

Sponsoring Vocational Education

An alternative to financing Vocational Schools in Albania

2017

This document is commissioned by Swisscontact in Albania in the framework of Skills for Jobs Project.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Making the case	5
Sponsorship: Definitions	8
Why do companies sponsor	9
Sponsoring Education	12
Why companies in Albania would sponsor VSD providers.....	13
Forms of Sponsorship.....	14
What do companies expect	16
How to make a sponsorship agreement a success.....	18
What preconditions schools should comply with.....	20
Guiding principles for schools to consider when engaging in sponsorship agreements	21
Sponsorship Policy Template	24
Sponsorship Checklist.....	26
Ensuring Transparency	28

Introduction

Vocational education is taking ground in Albania. A larger share of youngsters enrolling in upper secondary education choose vocational education instead of gymnasium compared to five years ago (this does not apply for arts schools and foreign language schools at upper secondary level). Public investments in VET are increasing. Donors are contributing ever larger amounts in vocational education and training (VET) with the EU and Switzerland leading the way. However, the increase in public and donor funding cannot meet the alarming need for the system to modernize and meet the demand of the private sector for a workforce that is up to speed with the developments of a given industry. In some cases, laboratories are outdated. In some other cases, they are not functional. Funds for purchasing materials for practical learning are very limited. In many vocational schools, classrooms are in very bad conditions. Waiting for the next round of investment from the Line Ministry may mean at least another five years. And when the investments are there, the project is not necessarily designed to meet contemporary standards and look ten years ahead. In the meanwhile, the private sector out there struggles on a daily basis in need for qualified workers. When analyzing the vet sector, one naturally asks: To which extent is the vocational school today A partner of private sector companies? Are schools supplying companies with highly qualified workers who can help them provide top quality services or goods to their customers and become and/or remain competitive in a globalizing economy?

The new VET law (no. 15/2017: *on vocational education and training in the Republic of Albania*) envisaged that Vocational Schools and Training Centers will operate as autonomous entities. This includes also financial autonomy. Chapter VI: Funding, Article 30: Funding Sources, point 1 stipulates:

1. Vocational education and training are funded by:

- a) the State Budget;
- b) income generated by the public VET providers themselves;
- c) donors' contributions;
- d) sponsorships;

Sponsorships are defined as one of the funding sources for the VET providers in Albania.

The experts are working on defining the modalities how the Government will fund the providers and analyze scenarios for income opportunities. In addition, VET providers need to start focusing more on outreach activities if they are to increase the base of their 'customers'. This means they need to engage in career orientation, career guidance, apprenticeships and job-matching activities. In view of improving the quality of the delivery schools also need to engage in graduate-tracer studies to ensure. Such activities are not foreseen in the budgets of the vocational schools. Resources need to be raised.

The VET providers need to start looking towards the private sector and build strategic partnerships for further developing their institutions, even more so in a situation when funding needs to be secured through other sources than public funds. Some of the forms to engage the private sector and other parties to co-finance the provision of VET are:

- Companies providing in-company practical learning for the students (the apprenticeship model S4J project is currently implementing);
- Companies providing free of charge practical training for teachers (life-long learning opportunities);
- Individual donations (institutional support or support for specific activities);
- Sponsorships from companies.

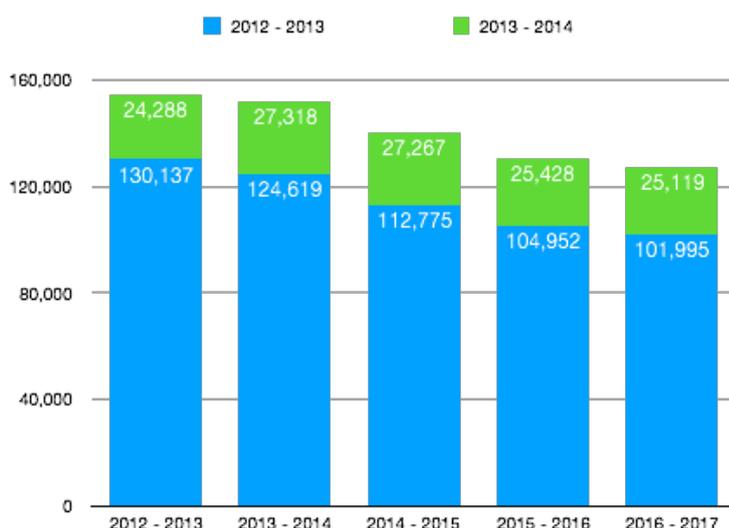
This document focuses private sector sponsorships. It argues the case why companies sponsor, education and more specifically vocational education. What is needed to change in the way schools operate and how can they make the best use of this possibility to empower their institution and provide their students a better learning environment.

