



The UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN COVID-19 MPTF)

*Business Unusual: Reimagining **Education** for Marginalized Girls and Boys during and post COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

I. What is the specific need/problem the intervention seeks to address?

Summarize the problem. Apply a gender lens to the analysis and description of the problem. Be explicit on who has established the need (plans, national authorities, civil society, UN own analysis, or citizens) [15,000 characters]. Relevant guidance [here](#) and [here](#).

The proposal aims to support the BiH Education sector/Government authorities in their efforts to strengthening the system which can prevent, mitigate impacts and respond quickly to emergencies, particularly when addressing the needs of the vulnerable population ensuring the principle of leaving no one behind, attaining gender equality , specifically focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized girls and boys and in line with the recommendations of the COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment and the UN Socio-economic Response Framework (SERF) pillars.

Disparity in Access to learning in Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented disruption of education across the globe - around 1.6 billion learners were out of their classrooms for months. This situation has further deepened inequity and exacerbated an already existing learning crisis as millions of children, youth and adults did not have equal access and opportunities to continue learning. Since Mid-March 2020, around 500,000 learners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) were not in their classrooms. Education authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina attempted to quickly establish different mechanisms for distance learning under challenging circumstances, with varying degrees of success. Besides the significant impact of disrupted learning on all children, children from vulnerable groups are under additional risk to be left out, with increased risk of dropping out and widening the existing equity gaps. School closures and disruptive education among the most vulnerable children, further exacerbates existing gender norms, increases house household care work for girls limiting their available time and resources to learn. This impacts on girls' futures, as well as intergenerational impacts on health and nutrition, on economic growth, and many other outcomes. The BiH

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education authorities estimated that the lack of continuum of learning affected over 9,700 children in primary and secondary schools who did not have access to ICT¹ and many educators lack the ICT skills needed to facilitate quality distance learning.

Furthermore, according to UNICEF's [U-report](#), 45% of youth experienced challenges with access to learning, due to the need of having to share devices within the household, or not having appropriate space and environment for learning. Even if they had ICT equipment, children and youths with disabilities faced access challenges due to the lack of assistive technology and their needs for intensive teacher support.

Vulnerable groups of children and youth, such as Roma, children and youth living in poverty, and children and youths on the move were more at risk for disrupted continuum of learning. Roma children were disproportionately affected - representing at least 6 per cent of children without access to ICT and Internet.² They are most often excluded from opportunities/labour market. Many children of this group do not complete school, specially drop out rates are higher among girls. This is even more alarming as Roma children have extremely low enrollment rate in the overall development program of preschool education, but also have low enrollment rate in pre- primary education programs: only 1.5% of Roma children of preschool age are included in some form of early childhood education.

The number of Roma children attending primary education in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is 1510. In some Cantons such as the Bosnia Podrinje (BPK), there are no primary schools enrolled with Roma children. The percentage of Roma children who were enrolled in primary education in the Federation of BiH but dropped out before completion is 15%³.

Further, pre-schoolers were the biggest out-of-school group during the lockdown - 82 per cent of children interrupted their preschool attendance during the preschool closure between mid-March and mid-May 2020. Considering that only 25 per cent of children in BiH attended preschools prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, this sector is particularly vulnerable⁴, as the provision of affordable childcare is critical in ensuring equal opportunities for women to participate in the labour market. As the number of dual-earning and single-parent families grows, accessible and affordable preschool services are essential to allow parents to stay in or join the labour market and reduce the gender gap in employment.

When children cannot go to schools, they often end up losing more than their education. For many students, they lose their routine, time with friends, their only meal of the day, their access to health and nutrition services and a safe environment. Inherent inequalities in access to tools and technology during

¹ Agency for Statistics BiH http://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2020/EDU_04_2019_Y2_0_BS.pdf

² Rapid Needs Assessment- Education, UNICEF BiH, March 2020

³ Information on Inclusion of Roma children in preschool and primary education in the Federation BiH, Federal Ministry of Education and Science, 2018 http://www.fmon.gov.ba/Upload/Ostalo/8e6f18a9-1315-4c9b-a914-aadd08c6825b_Informacija%20o%20ukljucenosti%20djece%20romske%20nacionalnosti%2016072018.pdf

⁴ Ibid

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lockdowns threaten to deepen the learning crisis. BiH faced a learning crisis even before the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Programme for International Student Assessment ([PISA 2018](#)) showed that in BiH over 50 per cent of children are not achieving the minimum level of functional literacy in language, science and mathematics. There are [estimates](#) that this percentage may further increase as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.

