the Qualifications Development Service of the National Centre for Quality Development in Education. This undoubtedly will impact on the introduction of two educational modules – in personal care and health services – in the VET system for the following reasons: according to the new Amendment to the mentioned rule, there are procedural formalities which became mandatory and affected the timeline of the project activities.

This included the process for developing the educational module which includes observing the recommended minimum material resources and technical requirements for listing and learning environment arrangements; and submitting the developed educational module to the Director of the National Centre for Education Quality Development and then to the Sectoral Board for approval. Before submitting the module to the Sectoral Board, to ensure transparency of the whole process, public review is necessary.

The whole process starting from application to the approval stage required a lengthy period which extended duration of several activities causing (among other factors) the first no-cost extension.

- New admission regulations have also been introduced into the vocational education system. Instead of two admissions in one academic year, only one admission takes place in early August when students can select specializations and enrol in professional colleges. This means that the newly initiated educational modules which UNDP's CBLLL Project plans to introduce must be developed by the subject specialists, go through the thorough process described above, and then authorization must be obtained which also takes time.
- The local self-government election of October 2021 brought some challenges to the project. As a result, some activities were postponed, namely, the heads of the local municipalities and the education committees were replaced by newly elected candidates. This meant that the CBLLL project needed to reintroduce the project's plans and objectives to the local stakeholders and build trust and revive enthusiasm among new personnel. The two studies being undertaken during that period were also affected by the pre- and post-election period, namely the information-obtaining process, including interviews, focus group meetings and personal interactions with the local stakeholders were also postponed for some time.
- Implementation of the project activities in the regions, especially the ones requiring regular attendance of VET courses, faced various challenges related to mobility and accessibility. These issues were more prevalent in case of youth work activities implemented by the RPA Sunny House and were acknowledged

and discussed by partner schools and colleges during the monitoring visits as well. Several strategies were employed in response to this challenge: in order to ensure accessibility, the project is determined to create better opportunities in the remote communities, by empowering schools which already exist in the communities. The college-school coordination will help to improve capacities of the schools to target those with challenges of accessibility. Where possible, various non-formal activities and opportunities are offered to the youth to tackle the challenges related to remote and difficult to reach communities. And last but not least, digital/blended learning opportunities as well as distance-homebased work models are being developed to tackle the issue.

Moreover, for the improved accessibility, the following adjustments were made on the activities : a) in cases where public transport was available on specific days, the activities were planned accordingly (Racha); b) the club activities were planned right after the classes to adjust to the transport schedule in the evenings; c) in cases where youth workers were traveling from other location to the club (in Korbouli school), the youth workers received additional allowances from „Sunny House“ to cover transportation expenses., d) the meetings have been offered in hybrid mode if due to climate conditions, some beneficiaries could not travel to meeting destinations. The challenge with transportation which remains in Racha is linked to the harsh climate conditions. During the winter period, the beneficiaries cannot travel as roads are not operational. In some cases, these meetings cannot be substituted with the online mode, as snowstorms create electric power outages.

- At the initial stage of the project's implementation, MoESY approved regulations governing the conduct of economic activities within VET institutions. These regulations included specific provisions aligning with activities outlined in the project, particularly those related to fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems in VET colleges. The approval of these regulations positively influenced the overall objectives of the project, as it facilitated the strengthening of VET colleges in the realm of economic activities in accordance with the endorsed regulations.
- The concept of developing regional hubs was formulated within the framework of the Asian Development Bank's programme "Modern Skills to Promote Better Employment," a component also incorporated into the CBLLL project. Through discussions involving UNDP, Skills Agency, and Sunny House, it was decided that the project would integrate the development of student and non-formal education services within the skills hubs as an additional and primary function.

System-level processes affecting project implementation:

- Institutional reform – The delayed establishment of the Skills Agency and establishment of the relevant institutional set-up required major changes in the workplan schedule. (The agency was formally established on 29 April 2021 but became operational from January 2022.)
- Need for collaboration and alignment of the efforts supported by multiple donors and stakeholders. As there are multiple donors supporting the establishment and improvement of specific areas of VET, more coordination is required by the Skills Agency to ensure that efforts are aligned, activities are not duplicated, and resources and interventions build on each other following the VET system development strategy.

In view of the system-level reforms and activity-related issues described above, the following steps have been undertaken to ensure that the project follows the proposed timeline, and that adequate plans and commitments are in place to achieve the project target indicators:

- The workplan has been revised together implementing partner Sunny House the Skills Agency to ensure that the actions and relevant sub-activities are amended to reflect the VET sector processes, regulations, existing challenges and opportunities.
- Relevant review of the agreements has been initiated, along with the budgetary amendments and respective target indicators.
- New activities and commitments have been delegated, agreed upon and specified, which fall under the existing partner profile and capacity.
- Relevant plans and ToRs have been developed to ensure that the project actions and sub-activities relate to strengthening VET providers' capacity (entrepreneurial VET model), improve the learning environment of partner colleges and schools, increase the employability of the VET students, and support cross-sectoral cooperation to enhance employability and the long-term partnership between VET providers and private sector representatives.