Making the case

Vocational education and training (VET) is taking ground in Albania. The image of VET has started to improve. More youngsters are choosing vocational education compared to gymnasiums. The Government of Albania and many foreign donors are promoting vocational education as a secure path to a prosperous future for young people. Often in the local media people learn about the modern laboratories and ‘fancy’ profiles introduced in the vocational schools. Many famous professionals (i.e chefs) are investing their image to promote VET. This is an excellent opportunity for attracting private sector companies to associate themselves with vocational schools as a means to establish a positive public profile. Companies report that they see an interest in linking their image (brand) to vocational education, however this is an area that needs to be explored and mutual interest should be the guiding principle in a potential cooperation between vocational schools and companies.

* * *

In the last five years, INSTAT reports an increasing trend in enrollment of pupils in upper



secondary level in vocational schools compared to those enrolling in a gymnasium. While the overall numbers remain in the range of 25,000 students a year (See Figure 1), the share of those studying in vocational education compared to the total population of pupils enrolling in upper secondary education (including those studying in a gymnasium) has increased from 15.7% in 2012 to 19.8% in 2016 (See Figure 2).

Figure 1: Students enrolled in upper secondary school

This is due to the aging process in the demographic development of Albania. A reduction in the pyramid base (the reduction of the number of live births) has been noted from 2001, resulting now in a shrinking population in the group age 6-16 (See Figure 3). The result of this is a reduction in the number of youngsters enrolling in high school overall: 154,425 pupils in the academic year 2012 - 2013 decreasing to 127,114 pupils in the academic year 2016-2017.

	Share in VET
2012 - 2013	15.7%
2013 - 2014	18%
2014 - 2015	19.5%
2015 - 2016	19.5%
2016 - 2017	19.8%

Figure 2: Share of VET students vs total

The trend of enrollment in vocational education is positive (See Figure 2). However, a long way from the rates in the neighboring countries and the EU developed economies (see Figure 4). This tells for a need and potential (for the economy) for an increasing number of youngsters enrolling in vocational education in the years to come.

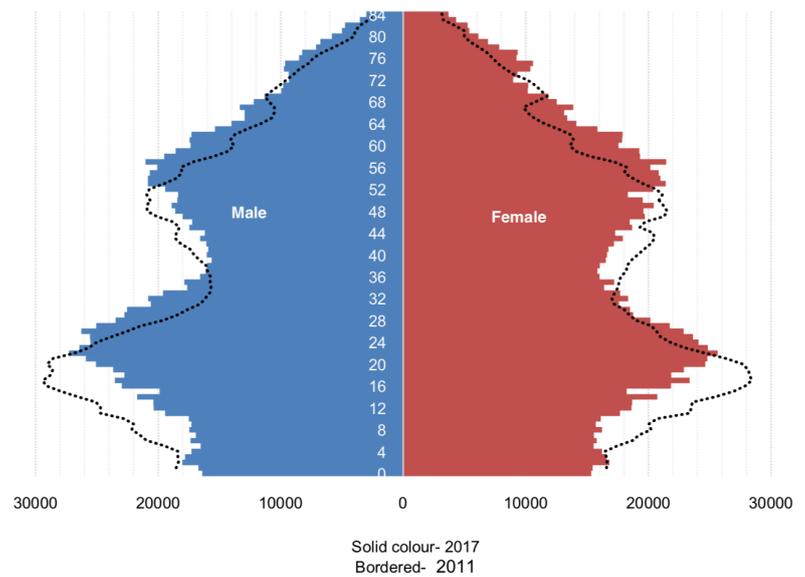


Figure 3: Population Pyramid 2011 – 2017

	Lower secondary			Upper secondary			Post-secondary non-tertiary		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
EU-28	3.1	3.4	2.8	47.3	52.4	42.0	90.6	90.0	91.1
Belgium	20.1	20.8	19.3	59.6	61.6	57.8	92.7	95.3	90.1
Bulgaria	4.0	3.6	4.4	52.6	60.0	44.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
Czech Republic	0.5	0.5	0.4	73.2	78.7	67.6	14.8	30.0	7.1
Denmark	-	-	-	42.5	47.6	37.4	-	-	-
Germany	2.6	3.0	2.2	46.8	53.9	38.4	90.9	88.0	93.0
Estonia	1.2	1.5	0.8	35.7	45.2	26.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
Greece (*)	-	-	-	45.9	64.1	29.9	-	-	-
Spain	0.9	1.2	0.7	35.2	37.9	32.4	100.0	100.0	100.0
France	-	-	-	41.5	46.4	36.5	53.5	44.1	58.7
Croatia	9.7	7.6	11.8	70.4	77.3	63.5	-	-	-
Italy	-	-	-	55.8	67.1	43.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cyprus	-	-	-	15.6	24.1	6.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
Latvia	0.7	1.0	0.3	39.8	45.7	33.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
Lithuania	2.1	2.9	1.1	26.8	32.8	20.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
Luxembourg	-	-	-	61.4	63.5	59.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hungary	0.9	1.1	0.7	23.2	27.3	18.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
Malta	0.6	0.5	0.8	12.7	15.8	9.8	94.9	96.3	93.0
Netherlands (*)	6.2	6.7	5.7	68.5	69.4	67.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Austria	-	-	-	69.5	73.6	65.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Poland	1.0	1.1	0.9	50.5	59.5	40.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Portugal	11.3	13.3	9.2	44.9	50.5	39.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Romania	-	-	-	56.3	64.1	48.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
Slovenia	-	-	-	67.5	74.0	60.5	-	-	-
Slovakia	2.5	2.9	2.0	69.0	75.0	63.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Finland	-	-	-	71.3	74.0	68.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Sweden	0.9	0.9	0.9	38.2	39.5	37.1	76.9	73.3	80.0
United Kingdom	11.3	12.4	10.0	40.1	40.1	40.1	-	-	-
Iceland	-	-	-	32.8	38.1	27.3	98.5	98.8	98.0
Liechtenstein	-	-	-	66.2	71.6	58.5	-	-	-
Norway	-	-	-	50.1	58.0	41.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
Switzerland	-	-	-	65.3	71.9	58.0	85.0	83.3	86.1
Montenegro	-	-	-	67.2	72.6	61.4	-	-	-
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	-	-	-	59.5	64.3	54.4	100.0	100.0	100.0
Serbia	-	-	-	75.1	79.0	71.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Turkey	-	-	-	49.0	50.1	47.8	-	-	-