Gender gaps in Technical and Vocational Training:

In addition, over 75% of secondary school students in BiH are enrolled in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and have experienced the lack of access to practical classes during the pandemic⁵. Despite efforts to continue delivering some training via video tutorials and written resources, TVET delivery, exams and certification were seriously affected during the closure. This group has largest differences in gender representation where about 70% are boys. In other types of secondary schools, (mainstream/non TVET) the percentage of girls is higher.⁶ Contributing factors are mainly due to cultural and historical orientation of boys towards certain historically male vocations.

Women's and men's choices in education have an impact on their earnings later in life. Fewer men than women study in the fields of general education (8% compared to 13% for women), social sciences, business, law (10 percent compared to 23 percent), and services (17% compared to 25%). By contrast, 54% of men studied engineering and construction, compared to only 19% of women.⁷

Hourly-wage gap for the population 16-64 years of age working for salaries or wages, is nine percent. This means that the difference between men's and women's average hourly wage is nine percent of the men's wage.⁸ Lower paid 'women's' jobs exist in both public and private sectors and in the informal economy. Sectors primarily associated with lower earnings include education, health, culture, and agriculture.

Overall Gender Gaps in Education:

According to an analysis published by International Labour Organization (ILO) in BiH, in April 2020, reported that such a standstill of education poses a risk of permanent drop out of children and youths from education and training and losing the opportunity to complete their studies and look for gainful employment. This will result in further increase of already very high share of youths neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEETS), which amounted to 21% (21.1% female and 22.1% male) in 2019.⁹

Working age women have lower educational attainment levels than men in BiH. A considerably higher proportion of women than men in BiH have only a

⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Agency for Statistics BiH, Women and Men in BiH, 2020 http://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Bilteni/2020/FAM_00_2019_TB_0_BS.pdf
⁷ Agency for Statistics BiH, [Household Budget Survey 2011](#)
⁸ Gender Analysis Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, USAID 2016 <http://www.measurebih.com/uimages/Edited20GA20Report20MEASURE-BiH.pdf>
⁹ Agency for Statistics BiH Labor Force Survey in BiH, 2018 and ILO STAT Bosnia and Herzegovina Country profile: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/> and https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer11/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=EIP_NEET_SEX_RT_A

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primary education (49% compared to 29%), with a similar achievement gap in favor of men present in secondary education (60.9% compared to 41.7%). The gender gap in higher education is considerably smaller, at only one percentage point in favor of men.¹⁰

Lower educational attainment, especially for women in rural areas, is an important contributing factor to persistent lower employment and self-employment. Urban women may have twice as many years of schooling as rural women. Several factors may account for this, including persistence of traditional gender norms in terms of household responsibilities, and involvement in various seasonal agricultural activities. All of these are conducive for limiting years of schooling, dropping out, or skipping classes. Distance from school, especially at a secondary level, insufficient transport, and difficult terrain may represent other contributing factors to lower educational attainment among rural women.¹¹

Impact on Female Teachers:

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, teachers (68% women) have been vital to ensuring the continuation of distance learning, where feasible, and to ensuring the greatest possible well-being for students in remote and high stress learning environments. In addition, female teachers are critical to positively impact girl's education and role models for children to counter rigid gender norms, yet their double burden also as mothers/ educators supporting their own children's learning, as well as caregivers in their own households was largely unaddressed in the pandemic. Most of the education authorities did not develop guidelines for e-learning and the teachers did not receive adequate training and ICT/digital skills in this area. In addition, educators and family members experienced challenges due to lack of appropriate skills to teach children and youth remotely and family members and caregivers required support to help children and youths continue education at home. Education authorities identified 523 primary and secondary school teachers who did not have access to ICT devices and Internet, which is 1.4 per cent of the total number of teachers, these mostly being women since the rate of employed teaching staff in primary schools is 72% and secondary 61% in favour of women.¹²

Lack of data hampers an effective gender-sensitive response. An approach will be to also enhance sex-disaggregated data on teachers to better understand and address the impact on female teachers' health and well-being during school closure, with particularly consideration to the impacts of additional caregiving responsibilities and increased rates of domestic and gender-based violence.