4.5. Monitoring and evaluation

The project staff was supported by the UNDP Country Office monitoring and evaluation specialist checking the quality of the monitoring mechanisms applied. The project applied regular field visits, verification of the information of the contactors' reports, checking the compliancy with the visibility and communications rules. log-frame indicators are uploaded in the OPSYS and UNDP corporate systems.

Significant instrument for the monitoring of the project was EUD's field monitoring visits reflecting the results in narrative field mission reports. The project provided feedback and considered the results during the project implementation.

The activities conducted by the Skills Agency followed more uniform process, consisting of developing a model, piloting/implementing it and based on the evaluation of the results and observations, developing recommendations and replication plans.

Independent external evaluation was conducted by the completion of the project which assessed the sustainability and quality of the achieve results.

4.6. Sustainability

To enhance sustainability the CBLLL project aimed to identify and work with the respective stakeholders at the national level, which are formally mandated to carry out respective work. Adjustments of the project activities were mainly result of the system-wide reform, including the establishment of the Skills Agency. Although in terms of institutional capacity the Skills Agency was a newly established agency being in the process of formation, close cooperation with the agency ensured that the models, approaches and concepts developed are enshrined in policy documents and in the regulatory framework guiding the VET system.

Furthermore, as UNDP provided direct assistance to VET providers in the field, the concepts and mechanisms created on a national level are piloted in VET institutions. This approach not only strengthens VET providers and supports institutional capacity development but is also a key factor for creating opportunities for grassroot development, peer support and horizontal learning, thereby ensuring that the models and approaches are replicated and expanded to other VET institutions.

The following steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of the activities performed by the project:

- The activities carried out within the project framework, as well as ongoing efforts, are incorporated into the draft version of the vocational education development strategy and the accompanying action plan for its implementation.
- The project supported to 10 secondary schools in introduction of short-term certified courses inter alia including managers and teachers skills development modules for VET courses design and introduction. Authorisation of the schools is needed for making them regular provider of VET courses. The process of authorisation for VET is related to the secondary education provision related authorisation (subject to fixed calendar), VET courses provision related authorisation to ensure compliance of the learning environment with the requirements set for the courses and national fire regulations. This process is ongoing and is not finished in UNDP supported schools. The school based VET introduction is acknowledged among priorities in VET. The Skills Agency has funded delivery of orientation courses in 2023 in Batumi School #30, Kobuleti School, Ureki School (Ozurgeti municipality), Korbouli school (Sachkhere Municipality), Satsiri village school (Tkibuli municipality), Arkhiloskalo village school (Dedoplistskaro municipality), Kvareli school #2, Lentekhi School #1, Ustera village school (Oni municipality), Tsageri school #1 (total budget 521,818 GEL, 176 students). In 2024 the orientation courses are planned for 169 students in Batumi school #30, Mukhaestate school of Kobuleti municipality, Ureki School (Ozurgeti municipality), Korbouli school (Sachkhere Municipality), Satsiri village school (Tkibuli municipality), Arkhiloskalo village school (Dedoplistskaro municipality), Kvareli school #2, Lentekhi School #1, Ustera village school (Oni municipality), Tsageri school #1.
- The career guidance services developed and piloted within the project, along with their subsequent institutionalization, are integrated into the career guidance strategy and its action plan. An Orientation Service for people with Special Education Needs and PWD people has been developed within the project and integrated into the enrolment rules approved by the MoESY. As a result, the formalisation (approval) of the elaborated career services for PWDs and career education service is in progress and after the review by the new management of the Skills Agency will be approved in Autumn 2024.
- The activities undertaken by both the Skills Agency and Sunny House within the project, and their subsequent institutionalization, are outlined in the Skills Agency's Action Plan making it eligible for further funding.
- To ensure the sustainability of non-formal education courses focused on key competency development, a dedicated budget line has been added to the Skills Agency's budget programme, enabling the introduction and expansion of these courses in other VET institutions.
- Legislative changes have been proposed to introduce VET in public schools, with a package of amendments submitted to the Ministry to amend regulatory documents for general educational institutions.
- To ensure the sustainability of informal and extracurricular activities conducted by the Skills Agency and Sunny House within the project, the Skills Agency has restructured the organizational framework of target VET colleges, establishing a dedicated position responsible for developing student services and extracurricular activities. Furthermore, in 2023, Sunny House was granted the opportunity to continue and expand its activities initiated in target colleges through a competition for the development of extracurricular activities organized by the Skills Agency. The target colleges have requested adjustments to the organisational structure, namely adding new staff to conduct these services. These requests are under consideration as are subject of fiscal costs advance control by the Ministry of Finance and needs

further follow up by the MoESY and the Skills Agency. Once the introduction of new staff is allowed the extracurricular activities will be regularly implemented in the target colleges.