(*) Upper secondary: 2014.

(†) Post-secondary non-tertiary: 2014.

(-) not applicable

(:) not available

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07)

Figure 4: Share (%) of students in Vocational Education programmes, 2015

Data for the total population of vocational education students are yet to be collected. Experts estimate that for the academic year 2018-2019 we will see an increase in enrollment of students in vocational education in the 10th grade. It is expected that this will result in an increase of about 6 percent compared to the total number in the academic year 2016-2017 (25,119).

The numbers in enrollment are not stagnating or (very moderately) increasing proportionately throughout the country. We see an increasing demand for enrolling in vocational education in larger urban areas versus a decrease in smaller towns. This reality raises a few strategic management questions for the policy-makers:

- What will happen with the small schools that are shrinking in size in smaller towns? What happens with these buildings? How is the future of the teachers in these schools going to look like in the next three to four years?
- How many new vocational schools are needed? In which towns/regions? What kind of new infrastructure is needed (what directions/profiles and respective laboratories)? Who is going to pay for the maintenance of this new infrastructure? What are the running costs for such new buildings offering new occupational profiles?
- How is the shrinking population among teens going to affect enrollment in gymnasiums? What will happen to the teachers currently teaching in gymnasiums? Will the government let them go or will there be a plan to integrate them in the vocational education system?

All of these policy dilemmas will need to be addressed in the near future. The solution will be a compromise that will result very costly. Many schools cannot offer certain profiles due to lack of workshops (laboratories). The industry is asking for more contemporary infrastructure in the vocational schools to ensure that students are trained with modern technologies as a means to ensure they are ready when entering the labour market. Can the public sector (funded by the taxpayer's money) in one of the poorest countries in Europe¹ (second poorest after Kosovo) keep up with the investments to ensure the VET system is producing qualified workers for the labour market that shall become ever more competitive in a global economy? Providers need to find, and pretty fast, alternative financial means to ensure they keep up with the demands of modernizing economy for a skilled labour force.

Sponsorship is one of the means that vocational schools shall test to ensure financial stability and enable growth.

¹ GDP per capita (current US\$) 2016:

Albania = 4,125 \$; Neighboring countries: Montenegro = 7,023.5 \$ / Kosovo = 3,661.4 / Macedonia = 5,237.1 \$ / Greece = 17,930.2 \$ / Italy = 30,674.8 \$; Countries where dual VET is applied as a mainstream: Germany = 42,069.6 \$ / Austria = 44,676.3 \$ / Netherlands = 45,669.8 \$ / Denmark = 53,549.7 \$ / Switzerland = 79,890.5 \$ / Luxemburg = 100,573.1 \$.

Sponsorship: Definitions

Sponsoring is the act of supporting an organization, event or a person financially or through the provision of products and/or services (in-kind support). The company, the individual or the group that provides the support, is known as the **sponsor**.

Sponsorship is a form of promotion, often considered as Public Relations, in which a company provides support in order to obtain positive publicity. It is an increasingly common form of promotional activity used primarily to reach specific business goals. Companies in return of the support provided get advertising space in the premises of the organization, the related events it organizes and its promotional materials (i.e. website, posters, banners, et. al). Sponsorship is common for social programs, arts and culture events, sports as well as education.

According to IEG, a consultancy group specializing in sponsorships, "Sponsorship should not be confused with advertising. Advertising is considered a quantitative medium, whereas sponsorship is considered a qualitative medium. It promotes a company in association with the sponsee."

A sponsorship is not:

- a grant, including money, goods or other benefits provided to the recipient for a specified purpose, but with no expectation of attaining rights or benefits as outlined above
- a bequest that has no obligations on the school and offers little or no rights or benefits to the provider
- the sale of advertising space, editorial comment or advertorials.