The strategic approach for delivering on these results will take strongly integrate gender equality and women empowerment approaches to ensure that gender-responsive measures that transform education systems are prioritized and the key bottlenecks and barriers are considered to build resilience within the system. Globally, women are well-represented in the teaching workforce, but men are more likely to hold positions of decision-making across the school system. The BiH educational system reflects the representation of 68% of women in the teaching workforce; however, participation of women in managerial positions decreases from 83% in preschool to 35% in higher education.¹³ Too often female teachers have less training, unequal working conditions, professional

10 Agency for Statistics BiH, Labour Force Survey 2015

11 Gender Analysis Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, USAID 2016 <http://www.measurebih.com/uimages/Edited20GA20Report20MEASURE-BiH.pdf>

12 Agency for Statistics BiH, Education Statistics for school year 2019/2020 <http://bhas.gov.ba/Calendar/Category/15>

13 Agency for Statistics BiH, Education Statistics for school year 2019/2020 <http://bhas.gov.ba/Calendar/Category/15>

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development opportunities and lower pay than their male counterparts, further contributing to the risk of female teacher drop out and overall quality of teaching outcomes. When women are in leadership positions in schools, they serve as role models for girls encouraging both enrolment and attendance in school. At least 55% of the programme budget will be spent on gender equality and women's empowerment, while at least 35% of programme activities are directly supporting girls and women.

Having in mind the better participation rate of women teachers and equal rate for boys and girls, these activities will apply the 'Do No Harm' principle by including the appropriate number of boys and men in order to avoid the challenging of gender roles in a form of reinforcing gender inequalities. Young men are more likely to leave education early. According to Eurostat, in 2014, the percentage of early school-leavers in BiH was 20 percent for women and 30 percent for men. This is an alarming statistic, and what is of even greater concern is that this represents an improvement from 2006 when the levels of early leavers were 38 percent for girls and 49 percent for boys (Eurostat, 2015). There are a couple of possible explanations for this trend – cultural norms of lower expectations in terms of educational achievement associated with boys, or greater competition for young women to find employment with the same educational levels as men.¹⁴

Impact due to income loss:

The widespread unemployment and income loss from COVID-19 will severely test household ability to pay school fees and materials. Budget constraints may cause the poorest households to keep children out of school even when schools reopen. Combination of being out of school and the loss of family livelihoods caused by the pandemic may leave girls especially vulnerable and may exacerbate exclusion and inequality – particularly for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. School dropout pressures are likely to have more impact on boys, who tend to be more pressured to contribute to family income, particularly as economic conditions tighten. This could lead to boys to drop out permanently, particularly those in upper secondary.¹⁵

In June 2020, UNICEF and UNESCO conducted the Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment in Education which was distributed to 14 responsible education authorities in BiH.¹⁶ The analysis revealed specific structural problems of the education systems in BiH:

- Inadequacy of ICT resources to support e-learning and blended learning, **particularly for vulnerable children and youth**
- lack of **online and e-learning platforms/ networks** that would allow all education institutions to quickly switch delivery mode for teaching, examination and certification and non-availability of diverse delivery channels
- lack of standardised e-learning and blended learning curricula with modern instructional design and quality multimedia materials. This includes also contingencies and strategies to compensate for the loss of practical training
- **Inadequate teacher and instructor** training for implementing and facilitating e-learning and blended learning and the creation of learning

14 Gender Analysis Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, USAID 2016 <http://www.measurebih.com/uimages/Edited20GA20Report20MEASURE-BiH.pdf>

15 The Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19: Education, World Bank Group Spring 2020 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/western-balkans-regular-economic-report>

16 [Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment on Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF and UNESCO, August 2020](#)

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- lack of capacities of education government authorities to conduct quality assurance.

All the changes caused by the COVID 19 pandemic have highlighted that the future of learning, and delivering quality education, cannot be separated from the imperative of leaving no one behind. Preventing a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe requires urgent action from all and this is not business as usual. This disruption presents the opportunity for BiH education authorities and their partners to build back equal and establish a 'new normal' for the education system, that tackles barriers to inclusive education especially for marginalized girls and boys and ensure that education system does not perpetuate unequal power structures in the teaching profession, but rather serves to accelerate sustainable gender equality and full inclusion.

This joint programme was designed with the vision of re-imagining education and has the following entry points to the fore of our efforts: focus on gender responsive approaches that are addressing learning losses and preventing dropouts, particularly of marginalized groups; offer skills for employability programmes; support the teaching profession and teachers' readiness; expand the definition of the right to education to include connectivity; remove barriers to connectivity; strengthen data and monitoring of learning; strengthen the articulation and flexibility across levels and types of education and training.

II. Results expected to be achieved and a clear explanation of tangible results or changes that will be achieved through this collaborative programme

Beside direct contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs, education contributes transversally to several targets and goals — including those related to decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, environment, promoting gender equality, innovation and peaceful and inclusive societies. For this reason, the role of education can be addressed both as a driver that contributes directly to bringing about economic and social benefits, and also as an enabler that contributes to the effectiveness of development interventions.