- The VET teacher Pre-Service programmes developed within the project adhere to VET teachers' standards. Following the approval of the regulatory framework for VET teachers, these programmes are utilized for teacher development across all VET institutions.
- The documents crafted to bolster SSO's in agriculture and tourism and wellness within the project can serve as models for strengthening sectoral skills organizations across all sectors.
- The document exemplifying the sectoral network of tourism and wellness VET teachers developed within the project can serve as a blueprint for establishing and nurturing sectoral teacher networks in other sectors.
- The technology-based learning development concept note developed within the project outlines institutional visions for advancing e-learning in vocational education. By 2023, initiatives undertaken by the Skills Agency in this regard were already aligned with the conceptual framework established within the project, paving the way for a grant component aimed at enhancing digital competencies and resources among teachers.
- The two qualifications devised within the project are expected to be approved in Autumn 2024 , with their implementation set to commence in VET institutions offering or planning to offer programmes in health tourism. Concurrently, the work safety and hygiene module developed within the project will be integrated into all personal service programmes as a core module. The Skills Agency works on finalisation of the approval package of the qualification of Sken Hygienist's equipment's list which is the last remaining part until its approval (expected in Autumn 2024).
- In the forthcoming UNDP programme "Modernization of Vocational Education in Agriculture," in collaboration with the Skills Agency, the mechanisms established in the CBLLL project for NEET's will continued. There is unresolved issue of the mechanisms of identification of the youth in NEETs as this mechanism is of interagency character and needs introduction in the mandate of social services providers (on the part of identification) and in the mandate of VET service providers (on the part of provision of catch up courses and other services). Therefore, the identification and targeting youth in NEET needs further support and formalisation of its interinstitutional character.

The sustainability matrix has been developed to ensure that the project outcomes and outputs, as well as the resources developed, are transferred to the relevant partners for further use.

4.7 Lessons Learned

Some of the project challenges falls outside of the realm and capacity of the project. In some regions, attending VET in centrally located towns was made complicated due to lacking or deficient infrastructure. Transport and/or on-campus dormitories were not always available. Also, in the mountainous regions heavy snowfall could also prevent students from attending public schools and VET colleges. Additionally, poor or inexistent internet coverage in some remote regions added to the challenge. This underlines the importance of creating early partnerships with the local authorities to try to address challenges affecting the effectiveness of the project. In one case a local major organized ad hoc transport to VET activities carried out by the CBLLL project.

The blended teaching methods have limitations and need strong focus on skills development and related learning infrastructure as critical factor for quality education.

Addressing gender bias in education requires a multi-faceted approach that includes policy interventions, awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes, targeted support programmes, and efforts to create inclusive and supportive learning environments. Overall, while gender segregation in VET professions still exists, there is a positive trend towards greater diversity and inclusion. Continued efforts are needed to ensure that VET institutions reflect the diversity of their communities and provide equal opportunities for all students, regardless of gender.

Extracurricular activities, informal education and development of core competencies were all extremely welcome by the youth beneficiaries. However, the implementing partner reports a mixed reception of the entrepreneurial skills trainings. Many youths expressed a lack of interest in the entrepreneurial segment of the programme. Given that the objective of the project is to match skills with the demand of the labour market, a reluctant reception of these activities by some beneficiaries raised the need to introduce the activities with clear and convincing arguments and realistic expectations.

The work on identification of youth in NEET was focused on partnership with local actors while in the future it will need coordination at national level to ensure that there is responsible institutes and their regional and local units assigned with the responsibility of identification and outreach. This will ease the work of the VET service providers which will provide catch up course and other services. The national level institutional cooperation will ensure smooth interinstitutional collaboration among these institutions (possibly social aid agency and its employment unit, Youth Agency, social workers, VET service providers, Skills Agency and the MoESY).

4.8 Visibility and communication

The project intensely outreached various target groups and the general population of Georgia to communicate the main message of skills mismatch, VET services benefits, different stakeholders, direct or indirect beneficiaries, and socially vulnerable groups do Not Leave Anyone Behind. Social networks of UNDP, Skills Agency and Sunny house were used to highlight the major achievements and communicate with wider public. The media channels, as well as special events were planned together with EU Delegation colleagues facilitated by the communications' team of UNDP through EUDigitool. The project banners were regularly demonstrated at the physical events of the Skills Agency and Sunny House. For more details, please, see the attachment List of Major Visibility and Communication Activities.

Attachment 1: List of Major Visibility and Communications Activities

03.02.2022 Youth Workers Trainings by Sunny House



[Fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1490565991415353347>

https://www.instagram.com/p/CZ0_PjFM1x6/

14.07.2022 Interactive Games Organised by Youth Workers at Aisi College



[Fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1547546025866526720>

https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf_Wl7yti7C/?hl=en

12.08.2022 International Youth Day



[Fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1557986411558719489>

13.09.2022 Presentation of the Findings of the Labour Market Research/Tourism and Wellness Sectors



[Fb](#)

[TV Tv Tv](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1569636536836038657>

[BMG; GBC; Euronews; Formula TV; BMG,TV Pirveli; Rustavi2 TV](#)

02.02.2023 The “Good Deeds’ Month” Initiative with Sunny House



[Fb](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CoJcHXnNLcS/?hl=en>

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1621381171761319941>

https://www.instagram.com/p/CoMHMKelMS_/?hl=en

03.04.2023 The Research on the Labor Market in the Tourism and Wellness Sectors



[Fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1642862802812411907>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7048630415594504192>

11.05.2023 Skills Week



[Facebook](#)

07.10.2023 Sunny House games at the People&Planet Festival in Lagodekhi



[Fb](#)

[Fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1711611905712742685>

https://www.instagram.com/p/CyNxFB6u0N6/?hl=en&img_index=1

21.12.2023 Project Closing Event



[fb](#)

<https://twitter.com/UNDPGeorgia/status/1737824638305026461>

Attachment 2. Updated Risk Log

#	Description	Risk Category	Impact & Likelihood = Risk Level	Risk Treatment / Management Measures
1	Schools do not receive authorization to provide VET education and trainings	Organizational Operational	Without authorization the schools cannot operate and thus the planned activities cannot be implemented P = 2 I = 3 R=Low	Project worked towards building capacity of schools through providing trainings workshops, seminars and information meetings on VET introduction in secondary schools, as well as arranging the conditions for accepting/introducing VET education and trainings at secondary schools. The Ministry has authorized 10 schools for long-term programme. The CBLLL project elaborated training programme do not need full scale authorization.
2	Interest and motivation among early school leavers is low	Social and Environmental	The number of direct project beneficiaries will be low. P = 3 I =2 R=Moderate	Project developed NEET identification instruments and is working for capacity-building of VET colleges and schools to provide targeted interventions (catch-up courses).
3	Low accessibility of vulnerable groups to computer/internet outside VET institutions may decrease their participation	Social and Environmental	Fewer beneficiaries (vulnerable groups) participate in the VET programme. P = 3 I =2 R=Low	Project developed a special methodology to combine digital and blended learning to support the accessibility of vulnerable groups through partner institutions, including schools, besides VET colleges. Within Certificate Courses provided by partner schools and colleges, computer laboratories have been equipped by the Skills Agency.
4	Beneficiaries may remain sceptical and thus less motivated to participate	Social and Environmental Strategic	Fewer beneficiaries participate in the VET programme. P = 3 I =2 R=Moderate	Project implemented strategies, such as extracurricular activities, coaching, consultations, personal meetings with beneficiaries to motivate them to participate; youth workers trained.
5	Commercialization of services may progress slowly, and additional support may be needed after the completion of the project	Operational Strategic	The sustainability of project results may be at risk. P = 3 I =1 R=Low	Project worked on provision of feasible commercialization scheme, support in networking and advocating the model to respective stakeholders.
6	Due to frequent human resource changes in governmental and local governmental institutions, knowledge acquired may not be applied	Organizational Strategic	The sustainability of project results may be at risk. P = 2 I =2 R=Low	Project has progressed towards a situation where the resources developed within the project become accessible to partner institutions and are communicated properly during and after completion of the project. The management change of the Skills Agency (in 2024) posed some risks for long-term sustainability of the elaborated methodologies and approaches which UNDP addresses

#	Description	Risk Category	Impact & Likelihood = Risk Level	Risk Treatment / Management Measures
				after the completion of the CBLLL project.
7	Network will need additional financial resources for long-term functioning after the completion of the project	Organizational	The sustainability of project results may be at risk. P = 3 I = 2 R=Moderate	Project has developed sectoral partnership of colleges with private sector, governmental organizations and NGOs and built capacity of colleges in general competencies, including management, fundraising and other areas to enhance their sustainability
8	VET providers may not be proactive in identifying needed beneficiaries for provision of services	Operational	The level of participation of beneficiaries will be low. P = 1 I = 3 R=Moderate	The project developed the capacity of VET providers through trainings, information meetings, as well as through their partnerships with local governments and other organizations for provision of services.
9	Local governments will need increased funding for services provision when implementing action framework after the project completion.	Organizational	The sustainability of the project results may be at risk. P = 4 I = 2 R=Moderate	Project provided regular capacity-building for local governments in general competencies, including management, fundraising, communication and advocacy and implementation of framework
10	VET institutions (other than project partners) may need additional funding and infrastructure development for provision of extracurricular activities after the project completion, thus the model will be replicated slowly	Organizational	The sustainability of the project results may be at risk. P = 3 I = 2 R=Moderate	Project has developed scale-up approach for gradual implementation that will take into consideration the existing resources of the colleges, as well as the needs and potential for improvement, so the replication will start at those colleges and schools ready for implementation. A sustainability matrix is being developed to increase the commitment of stakeholders.
11	Teaching of course may lack quality in some partner VET institutions	Organizational Operational	The expected result – “Target groups and institutions will be strengthened through provision of needs-based, competency-based, safety-oriented and targeted capacity-building programme” will be at risk. P = 3 I = 3 R=Moderate	Project delivered the competency-based trainings to the instructors and providing consultations during the project implementation. Implementation monitoring was conducted for addressing the challenges.
12	Incorporation of the model in schools and VET institutions outside the project may slow down	Organizational Operational	The project may not achieve all planned results within the planned timeframe. P = 2 I = 4 R= Moderate	The project widely advocated for the model and Skills Agency funded the equipment and learning environment in schools from its own resources. The VET delivery through secondary schools is a priority for the new management of the Ministry.