Why do companies sponsor

There are many reasons why corporate sponsorship has grown over recent years. Today's businesses pursue a range of objectives which reflect the complexity of social relations within a modern society. Big business is not just about making profits, but also has to take into account the interests of the communities it serves. Sponsorship helps organizations to reflect these wider community interests and, as modern sponsorship deals have become increasingly flexible, allow organizations to target sponsorship projects more carefully. This in turn has provided an ever-growing range of benefits for sponsoring companies. These include:

Advertising

Sponsorship can be used as a form of advertising in which a company pays for all or some of the costs associated with a project or program in **exchange for recognition**. Companies may display their logos and brand names, with specific mention that they have provided funding. Company sponsorships are commonly associated with non-profit groups or events in educational institutes, who generally would not be able to fund operations and activities without outside financial assistance. The idea is to get the company name out and be viewed positively as a participating member of a given community.

Brand awareness and media coverage

Sponsorship gives one's brand the opportunity to generate awareness, boost the perceived image of the business and potentially gain media exposure. Companies ask for naming rights on given events. In addition, space can be provided to companies to get the floor for a few minutes during one event. A central location stand also helps boost visibility of the company. Always, if good quality events are organized and if enough people (and relevant ones) visit the event.

Communicating Corporate Values

Most companies present an image to the public at large. The resulting image may not always be accurate or the image may pre-date the reality as the company moves on. Sponsorship may therefore be used to convey the values for which the organization stands and the way it currently conducts its business. Communicating values helps a company to influence its perceived image. There are many reasons why companies might want to do this and these may not always be related to increasing sales. Partners in sponsorship need to be carefully chosen. The image of the sponsor will be impacted by the activities and events related to it and vice versa. The marriage of a company's business objectives and the nature of the event requires much consideration. The pursuit of maximum publicity, no matter what the event, is not always the best policy.

Targeting

Targeting involves making sure that the right people receive the required message. For example, the targeting achieved through sponsorship can be directed to a group far more efficiently than other forms of advertising. Using an example from vocational education: If a company manufacturing air conditioners were to sponsor a workshop (in a vocational school or training center) where young professionals learn how to fix air conditioners it would expose the future professionals who will install and service air conditioners to the brand and its products. If the students practice for many years with the equipment provided by the company and they appreciate its products they will be keener on recommending the products of the respective brand to their future customers. The profile of the company and its products would therefore be raised amongst the section of the population most likely to purchase the product.

Relationship Building

Perhaps the most important reason companies have for sponsoring an entity is relationship building. Sponsors can seek to develop new relationships with access to one's entity stakeholders. For a vocational school, it may be the parents' community, the teachers, the employers – private sector companies that cooperate with the school, the mayor or the minister. This relationship building can be at the school or at the company premises. For example, retailers (i.e. Neptun) can be interested in promotions that get your stakeholders to visit their stores. In such cases a school needs to look at how it can drive traffic to its sponsors, how to provide them with an opportunity to personally meet its own audience.

Building Business to Business (B2B) connections

Sponsoring a vocational school that partners with over fifty local enterprises to offer apprenticeships to its students, another eight industry-leader companies who have engaged to train its teachers and another twelve companies who sponsor its activities may help a company expand its network of potential business partners and establish working relations with some of them. (i.e. attend a dinner organized by the principal for all the businesses supporting the school; participate in apprenticeship or job fair hosted at the school; become a member of the *Board of Friends* of the school with other peers).

Corporate hospitality

Corporate hospitality is normally one of the benefits associated with a 'sponsorship package.' So, for example, a vocational school with an indoor sports center (volley and/or basketball pitch) can offer to some of the companies that sponsor its activities to use the gym for once in a while. Local companies can offer the possibility to use the school's indoor sports center

to their employees or organize volleyball or basketball competitions where employees of different companies compete with one another. Such events would be used to recognize and further develop personal relationships between individuals from a number of companies. Other vocational schools can make available their *infotheques* to companies to make presentations for their clients or introduce new products. Workshops can also be interesting for companies to use to present new products to professionals in a given town/area. For some sponsorships, the opportunity to use certain facilities for corporate hospitality are highly prized, as that venue would not be available through any other channel.

In addition, companies can have workshops and/or classrooms named after them – if they are to provide a substantial sponsorship (i.e. sponsor a full laboratory, provide working materials for a given period of time, provide financial support of a considerable value that is undesignated).

Sponsoring Education

Many companies worldwide are supporting education. The large corporates have established foundations to support education programmes and provide direct support to educational institutions and/or to pupils/students directly (in a context when the school applies fees for students to cover its costs). Public companies are more limited in channeling funds to a foundation. In such cases, it is the major shareholders of a company who establish a foundation and fund it through personal funds. Below a short list of foundations created by big corporates or individuals supporting education:

- **BIC Corporation Foundation**
(<https://www.bicworld.com/en/our-commitments/commitment-education>)
- **UBS Foundation for Social Issues and Education**
(<https://www.bicworld.com/en/our-commitments/commitment-education>)
- **CISCO Public Funding Office for Education**
(<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/industries/education/us-education/resources/grants-strategy.html>)
- **Novartis Office of Grants and Education** (<http://ngcs.novartis.com/grt.jsp>)
- **Microsoft Education | Shape the Future K-12 Program**
(<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/windows/shapethefuture.aspx>)
- **VODAFONE Foundation** (<http://www.vodafone.com/content/foundation.html>)
- **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** (<https://www.gatesfoundation.org>)
- **The Walton Family Foundation**
(<http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/our-impact/k12-education>)
- **Robert Bosch Stiftung**
(<http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/education.asp>)
- **Chan Zuckerberg Initiative** (<https://chanzuckerberg.com/initiatives>)
- **Google for Education**
(https://edu.google.com/k-12-solutions/classroom/?modal_active=none)

To get a better understanding on the size of funding companies give to education, please find a long list of companies and individuals who sponsor Khan Academy, a global educational initiative on this link: <https://www.khanacademy.org/about/our-supporters>.

Why companies in Albania would sponsor VSD providers

Besides the reasons provided above, private sector companies may have a variety of reasons to support vocational education and more specifically vocational schools. This is true not only for major corporates in developed economies but as well for smaller size companies in small countries like Albania. Based on 12 interviews conducted with private sector representatives in Tirana, below a summary of the responses we collected:

- Corporate Social Responsibility;
- Advertising;
- Establish a reputation as a good employer among students/apprentices who will soon enter the labour market (ensuring the best talents aspire to work for these companies in the future);
- Benefit from a direct contact with potential apprentices to ensure they recruit the best talents to do an apprenticeship in their company;
- Establish a good reputation amongst teachers - building the ground for training teachers on the newest technologies who can then better transfer it to the students/apprentices;
- Establish a reputation among policy-makers (MPs, Line Ministry Executives, local government officials);
- Advertise the brand to future professionals who can impact sales of their products and services to end customers
- Utilize the premises for company benefits;

All companies interviewed are aware that in Albania there are no significant incentives – in terms of tax returns. The majority of the company representatives interviewed do not see this as a major concern for as long as the schools will develop good packages for the companies to ensure a good return on the investment.

Please list other reasons that drive companies your school collaborates with to sponsor vocational schools:

Forms of Sponsorship

Almost all company representatives interviewed who consider sponsoring vocational schools said that for the time being, given the management modalities of the VET system in Albania, their companies do not consider providing financial support. Some of the most common forms reported are:

- **Major discounts for certain products**

CISCO applies a scheme which provides 75% discount on their products (network laboratories) should a school have teachers (staff) who have received industrial certificates (i.e. CCNA). Microsoft provides major discounts (over 90%) for schools for the operating system (Windows 10) of the new computers they purchase. With the current system of procurement which the schools need to apply to purchase goods and or services this is rather complicated. However, there are modalities to overpass this obstacle;

- **Working materials for workshops and classes**

BIC has a program as part of which selected schools receive stationery for a given period of time (i.e. 3 years). Supermarkets may provide food that is close to expiry date to schools training cooks. Microsoft provides internet access to some vocational schools in Albania including some licenses of Office 365. SICPA may provide learning materials for laboratories of hi-tech oriented courses. Diamond Hill Resort is considering the possibility to provide solar panels to vocational schools it collaborates with;

- **Infrastructure**

Albaelettrica (a company focusing on lighting solutions) provided the **lighting system** for one vocational school in Albania. In addition, they have committed to furnish up to three new **Electrical Laboratories** in vocational schools teaching this profile. SICPA committed to sponsor a new **3D printers' laboratory** for Industrial 'Pavarësia' School (SHIP). TELEPERFORMANCE is considering the possibility of providing up to **400 PCs** in good working conditions because they are renewing their computers based on the policies of the company globally. VODAFONE may provide hardware products for IT laboratories;

- **Teacher Training**

Plaza Tirana provides tailor-made training for teachers of tourism and hospitality. Other companies offer on-the-job practical learning for teachers. There is plenty of potential in this area;

- **Services**
Media companies may become official media partners and provide space for promoting the school.

- **Other**
Diamond Hill Resort has committed to provide a wheelchair for a student.

What do companies expect

As a general rule, companies consulted for this paper expect that vocational schools put together sponsorship proposals that are beneficial to them. In an ideal situation, the package offered by the schools should be of the same value as a given company would pay for media coverage for the same target group and size of specific audience. Certainly, this is too difficult to measure. In addition, companies are also committed to advertise themselves the support they provide to schools.

Below a list of different elements companies expect the schools to offer are:

- Company logo on school website, with link to company's website or social media;
 - o Differentiate sponsors according to level of sponsorship (i.e. Gold Partner, Silver, et.al.)
- Company logo on school social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn);
 - o Share status, links, promote the brand
- Story about the sponsorship (produced by communication specialists or by the company and posted on the school's website and/or social media channels);
- Space dedicated to put company banner (roll-up banner, forex banner);
- Name a class or a laboratory after the company
- Public events organized by the school – most importantly with the presence of media
 - o Invite staff / important clients in important events
 - o Allow room to speak on behalf of the company to the audience
 - o Mention the contribution of the company to the audience
- Public events with the presence of important business representatives and policy-makers
 - o Sitting next to a potential business partner
 - o Standing/sitting next to an important figure (to ensure media visibility)
 - o Be a guest speaker
- Companies host own events in the school premises (i.e. presentation of new products, sports activities, receptions);
- Official institutional partner for the year / for special national events where the school participates;
- Mentioning in periodic newsletters, including logo, web link
- Logo presence in Annual Catalogue of the institution
- Logo presence in folders, promotional materials, bags,
- IT students can provide maintenance of the company's website
- Production of logo in different materials