Hence, incorporating education into the UN Socio-economic Response Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁷, based on the **Recover Better Together** principle¹⁸, helps to accelerate overall recovery of the society with the participation of all sectors and focusing on gender component of educational response activities to achieve better outcomes for women and girls and to build stronger, more inclusive and more resilient society.

In terms of **Human Rights Based** approach¹⁹, the focus of the Joint Programme is not only to enable children to have access to school, but in the long-term to

¹⁷ <https://data.uninfo.org/Home/ DocumentTracker>

¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/recoverbetter>

¹⁹ <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach>

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provide opportunities to have a quality curriculum and complete all years of schooling to fulfil their right to education. Crucial are teachers, school management and other staff, especially during the pandemic, playing key roles in creating safe learning spaces, adapting curricula and providing support to marginalized students.

The COVID-19 pandemic confronted education authorities in BiH with a unique set of challenges in ensuring the continuity and quality of learning with **'Leave no one behind'** principle²⁰. This Joint UN programme proposes to modernise education and learning in BiH for the following areas to increase resilience of the education systems and to further contribute to the education sector reforms:

- i. Access
- ii. Delivery modality
- iii. Didactic approach and
- iv. An overall quality of education

The **focus** of the response strategy is to improve public sector education in three selected education administrative units (cantons and entity), strengthening the system which can prevent, mitigate impacts and respond quickly to emergencies, particularly when addressing the needs of the vulnerable population ensuring the principle of leaving no one behind. Additionally, these interventions aim to improve the blended learning²¹ approaches to ensure required resilience of education systems and the overall improvement of the quality of learning. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a significant objective of this proposal (Gender Marker- GEM3). Key activities of the joint programme are focused on mitigating and overcoming the educational disparities, learning and teaching outcomes for girls and boys as well as capacity building and empowerment of female teachers who constitute close to 70% of the workforce

The programme supports women and girl's empowerment, participation and leadership. Key activities are focused on overcoming gender data gaps, and long-term investments and education policy change that promotes gender equality in teaching workforce as well as equitable access to quality and inclusive education systems and learning outcomes thereby the implementation of the SDGs 5 on Gender Equality.

Focusing on dropout prevention and enhancing early education with a focus on disadvantaged children and strengthening teacher training will lead to improvements of education quality and equity in the long-term. The JP's outputs will create an opportunity to build an education system that is more resilient, adaptable to student needs, equitable, and inclusive, with a strong emphasis on the role of technology in teacher's training at scale and ensuring learning continuity between the school and the home.

²⁰ <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

²¹ Learning in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.

Innovative approach

COVID-19 will remain a challenge for a still unknown period of time and consequently the permanent closing of schools is not an option. Although students, teachers and families encountered numerous challenges, there have been great examples of **innovations** such as the development of **mobile apps and web portals for learning**, which enabled a continuous education process, especially for children with disabilities. The global pandemic crisis for BiH can be explored in a form of an opportunity to **re-imagine learning** so that every learner gains the required skills they need to succeed in life and work, based on recommendations from the very recent Secretary-General's Policy Brief on Education during COVID-19 and beyond²². Special emphasis is to be placed on digitalization of education systems, enhancing digital skills among teachers and students and integration of distance and online learning modalities, as a pre-requisite for a flexible and efficient response to future disruptions.

Social Cohesion:

Further, given BiH's post-conflict context, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating vulnerabilities while magnifying divisions and creating new ones. In this regard, it is essential that priority be given to strengthening social cohesion and community resilience during the fight against COVID-19. The work must include efforts to address some key drivers of instability that communities have been grappling with for an extended time and which continue to deeply impact the fabric of society across the country. In BiH, a fragmented education system exacerbates divisions among students at their early age.

Communities are bearing the brunt of the socio-economic impact of COVID19 in BiH; but they also hold the key to flattening the COVID-19 disease curve and ensure longer-term recovery. Their role was very evident during the devastating May 2014 floods in BiH, but also during immediate recovery period, when self-organizing community practices and mutually supportive interactions with neighboring communities were critical in helping mitigate the worst outcomes. To date, in the COVID-19 crisis, people across BiH have showed a great sense of solidarity cooperation and mutual care.

In this regard, communities will need investment that help them remain resilient and strengthen coherence. It is thus vital for the UN and partners to help BiH bolster effective governance; a healthier relationship between institutions and all community residents all the while working toward a genuine, durable peace based on common aspirations and priorities. These are critical areas in need of long-term attention; and they underpin the UN's prevention agenda, sustaining peace and SDGs-related work.