#	Description	Risk Category	Impact & Likelihood = Risk Level	Risk Treatment / Management Measures
13	Development of gamification approach may require more time	Organizational Operational	The project may not achieve all planned results within the planned time frame. P = 2 I = 4 R = Low	Project selected consultants to develop the approach and made significant progress in aligning activities across other donor supported projects, including contributing through membership to boards created by other projects (ADB).
14	Youth activity in network may not be high	Social and Environmental	The number of direct project beneficiaries will be low. P = 3 I = 4 R = Moderate	Project created strong partnership basics for different stakeholders to motivate and support network functioning in the long-term

Attachment 3. Results Log frame Update

	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (September 2020)	Target (March 2023)	Achievement (March 2023)
Impact (Overall objective)	Impact: Overall objective: Strengthening employability for men and women in capital and rural areas through increased access to high quality services.	Indicator 1. Status of system-level changes integration in legislation and regulations leading to accessible and quality VET services.	Baseline 1: Existing legislation of Georgia limits the opportunities for diversification of VET services' provision, thus hindering the quality and accessibility.	Target 1. Draft law, regulations and/or recommendations submitted to the MoES and/or Parliament adopted, creating additional opportunities and mechanisms for accessibility and quality of VET services.	1.1. Achieved: A package of amendments in regulatory framework for VET provision in secondary schools is developed (Draft amendment to the authorization provision Draft amendments to the government decree on VET funding (to reflect the VET provision in schools) Approved amendments to the Law on General Education, Draft amendments in the school charter Draft new charter of the school)
		Indicator 2. Number of beneficiaries benefitting from availability of needs-based institutional development plans put in practice for provision of diversified VET services.	Baseline 2: Weak institutions, limited VET services and absence of needs-based interventions impedes the provision of quality and accessible VET services.	Target 2. At least 300 beneficiaries are provided with diversified, needs-based and quality VET services institutions strengthened	2. Overachieved. 1,516 VET students and schoolchildren, 16 college staff members, 34 HUB college staff members (15 women), 41 (20 women) HUB college partners are covered by Sunny House; 92 college and school staff members (60) and partners from local governments are covered. Note: Further delivery of the HUB's services is subject to administrative structures' adjustments and formalisation (which is in progress) of the regulations developed by the project.
		Indicator 2.1. Number of innovative programmes introduced for provision of diversified VET services.	Baseline 2.1: Limited innovative programmes prevent the provision of diversified VET services.	Target 2.1: At least three educational modules are created to provide diversified VET services	2.1. Achieved. Two educational standards with modules in tourism and wellness (formal approval by the VSA is in progress), additionally two modules for personal service programmes (approval by the VSA is in progress), three non-formal education courses (the approach continued by the VSA), two self-directed digital courses, and one self-directed non-formal education course have been introduced (through the LMS platform).
		Indicator 2.2 Status of availability of operational digital platforms	Baseline 2.2: Absence of digital platforms prevent the provision of quality VET and access to VET services/resources	Target 2.2: Functional digital platform provides resources for VET	2.2. Achieved. The LMS platform of the Skills Agency provides with the following courses: work safety and hygiene, first aid, and financial literacy.
		Indicator 3. Number of implemented programmes and modalities for provision of VET services, ensuring accessibility and	Baseline 3: Limited VET services, poor geographical, physical and financial accessibility prevents youth and	Target 3. Five new modalities and programmes put in place for provision of	3. 3. Overachieved. 20 certificate courses for schools (2 courses per school), 2 VET programme in Tourism and Wellness, 3 non-formal education catch-up

		participation of youth and vulnerable groups.	vulnerable groups' participation in VET services.	accessible VET services for youth and vulnerable groups.	<i>courses, and 2 courses for personnel services programmes.</i>
		Indicator 3.1: Number of sectoral partnership networks created in target regions to ensure diverse institutional settings for youth and vulnerable groups	Baseline 3.1: Lack of partnership networks in target regions prevent providing diversified VET services	Target 3.1: Two sectoral partnerships networks are in place – personal services and health fields, along with support tools (coaching, monitoring and assessment)	3.1. Achieved. Two networks (school/colleges and teacher sectoral network) in health/wellness and tourism are set up contributing to further cooperation among them
		Indicator 3.2: Number of general education schools in target regions positioned as VET service providers	Baseline 3.2: Absence of partnership connections of general education schools with VET services in target locations	Target 3.2: Five public schools partner with VET service providers	3.2. Achieved partially: 10 Schools are supported by 7 target colleges establishing partnership for delivery of the services Note: for the time of reporting the obtaining of the right for implementation is in progress for all 10 schools. Subject to further UNDP monitoring and reporting to EU. In some schools the implementation of VET services will be significantly delayed due to lack of necessary infrastructure for authorisation. There is lack of state funding needed to ensure compliancy of the schools' infrastructure with the schools authorisation and fire safety regulations.
		Indicator 3.3: Number of VET colleges transformed into local skills hubs with improved access to resources	Baseline 3.3: In target locations, VETs play no central part in skills development	Target 3.3: Two VET colleges are transformed into local skills hubs and improve their access to resources	3.3 Achieved partially: two skills hubs in Kakheti (Prestige) and Imereti (Iberia) were strengthened. Note: For the moment of reporting the project has delivered the planned support. The transformation of the colleges into HUBs is a continuous process needing formal procedures (organizational structures adjustments) and capacity development, subject for further support from VSA and other actors.
		Indicator 3.4: Number of catch -up courses for early school leavers are created	Baseline 3.4: Non-existence of catch-up courses cause lack of basic key competencies among NEETs	Target 3.4 At least one catch-up course model piloted in 2 VETs and 2 public schools	3.4. Overachieved: Catch-up Courses focused on key competencies were introduced in all 7 VET colleges targeted by the project and, in addition, in two public schools
Outcome (s) (Specific objective(s))	Outcome 1. Strengthened institutions contribute to delivery of high-quality lifelong learning	Indicator 1.1. Percentage of students/project beneficiaries who report that high-quality programmes for lifelong learning are delivered through innovative approaches, compatibility with new authorization standards and enhanced capacities of institutions and human resources, including teaching staff.	Baseline 1.1. Low capacities of VET providers and lack of innovative approaches in service delivery cause the low quality of education/trainings.	Target 1.1. At least 70 percent of the interviewed students of 25 partner institutions report by the end of the project that they are benefitting from high quality lifelong learning services provided by qualified human resources.	1.1 Achieved. 73% percent of the interviewed youth (from seven colleges) report the highest score