Please list other areas of interest that companies your school is cooperating with is interested in:

Schools should always take into consideration that the level of acknowledgement provided to sponsors should be consistent with the level of sponsorship. This acknowledgment must be in a form which can be positively associated with enhancing education outcomes and the public image of the school must be considered at all times.

How to make a sponsorship agreement a success

To create an effective sponsorship program, it is important that a VSD provider considers that a sponsorship deal should help to build both brand and achieve the objectives of the educational institution. As applied in different sectors, the recommendations below can help improve the effectiveness of a sponsorship to your institution:

- 1. Clearly define your objectives.** Determine which of your current goals or strategies the respective potential sponsorship agreement can help achieve, versus creating new ones.
Don't create a new program just because a potential sponsor is telling you money is available. Starting a new program needs to come as a result of a strategic planning process. Otherwise, it is not going to be sustainable in the long run and thus create you more problems than offering you solutions. Keep the focus on achieving your goals and strategies.
- 2. Identify your equity opportunity.** Find the space you can actually "own" and what you can achieve with it.
If a company offers and/or agrees to sponsor the institution you work for there has to be a potential benefit. It is very important for you to understand what you are offering and reflect on the value of it. Such a reflection helps you be aware of your strengths and how you can build up on those strengths. It will help you be in a better position with a given sponsor and in addition it will help you understand what other companies may have an interest to associate with you.
- 3. Assess your partner's equity fit.** There's nothing worse than partnering with an entity (company or organization) that doesn't align with your current mission. Make sure the partner (the sponsoring entity) will enable you to reach your objectives and reinforce — or better define — what you stand for. This issue becomes very delicate when we are talking about educational institutions.
- 4. Value what you bring to the table.** Every successful sponsorship also helps the promotional partner. Use the value you bring to the table to negotiate opportunities; otherwise, you may 'overpay'.
This may sound like an exaggeration at the very moment. Do not forget. You are starting now to establish such partnerships. These partnerships are meant to help you improve the performance of your institution and create and/or consolidate a brand of your own. Once you have reached there you have become an asset in the sponsorship market. Therefore, act based on this recognition from the very beginning. You may suggest to your management board in specific cases to 'overpay' because certain circumstances may require this. However, they need to be well

aware of this and it is your task to help them understand what is it that you are bringing on the table and what is the rationale this time for being 'generous'. Companies value this business mindset because they understand you are thinking of the value you have and the value you can add them in the mid- and long-term.

5. **Look for ways to activate the sponsorship across all relevant channels.** Once a company engages with you, work out all the possible aspects of cooperation with it. They may be interested to organize company open days for your students and/or the teachers; collaborate with your institution to host apprentices; help you by promoting your institution among peers; join your staff in outreach activities with 8th and 9th grade pupils in compulsory education to talk to them about their industry and what future awaits those who decide to work in that industry; contribute to a school-based curricula revision; train teacher at work (practical learning); ask a senior expert of their company to come as a guest speaker in a class. By engaging with a company on more than one area you have managed to improve your Return on Investment (RoI). Career Centre staff need to invest time to identify potential partners from the private sector, establish and maintain relationships. If you engage with a company on more than one area you have helped to reduce the amount of time Career Centre (Development Unit) staff spend on finding new partners.

6. **Capture data and measure results.** Be attentive. Keep track on how the collaboration is helping you and your partner. This will help you improve/optimize what you have built and it will through you into new ideas/opportunities for expanding and/or deepening cooperation with an existing partner. This means sustainability and scalability. This will help you to do better projections for the future of the institution you are part of.

Done properly, sponsorship can offer much more than mere affinity and capturing the attention of your, existing and potential, constituencies. It can also play a starring role in increasing the interest of your 'clients' – pupils and their parents who help them decide to choose their educational path, in your institution. Albanian families are very concerned by the alarming youth unemployment rates. They know it is going to be difficult for their kids to enter the labour market. Many aspire for their kids to work in the public sector and therefore choose gymnasium instead of vocational education. Stronger links between vocational schools and with private sector companies, especially the industry leaders, will have a major impact in changing that mindset. In this respect, sponsorship may help beyond just providing financial means for an activity or an isolation intervention. It may help us change the way society regards vocational education.