The proposed intervention will aim at achieving the following **outcome**:

Increased capacities of education systems to provide continuity and quality of e-learning and blended learning for all children and youths, girls and boys in

²² https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf

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Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To achieve this outcome, the **Theory of Change** (ToC) hypothesises that **IF:**

- Capacities of education authorities are improved for crisis response, implementation of safe schools' operations and risk communication, and to implement gender responsive, quality inclusive e-learning and blended learning approaches;
- The continuity of learning is ensured for all vulnerable children and youths, girls and boys with equal opportunities
- All Teachers/Educators have enhanced capacities, digital skills especially as skills shortage will be lower in rural areas and among female teachers and are empowered for delivering quality e-teaching and blended teaching;

...AND education authorities demonstrate clear commitment with strong supportive policies and actions to improve access, pedagogy, quality and women's empowerment bridging gender disparities in teaching workforce for inclusive e-learning and blended learning,

THEN education systems will be able to provide continuity and quality of e-learning and blended learning outcomes for all children and youths, girls and boys in BiH, including the most vulnerable girls and boys.

These interventions envisage **strategic partnerships** with the relevant education authorities and designated agencies at state, entity, District Brcko and cantonal levels, targeted preschools, primary and secondary schools and universities, private sectors, community volunteers, and implementing partnerships with civil society organizations.

The **geographical scope** of intervention is BiH with the following **key beneficiaries:**

- **100,000 children and youths (girls and boys)** enrolled in preschool, primary, secondary, TVET and higher education in 3 education administrative units (55% female beneficiaries);
- **5,000** preschool, primary, and secondary school **teachers**;
- **14 education authorities** in BiH.

The **proposed period** of intervention is 18 months.

Target population

Children and youths

Children and youths (girls and boys) enrolled in preschool, primary, secondary, TVET and higher education will be the main target population for the proposed action. The activities will particularly target girls and women enrolled in formal education, meaning at least 55 per cent of children and youths beneficiaries. The proposed action will be implemented in three education administrative units in BiH, namely: Herzegovina Neretva Canton, Una Sana Canton and Republika

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Srpska, and therefore it is expected to indirectly reach 100,000 children and youths enrolled in formal education.

Preschool, primary and secondary school teachers

This intervention targets to empower and build capacities of 5,000 preschool, primary and secondary school teachers, out of which at least 3,400 are women.

Education government authorities

The intervention will target to build capacities of all 14 education government authorities in BiH to improve inclusive quality e-learning and blended learning for all children and youths.

The Joint Project is built around **5 outputs**:

Output 1: Gender-responsive crisis management, including legal frameworks, established to enable implementation of safe school operations and risk communication.

This output will be achieved through implementation of the following activities:

1. Support education government authorities to develop and disseminate 'back to school' and 'back to preschool' guidelines with '**Leave no one behind**' principle;
2. Assist education government authorities in development of risk and gender and vulnerability assessments, contingency, and response plans for remote learning;
3. Support schools and preschools in "opening up better" by provision of hygiene material and information resources.

Output 2: Continuity of learning in BiH is supported for all vulnerable children and youths, girls and boys equally.

This Output will be achieved throughout following defined activities:

1. Real time monitoring of the school closure impact on households and learning continuity for vulnerable children, with specific focus on gender-disaggregated data through collecting/identifying sex, age and disability disaggregated data, including on gendered risks, needs and barriers to services, and use it to inform the policy and programme decisions.
2. Support schools and preschools by provision of ICT resources for children (girls and boys) without ICT access in case of/ disruption of regular school process due to emergency crises;
3. Ensure equitable access and equip schools and preschools with assistive technology for children (girls and boys) with disabilities;
4. Prepare developmental content targeting vulnerable preschool children (girls and boys) to be broadcasted on media and other available distance learning platforms.

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Output 3: Education authorities are supported to implement quality inclusive e-learning and blended learning approaches;

This output will be achieved through implementation of the following activities:

1. Engage volunteers in supporting of digitalization of e-learning materials;
2. Assist education government authorities in conducting assessment on quality of e-learning delivery at education level;
3. Support education government authorities in digitization of education process to increase both efficiency and system resilience to future shocks;
4. Assist education government authorities in improving quality of information management platforms in education (e.g. EMIS, TMIS);
5. Support education government authorities in development of standards and guidelines for quality inclusive blended learning.
6. Establish mechanisms to prevent harm for all related to their participation in online learning, and address the unique safety risks for girls, with particular attention to gender gaps in digital access and skills among teachers.