	provision in selected regions	Indicator 1.2: Number of teaching staff who report that high-quality programmes for lifelong learning are delivered through innovative approaches.	Baseline 1.2: Lack of innovative approaches in service delivery causes the low quality of education/trainings.	Target 1.2: 35 teaching staff (including 18 female and 17 male teachers) are trained in pedagogical and vocational skills in 5 municipalities and report on applying innovative approaches	1.2. Overachieved: 56 teaching staff (38 female and 18 male) are trained in 5 municipalities
Outcome (s) (Specific objective(s))	Outcome 2. Youth and selected vulnerable groups have access to the flexible services of formal and non-formal learning in targeted regions	Indicator 2.1. Number of youth, including job seekers and vulnerable groups, benefitting from institutional and intersectoral partnerships and networks, digital platforms and diversified services	Baseline 2.1: Youth and vulnerable groups have limited access to flexible services of formal and non-formal learning.	Target 2.1. 390 youth, job seekers and vulnerable groups benefit from institutional and intersectoral partnerships and networks, digital platforms and diversified services	2.1. Overachieved. 483 beneficiaries of digital and other services: 100 career education students and communities members, 56 professional orientation services beneficiaries (PWD and SEN, 20 women), 200 beneficiaries of open days (120 women), 61 beneficiaries of financial literacy (40 women), 66 digital literacy courses beneficiaries (30 women).
		Indicator 2.2. Status of establishment of diversified services enabling identification mechanisms of vulnerable groups for accessibility to flexible formal and non-formal learning applied.	Baseline 2.2: Absence of identification mechanisms of vulnerable groups	Target 2.2 At least one identification mechanism of vulnerable groups enacted to ensure accessibility to flexible formal and non-formal learning for youth and vulnerable groups.	2.2. Achieved partially: Stakeholder cooperation mechanisms to identify NEETs have been piloted in two municipalities: Telavi and Ozurgeti. <i>Note: further implementation of the identification mechanisms need formalisation of interagency cooperation at national and local levels among the VSA and education, social and youth services providers.</i>

Outputs	Output 1.1. Accessibility on skills of youth, women and men, including vulnerable groups, in selected regions is strengthened through new types of formal and non-formal education-related service provision.	Indicator 1.1.1. Number of partnerships of VET colleges, public schools, municipalities and other service providers institutionalized and function to provide access to needs-based, targeted and diversified VET to all in formal and non-formal education settings in target regions.	Baseline 1.1.1. Absence of cooperation among actors involved in VET in target areas	Target 1.1.1. Fifteen institutions establish strong intersectoral partnerships enhancing access to skills development and provide diversified and targeted services.	1.1.1. Achieved: All 15 institutions formed 53 partnerships (including with employers and local agencies)
		Indicator 1.1.2. Number of special targeted programmes for youth, including NEETs and vulnerable groups, developed and introduced through new types of formal and non-formal education-related services in six target regions.	Baseline 1.1.2. Absence of targeted modalities and VET programmes and services to youth, NEETs and vulnerable groups.	Target 1.1.2. Four special programmes and services developed and introduced, including extracurricular activities, catch-up courses and others, ensure participation of youth, NEETs and vulnerable groups in 6 target regions	1.1.2. Achieved partially: Three career guidance services, including for vulnerable groups, were piloted in all 7 VET colleges targeted by the project. Additionally, catch-up courses, including those for NEETs, were developed and piloted in all 7 colleges and 2 schools targeted by the project. Note: further implementation of the services needs formalisation (in progress by the VSA)
Outputs	Output 1.2. Quality of skills development is improved through institutional and human capacity strengthening of the service providers	Indicator 1.2.1. Number of VET institutions in six regions that comply with authorization standards, transformed human resources prepared, and provision of high quality programmes and services for skills development.	Baseline 1.2.1. None of existing institutions complying with authorization standards in target areas	Target 1.2.1. Seven VET colleges of six target regions strengthened to deliver high quality services on skills development.	1.2.1. Achieved: Trainings for staff and stakeholders accomplished at 7 colleges and 9 schools and their partners in 5 target regions; Note: The project has delivered planned support. Human resource development is continuous process by VSA within their mandate.
	Output 2.1. Employability of youth is enhanced through developed key competencies, incl. digital and	Indicator 2.1.1. Number of designed new, high quality, innovative, distance and blended programmes that contribute to the development of key competencies of youth, leading to higher employment rate of participants.	Baseline 2.1.1. Limited opportunities for youth to acquire key competencies, including digital and entrepreneurial skills.	Target 2.1.1. Two of high-quality distance and blended programmes are institutionalized to develop digital and entrepreneurial competencies of all, including youth, women and vulnerable groups	2.1.1 Achieved: 81% employment in achieved in the target colleges as a result of the implemented services