What preconditions schools should comply with

In order for schools to offer such ‘services’ to companies in exchange for the sponsorship they need to consider investing on the following:

- Develop and implement a **Visibility Campaign**
- Create a **website** and maintain it;
- Develop state of the art **social media channels** (focus on Facebook and Instagram) and expand their followers base;
- Engage staff and collaborators to write **short articles**, mainly for the social media and web-site;
- Create **corners in visible places** for banners and/or posters of companies
- Organize **public events** (a few a year), thematically relevant and interesting for the partners, stakeholders, general public and the media;
- Create and maintain within their buildings **premises that can be attractive** for companies to host own events;
- Start and operate a **bi-monthly newsletter** and distribute it to its constituencies;
- Produce and distribute an **annual catalogue** (electronic only if too costly to print);
- Establish and maintain a **close link with journalists** of local and national media outlets (organize regularly visits in the school, business lunches, invite journalists to meet with prominent business figures and international guests visiting the school);

The list is not extensive and it doesn’t mean that each vocational school should ‘offer’ all of the abovementioned immediately. It is normal for companies if schools start slowly and in the future, offer a more complete package satisfying their interests.

Please list other aspects that your school is considering developing:

Most importantly the school needs to have one person who is dedicated to do research, establish and maintain relationships with the private sector companies. In Albania, this figure can be a staff of the Development Unit or the Career Centre (as established and supported by Skills for Jobs project). In addition, schools can recruit volunteers and interns (university students) who engage for period of 6 to 12 months to support the activities of the school in this domain.

Guiding principles for schools to consider when engaging in sponsorship agreements

The following Sponsorship Principles should guide conversations with school boards and school management structures when assessing potential sponsorship arrangements. Principles may in some cases focus more on the school or on the company, however it is intended that both schools and companies take note of all sections.

Policy

Schools must only engage in sponsorship activity that:

- improves educational outcomes
- supports the achievement of Government and school goals and objectives.

A school must not engage in a sponsorship that:

- engages in activity aimed at delivering or replacing core Line Ministry or school services;
- involves political parties, tobacco companies, gaming venues, companies involved in the sale/promotion of alcohol, and companies involved in offensive or inappropriate activity;
- requires the Line Ministry to directly endorse or promote its products and/or services;
- requires disclosure of the names or addresses held by the school to an external company as a benefit of sponsorship unless the individual's consent is sought.

The Management Board and/or Management Team need to establish a Sponsorship Policy (below a template to be used) that enables them to define:

- what type of company they would agree to have as a sponsor;
- what rights or benefits would they agree to provide to the sponsor company/organization (it may well be a foundation);
- the process for authorizing a sponsorship
- a mechanism to document and record the sponsorship (transparency).

The Sponsorship Policy and the sponsorship agreements shall comply with the following principles:

- 1.** Schools should support appropriate relationships with organizations, individuals and business in relation to sponsorship arrangements. These arrangements must be consistent with the principles, vision and goals for public education and derive benefits for the education of all students and support of teachers.
- 2.** All sponsorships will support the school's goals and objectives and increase the effectiveness of the school's strategic programs.
- 3.** Sponsorships should be used to enhance educational programs and not to displace other funding arrangements on which the school depends.
- 4.** Sponsorship programs and/or activities should contribute either directly or indirectly to the quality of students learning.
- 5.** Sponsorship agreements should only be negotiated with companies whose public image, products or services are consistent with the ethos, values and policies, of the school and its community.
- 6.** The sponsorship arrangement will build and foster relationships with key stakeholders.
- 7.** Sponsorships should operate within school on equity. All sponsorships should aim to give all students and schools the opportunity to participate in the sponsored activity/ies.
- 8.** Sponsorship activities should be compatible with good educational practice. Time and resources allocated to these activities should be consistent with school priorities and the overall educational program.
- 9.** Participation in sponsorships should not generate undue pressure on children, families or schools to purchase particular products or services, or to adopt particular beliefs, attitudes or courses of action.
- 10.** Sponsorships should not involve endorsement of products or services by the school.
- 11.** Acceptance of a sponsor's product or service should not be a condition of an individual student's participation in sponsored activities.

- 12.** Sponsorship should avoid placing undue pressure on children, families or schools to purchase particular products or services, or to adopt particular beliefs, attitudes or courses of action.
- 13.** Companies should not seek endorsement of their products or services as a condition of a sponsorship.
- 14.** Any educational materials provided as part of a sponsorship should be clearly identified as being those of the sponsor.

Schools must ensure that:

- There is a sponsorship programme with clear objectives, key performance criteria and an evaluation plan for each company/organization with which it engages;
- undertake an analysis of the risks, costs and benefits of the sponsorship (a template is provided below);
- in collaboration with sponsor develop a sponsorship agreement (using the template below) that:
 - sets out terms of the sponsorship
 - provides termination or conflict resolution procedures
 - includes reporting requirements
- record incoming sponsorship funds in the respective registry
- apply information privacy principles as requested by the sponsor and in compliance with national legislation.

Sponsorship Policy Template

The Sponsorship Policy Template featured below is a guide to be used in consultation with the School Board, Parents Board, the Pedagogical Council (Këshilli Pedagogjik) and the Student's Government. It is intended to facilitate ideas and discussion and should be adapted to suit the school community's values, ethos and direction.

TEMPLATE

1 Rationale

1.1 School X recognizes the mutual benefits that can be gained from developing positive and purposeful partnerships with businesses and organizations that exist within the wider school community.