Output 4: Teachers (women 68%) are empowered and have enhanced capacities for delivering quality e-learning and blended learning;

This output will be achieved through implementation of the following activities:

1. Support education government authorities in mapping the professional development needs of teachers for e-learning and blended learning;
2. Support education authorities to ensure female teachers are particularly supported with continued professional development opportunities
3. Pilot Digital Learning and Media and Information Literacy as precondition for (online) teaching workshop for primary and secondary teachers;
4. Provide training programmes to improve capacities of teachers for quality inclusive blended learning in line with European Key Competences Framework;
5. Implement training programmes for the usage of Assistive Education Technology tools to meet learning needs of students of all abilities;
6. Provide training opportunities to empower female teachers to engage in creative solutions for e-learning and blended learning by developing capacities and strengthening their position in the decision-making processes.
7. Undertake sex-disaggregated data and analysis on teachers to better understand and address the impact on female teachers' health and well-being during school closure, with particularly consideration to the impacts of additional caregiving responsibilities and increased rates of domestic and gender-based violence to also ensure girls and female teachers can learn and teach in safe and inclusive environments

Output 5: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) authorities have enhanced capacities for delivering quality TVET e-learning and blended learning, including enhanced capacities for TVET teachers and instructors.

This output will be achieved through implementation of following activities:

1. Facilitate provision of equipment for TVET schools for disadvantaged TVET students, girls and boys;

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2. Support education government authorities in development of standards and technical capacities for developing of e-learning platforms for TVET schools;
3. Implement professional development programmes for TVET providers for creating, facilitating and implementing e-learning / blended learning in TVET (including training of relevant staff, development of training materials and support institutionalizing of e-TVET professional development);
4. Establish collaboration with the business community to compensate for the misalignment between TVET training and labour market needs;
5. Develop and pilot e-learning curricula and multi-media e-learning materials for 2 key occupations for girls in 3 targeted administrative units focusing on how STEM and Skills4Girls is integrated to ensure future labour market potential for girls and skills enhancement.

This Joint Programme is designed to be implemented in the entire BiH (14 administrative units). However, the initial proposal is to first pilot the activities in the 3 Administrative Units: 2 cantons in the FBiH (ŽZH and USK) making up 23% of school population for primary and secondary level, as well as Republika Srpska entity. The selection is based on the findings from the Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment on Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina²³ where low data have been obtained both for the pupils/students and teachers without access to ICT.

III. Catalytic impact and nexus

Describe how the intervention is catalytic by mobilizing or augmenting other financial or non-financial resources including from IFIs, foundations, the private sector. Describe how the proposed intervention supports medium to long-term recovery for example by enabling other actors to engage, generates an enabling environment for longer-term development. [15,000 characters]

This Joint Project Proposal offers space for catalytic effect that can be scaled up and attract additional funding. Mobilization of the private sector was evident from the very beginning of the pandemic and learning disruption process when the first response of the UN agencies within the UN Socio-economic Response Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁴ was to ensure equal access of all students to online learning through provision of equipment. In cooperation with line ministries, and in-kind support by the private sector namely mobile and telecommunication companies, UNESCO and UNICEF jointly made a donation of ICT equipment (152 pieces Lenovo tablets for primary and secondary schools) and 5300 mobile connections to students of primary and secondary schools to assist in ensuring continuity of school process as well as equal learning opportunities for all students. UNICEF and UNESCO globally formed Global Partnership for Education²⁵ engaging private sector.

To maximize results of the Joint Programme and to encourage their long-term support to the country's educational system, cooperation will be established

²³ [Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment on Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF and UNESCO, August 2020](#)

²⁴ <https://data.uninfo.org/Home/DocumentTracker>

²⁵ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/>

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with international donors and organisations. Close cooperation with the EU Delegation to BiH will be looked at as a valuable partner in furthering the objectives of this Joint Programme.

Inclusion of other IC partners is also expected to continue for these activities. World Food Programme and the World Bank Group is a global partner of UNICEF and UNESCO in the process of providing policy recommendations to ministries of education on safe transition process of school opening: Framework for reopening schools²⁶ were distributed in May-June 2020 to line ministries in BiH in order to inform the decision-makers on school reopening, support preparations and guide the implementation process, as part of overall public health and education planning processes.