	entrepreneurial competence			leading to 50% rate of immediate employment of participants.	
		Indicator 2.1.2: Number of new, high quality, innovative, distance and blended programmes implemented	Baseline 2.1.2: Non-existence of distance and blended programmes in target areas	Target 2.1.2: Two new programmes are implemented	2.1.2. Achieved: Two modules in Tourism and Wellness and catch-up course hosted on the LMS platform already used during the piloting process and available continuously.
		Indicator 2.1.3 Rate of increase in employment of youth, which undertook distance and blended programmes	Baseline 2.1.3: Absence of employed youth through this project in target areas	Target 2.1.3: Fifty percent of youth, who attended new programmes, find employment	2.1.3 Overachieved. 76% (168 out of 220) got employment (110, 65% women) through the institutional partnerships among the colleges and private sector established by the project.

Attachment 4. Financial report

				Donor	Installment	EUR	USD received	Installments received	Average rate (EUR/USD)
Contract n°: ENI/2020 /417-449				EUD	I installment	348,614.00	409,171.36	Oct-20	
Implementation period of the contract: 16 September 2020 - 15 December 2023				EUD	II installment	551,386.00	553,600.40	Jun-22	
Reporting Period: 16 September 2020 - 15 December 2023				TOTAL	TOTAL	900,000.00	962,771.76		0.93480100

1. Financial Report 16.09.2020-15.09.2022	All Years				Expenditures incurred for the period: 16 September 2020 - 15 December 2023				
Costs	Unit	# of units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	# of units	Unit value (in USD)	Total Cost (in USD)	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)
1. Human Resources									
1.1 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local/int)									
1.1.1 Technical									
1.1.1.1 Local Experts	Per Person/day	540.00	150.00	81,000.00	560.00	177.57	99,441.24	166.00	92,957.77
1.1.1.2 International Experts	Per Person/day	77.00	500.00	38,500.00	74.00	559.82	41,426.64	523.32	38,725.66
1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff									
1.2 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local/expat/int.staff)									
1.1.2.1 Project Manager	Per month	35.00	2,250.00	78,750.00	35.00	2,490.31	87,160.89	2,327.95	81,478.09
1.1.2.2 Project Admin/Finance Assistant	Per month	38.00	1,450.00	55,100.00	37.00	1,634.95	60,492.98	1,528.35	56,548.90
1.1.2.3 UNDP CO Economic Development (ED) Team Leader (25%)	Per month	9.75	5,000.00	48,750.00	9.75	5,672.53	55,307.21	5,302.69	51,701.23
1.1.2.4 UNDP CO Economic Development (ED) Programme Associate (10%)	Per month	3.90	2,700.00	10,530.00	3.90	2,442.34	9,525.14	2,283.11	8,904.11
1.1.2.5 UNDP CO Finance Analyst (10%)	Per month	3.90	4,900.00	19,110.00	3.90	5,676.62	22,138.82	5,306.51	20,695.39
1.1.2.6 UNDP CO Procurement Team Leader (10%)	Per month	3.90	3,350.00	13,065.00	3.90	3,980.54	15,524.10	3,721.01	14,511.94
1.1.2.7 UNDP CO HR Team Leader (15%)	Per month	5.85	3,000.00	17,550.00	5.85	3,289.26	19,242.17	3,074.80	17,987.60
1.1.2.8 UNDP CO Logistics/Travel Assistant (5%)	Per month	1.95	2,300.00	4,485.00	1.95	2,452.25	4,781.88	2,292.36	4,470.11
1.1.2.9 UNDP CO Communications Analyst (10%)	Per month	3.90	4,700.00	18,330.00	3.90	6,365.63	24,825.94	5,950.59	23,207.31
1.3 Per diems for missions/travel									
1.3.1 Local (staff assigned to the Action)	Per Person/day	15.00	165.00	2,475.00	18.00	82.98	1,493.57	77.57	1,396.19
1.3.2 Local (local consultants assigned to the Action)	Per Person/day	170.00	75.00	12,750.00	90.00	138.60	12,473.89	129.56	11,660.60
1.3.3 International (Int consultants assigned to the Action)	Per Person/day			0.00			0.00		
1.a Human Resources - Responsible Party Youth Center Sunny House									
1.1a Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local/int)									
1.1.1a Technical									
1.1.1.1a Local Experts	Per month/per person	24.00	1,882.62	45,182.88	27.00	1,420.84	38,362.59	1,328.20	35,861.39
1.1.1.1a Coordinator	Per month/per person	24.00	395.08	9,481.92	27.00	375.67	10,143.17	351.18	9,481.85
Subtotal 1 Human Resources				455,059.80			502,340.23		469,588.15
2. Travel									
2.1. International travel (consultants)	Per flight			0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
2.2. Local transportation	Per month	18.00	300.00	5,400.00	17.00	337.75	5,741.70	315.73	5,367.35
2.a Travel - Responsible Party Youth Center Sunny House									
2.2a Local transportation	Per month	24.00	1,056.35	25,352.40	12.00	2,260.06	27,120.67	2,112.70	25,352.43
Subtotal 2 Travel				30,752.40			32,862.37		30,719.78