Main partners are ministries for education on all levels of government in BiH (state, entity, district, cantonal), as well as governmental agencies/institutes in the area of education, and institutions providing education services (preschool, elementary, secondary, high education institutions). The Joint Programme will further build and strengthen the ongoing projects implemented by UN agencies in the education sector, including:

- a) "Towards the SDG Financing Ecosystem in Bosnia and Herzegovina" a joint programme by UN agencies in BiH (including UNESCO and UNICEF) aiming to establish a wider eco system for future SDGs financing in a number of priority sectors including education; Education is one of the critical areas for the country where significant and complex reforms are required for creating human capital for 21st century. One of the preconditions for the reforms is reliable and accurate data for adequate policy planning and budgeting. To help address this gap, activities under the JP will result in improved statistical reporting system for the education sector required for assessing education's contribution to sustainable development, with the purpose to provide policy recommendations for increasing of investments and interventions in this sector. This is particularly important as the estimated education sector cumulative budget cut in 2020 due to COVID-19 of BAM 14,775,853 represents 1.13 per cent of the overall public expenditure for formal education making up 4.1 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.²⁷
- b) Enhancing the quality of learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the PISA results – programme by UNICEF aiming to use PISA 2018 results to generate social consensus on what is quality education and generate support to the comprehensive education reform in Bosnia

The proposed Joint Programme has direct linkage with the UN BiH's Cooperation Framework:

- Outcome 2: By 2025, people benefit from more inclusive and higher quality educational programmes focused on 21st century skills for enhanced employability and well-being

and will assist in achieving the following national priorities:

- BiH Economic Reform Programme (ERP) for 2019-2021 (relevant chapter on Education and Skills)
- Platform for Development of Early Childhood Care and Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2017-2022
- Strategy for the advancement of rights and status of persons with disabilities in the Federation of BiH 2016-2021

²⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373348>

²⁷ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, available at: http://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2019/EDU_06_2017_Y1_0_BS.pdf

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- Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities in Republika Srpska for the period 2017-2026
- Relevant education strategies on entity and cantonal levels

In the context of a life-cycle approach, this proposal seeks to create a continuum of learning from early childhood to higher education. This implies maintaining synergies, smooth collaboration and sensible interface management between entities participating in this proposal and the creation of common standards and joint recommendations. At the same time, this provides opportunities for generating synergies and optimising the use of funds and time through joint coordination.

IV. Who will deliver this solution

List what Recipient UN Organizations (no less than 2 per concept note) and partners will implement this programme and describe their capacities to do so. Include expertise, staff deployed, as well as oversight mechanisms that determine the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements and responsibilities. Use hyperlinks to relevant sites and the current portfolios of RUNOs so the text is short and to the point. [15,000 characters]

The Joint Programme will be implemented by using “Delivering as One UN” approach and the UN Resident Coordinator will lead political engagement at the highest political level, also ensuring engagement of the UNCT.

The coordination arrangements include: The oversight and strategic guidance of the Programme will be provided through Joint Programme Board. The Board will be co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the dedicated representative of the relevant Government Partners (Ministries of Education and other relevant institutions)²⁸ and the Heads of RUNOs. The Programme Board will meet first time after one month of the Programme inception to adopt terms of reference and agree on the composition of the Board, and how often the Board will be meeting. New members to the Board can be added by Board approval.

The agencies participating in the Joint Programme will include UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and UNV. Under the overall leadership of the Programme Board, the Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs) will have the ultimate responsibilities for achievement of results of the UN activities conducted through Programme. UNICEF will act as the Convening Agency of the Joint Programme responsible for the strategic and programmatic leadership of the Joint UN Programme and ensuring cohesive and coordinated approach of the participating UN agencies. The Convening Agency, in partnership with other RUNOs, will be responsible and accountable to the Joint Programme Board for facilitation of the achievement of agreed delivery and results of the Joint UN Programme.

The Programme Coordinator, hosted by the Convening Agency, will serve as the Secretary during the Board meetings. The Board will be the main decision-making authority of the joint programme and will be responsible for the strategic oversight of the overall implementation and interagency coordination. The

²⁸ Statistical institutions will play an important role in collecting and providing data required for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Joint Programme. Statistical institutions in cooperation with line ministries, have been collecting data and reporting on a significant number of education indicators need for domestic and international requirements.

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Board will give guidance to joint programme team and the Coordinator and will be responsible for the resolution of the implementation issues, if required. The Board will review and endorse the annual work plans, reviews implementation progress and annual reports and will approve any substantial changes in the budgets or activities.