1. Financial Report 16.09.2020-15.09.2022	All Years				Expenditures incurred for the period: 16 September 2020 - 15 December 2023				
Costs	Unit	# of units	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)	# of units	Unit value (in USD)	Total Cost (in USD)	Unit value (in EUR)	Total Cost (in EUR)
3. Equipment and supplies									
3.1 Furniture and Computer equipment	Per set	8.00	750.00	6,000.00	15.00	419.88	6,298.21	392.50	5,887.57
Subtotal 3 Equipment and supplies				6,000.00			6,298.21		5,887.57
4. Local office - Project Office									
4.1 Office rent	Per month	12.00	300.00	3,600.00	36.00	199.12	7,168.37	186.14	6,701.00
4.2 Consumables - office supplies	Per month	35.00	100.00	3,500.00	36.00	88.51	3,186.19	82.73	2,978.45
4.3 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)	Per month	38.00	100.00	3,800.00	36.00	130.92	4,713.08	122.38	4,405.79
4.a Local office - Responsible Party Youth Center Sunny House									
4.1a Office rent	Per month	24.00	277.00	6,648.00	28.00	306.08	8,570.34	286.13	8,011.56
4.2a Consumables - office supplies	Per month	24.00	56.00	1,344.00	28.00	51.50	1,441.96	48.14	1,347.95
Subtotal 4 Local office - Project Office				18,892.00			25,079.94		23,444.75
5. Other costs, services									
5.1 Studies, research, consultancy companies	Per study/research	1.00	18,092.61	18,092.61	1.00	19,336.24	19,336.24	18,075.54	18,075.54
5.2 Evaluation costs	Per evaluation	11.00	1,080.91	11,890.00	9.00	1,696.80	15,271.21	1,586.17	14,275.54
5.3 Translation, interpreters	Per Person/day	37.00	170.00	6,290.00	52.00	140.60	7,311.01	131.43	6,834.34
5.4 Costs of conferences/seminars/meetings/trainings	Per event	7.00	2,190.00	15,330.00	13.00	1,696.95	22,060.33	1,586.31	20,622.02
5.5 Visibility actions	Per year	3.00	2,500.00	7,500.00	5.00	1,663.21	8,316.06	1,554.77	7,773.86
5.6 Contractual services companies	Per contract	1.00	29,723.55	29,100.00	8.00	1,311.01	10,488.06	1,225.53	9,804.25
5.7 Contract with VET Service providers	Per month	4.00	8,190.00	32,760.00	3.00	13,407.48	40,222.43	12,533.32	37,599.97
5.8 Contract with VET Policy/Strategy Organizations	Per month	22.00	14,150.00	284,262.00	22.00	13,067.61	287,487.39	12,215.61	268,743.50
5.a Other costs, services - Responsible Party Youth Center Sunny House									
5.4a Costs of conferences/seminars/meetings/trainings	Per day	107.00	1,403.67	150,192.69	38.00	4,346.77	165,177.44	4,063.37	154,408.04
Subtotal 5 Other costs, services				555,417.30			575,670.17		538,137.05
6. Other									
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1-6)				1,066,121.50			1,142,250.92		1,067,777.30
8. Indirect costs (maximum 7% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)				58,878.50			62,101.44		58,052.49
9. Total eligible costs of the Action, (7+8)				1,125,000.00			1,204,352.36		1,125,829.79
10. Provision for contingency reserve (maximum 5% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)				0.00					0.00
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)				1,125,000.00			1,204,352.36		1,125,829.79
12. - Taxes				0.00					0.00
- Contributions in kind									
13. Total accepted costs of the Action (11+12)				1,125,000.00			1,204,352.36		1,125,829.79

*For the purpose of interpreting clause 11.3 of the General Conditions, Subtotal 1,2,3,4 and 5 are considered as the 'Budget Headings'.

	USD	EUR
Expenses (EU)	962,711.87	899,944.01
Expenses (UNDP)	241,640.49	225,885.77
TOTAL	1,204,352.36	1,125,829.79
1st EU installment transferred (Oct-20)	348,614.00 €	\$409,171.36
2nd EU installment transferred (Jun-22)	551,386.00 €	\$553,600.51
Total EU installments transferred:	900,000.00 €	\$962,771.87
Total EU funds disbursed	899,944.01 €	\$962,711.87
Balance:	55.99 €	\$60.00

DocuSigned by:

Approved by:

Nils Christensen

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Nils Christensen, Deputy Resident Representative OIC

Resubmission date: 13-Aug-2024