Joint Programme Coordinator will be tasked to coordinate the overall implementation of the programme, ensuring implementation of activities as approved in the work plans endorsed by the JPB and, in cooperation with RUNOs, coordinating activities with the Joint Programme Technical Team, ensuring the programme is implemented as envisaged and agreed with the Board, and coordinating closely with the Head of the Convening Agency and RUNOs.

The Joint Programme Technical Team will consist of at least two technical persons per UN agency, experts in the relevant field of intervention and as a minimum Education Specialist and Monitoring and Evaluation Expert. A gender expert from one UN agency will be assigned to review every monitoring process, and provide timely recommendations for timely adjustments in implementation.

The Coordinator will also be responsible for consolidation of the inputs of all agencies for consolidated narrative reporting to the MPTF. The Joint Programme Coordinator will consult with the agencies on the financial plans and expenditures related to activities defined within the work plans. The Coordinator reports to the Programme Board and is required to abide by Board decisions, and not to be affected only by steering or guidance by one agency, including the Convening Agency. The Coordinator will inform the Board on any substantial revisions to budgets and activities that go beyond the prescribed minimal threshold prescribed in the donor agreement. Such changes have to be endorsed by the Board.

The programme will follow the monitoring and evaluation procedures of Joint Programmes in BiH. The Programme Coordinator is responsible for the day to day monitoring of the programme under the overall guidance of the Board. As a monitoring tool, the programme will in the inception phase undertake a gender-equality focused analysis of the beneficiaries (institutions, teachers, students) to further advance the data analysis specific to gender disparities (nation-wide and with detailed focus groups in the selected locations) that will inform the implementation and contribute to the assessment of the results and impact of the programme. In addition, a final independent evaluation of the programme will be undertaken at the end of programme and appropriate budget has been allocated for the evaluation.

The RUNOs will undertake project monitoring activities under the overall coordination of the Joint Programme Coordinator. Monitoring activities would include site/online visits; meetings with partners and beneficiaries to assess progress and obstacles; continued assessments of the efficiency of the local-level mechanisms and financial assurance of granted activities such as spot checks (in line with the agency-specific standards).

Regarding the experience and expertise, UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education. It has been entrusted to lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda through Sustainable Development Goal 4., in accordance to the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA), UNESCO is responsible for coordinating the international community to achieve this goal through partnerships, policy guidance, capacity development, monitoring and

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advocacy.

UNESCO through its work aims to increase access to quality learning opportunities for children and youth, to empower them with values, knowledge and skills for life and work, to support teachers and enhance the resilience of education systems.

The Office in Sarajevo of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe is ideally situated to directly steer and implement required activities, with an extensive network of global and regional expertise from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris – notably the Education Sector. Strong network of operational National Commissions in every country. The capacity proven to be sufficient to address challenges at the National and Regional level. Important to mention capacities of UNESCO International Bureau for Education, International Institute for Educational Planning, and Institute for lifelong learning.

UNESCO is recognized by the National authorities in the region, as a key actor in promoting the role of education for sustainable development, including global citizenship, human rights and gender equality, health and HIV and AIDS, as well as technical and vocational skills development. UNESCO aims through its actions in Education to reduce the negative trends in increasing mistrust and radicalisation of societies, which mainly affects youth and to boost processes contributing to the peace building and reconciliation. Important role of Communication and Information, as another key element of UNESCO mandate, should not be ignored and promotion of education should be accompanied with the work in this sector as well. Furthermore, cross cutting importance of education is to be further empathized.

UNICEF has become an authority on Girls Education, is an increasingly powerful advocate in these areas and UNICEF's gender sensitive programming has been strengthened. UNICEF's Emergency response is now widely accepted as a core part of the UNICEF mandate and preparedness and response planning. UNICEF's external communications and advocacy on learning crisis even in PreCoVID period have been expanded. Finally, UNICEF's regional expertise in Education and Gender will be brought together coherently to ensure programme implementation.

The ILO is a tripartite agency with a clear mandate and extensive technical capacities in the area of Vocational Education and Training (VET). Sectoral approaches, skills foresight and anticipation, an effective modernization of skills training and matching between labour market supply and demand are a core area of ILO's assistance to Member States. Solid methodologies, based on evidence on "what works", have been applied all around the world and are documented in methodological guides that are ready for application. ILO has a long-standing record in technical assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the field of skills development ILO has been implementing the Skills Forecasting in the Tourism Sector project by applying the ILO STED Methodology on Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification. The ILO Office for Central and Eastern Europe (Budapest) hosts a multidisciplinary team of experts, backed by technical support and research at ILO Headquarters. A National Coordinator and local project staff based in Bosnia and Herzegovina ensure a sound implementation at the country-level.