2 Aims

2.1 It is understood by the wider school community that participation in advertising and sponsorship will not generate pressure on children, families or schools to purchase particular goods or services, subscribe to particular beliefs or attitudes or pursue particular courses of action.

3 Implementation

3.1 The School establishes the Sponsorship Committee. It may be composed of business relations/Career Centre specialist(s), finance officer, a teacher and deputy director.

3.2 The School Management, comprising at least of the School Director, the Vice Directors and the Finance Officer, will investigate the sponsorship proposals (processed by the Sponsorship Committee), negotiate and approve all potential sponsorship and advertising arrangements.

3.3 The School Director will provide the School Board with details of any sponsorship or advertising proposals.

3.4 All sponsorship and partnership arrangements will be considered on merit, and decisions will be made on an individual basis.

3.5 When considering potential advertising and sponsorship arrangements, the School Management is required to adhere to the following guidelines:

3.5.1 Sponsorship and advertising will be with organizations and companies where a clear and demonstrable benefit for the students and the school's programs can be guaranteed.

3.5.2 Sponsorship and advertising arrangements must take into account the values and views of the school community as well as the school policies.

3.5.3 Sponsorship and advertising arrangements will only be entered into with organisations and companies that have a positive public image, and are associated with products and services appropriate for a school to align themselves with.

Consideration will be given to:

- the type of products or services the company markets
- the marketing methods the company employs
- the impact its products and processing have on issues such as the environment
- it's public image as an employer, acceptability to the community and general reputation as a business.

3.5.4 Arrangements must not be entered into with companies directly involved with tobacco or alcohol products and/or any other products considered to be harmful to children and parents.

3.5.5 Arrangements must not be entered into with companies that seek information from the school that would contravene the Law on *Personal Data Protection*.

3.5.6 Sponsorship arrangements that contain restrictions regarding the school's ability to purchase goods and services freely, or restrict the school's ability to make choices in any way, will be avoided.

3.6 Each individual sponsorship relationship will be monitored and maintained by the principal or his/her representative.

3.7 Information relating to the sponsorship will be stored in an easy and accessible format for audit purposes.

3.8 Each individual sponsorship arrangement will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4 Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the school review cycle.

Sponsorship Checklist

The Checklist suggested has a list of key questions to ensure schools have sufficient information before entering into a partnership. It is recommended that the checklist is used when considering sponsorship proposals.

The sponsorship proposal aligns with the school's sponsorship policy.	Yes/No
The sponsor represents a reputable organisation and is consistent with the ethos and values of the school.	Yes/No
The type of products or services the sponsor markets and the marketing methods used are consistent with the ethos and values of the school.	Yes/No
The sponsorship positively enhances the schools image and there is no possibility of damage to the school's reputation and image.	Yes/No
There is a sponsorship agreement with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear rationale of purpose of sponsorship • defined roles and responsibilities • clearly articulated terms and conditions • benefits for all parties • the duration of sponsorship • termination conditions and • evaluation 	Yes/No
The sponsorship agreement does not imply that a product or service is recommended by the school.	Yes/No
School Management has approved the sponsorship agreement.	Yes/No
Privacy of students, their families and school staff is not compromised by the proposal.	Yes/No
The relationship between the school and sponsors is conducted in a transparent manner and would be able to stand up to public scrutiny and maintain public trust.	Yes/No
The parties are clear how the funds are to be spent.	Yes/No
The extent of acknowledgement provided to sponsors is consistent with the level of sponsorship.	Yes/No
Acceptance of the sponsor's products or services will not give the sponsor exclusive rights in relation to the school or student activities.	Yes/No
Educational materials provided as part of a sponsorship are clearly identified as being those of the sponsor.	Yes/No
Other corporate connections to the sponsor will not damage the school's reputation and image.	Yes/No

A financial viability check has been conducted and there are no potential financial risks identified.	Yes/No
There is no conflict of interest and no personal benefits can be received by school staff and school council members.	Yes/No
At the end of the sponsorship agreement	
An evaluation process at the conclusion of the sponsorship has been developed.	Yes/No

Ensuring Transparency

Schools receiving sponsorship support must be transparent about:

- the sponsor(s)
- timeframe of a given sponsorship agreement
- value of sponsorship (when applicable quantify in-kind support)
- the objective of the sponsorship (scope and destination of resources)
- benefits the school has committed to provide to the company/organization sponsoring

The school management **must** make this information available to:

- Management Board
- Pedagogical Council
- Student's Government
- Various active Boards the school may have
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- General public
- Admin/finance staff of the school
- Line Ministry specialists
- Audit
- Local media

The information should be accurate, up-to-date and clear to read and understand for all the constituencies of the school. Preferably such information shall be provided at the moment when a sponsorship agreement has been signed. In addition, information about all sponsorship agreements active shall be published every three months.

Some of the forms recommended to provide such information are:

- Periodic bulletins the school publishes
- School Website
- School social media channels
- Annual Report
- Period Reports to the Management Board
- Local Newspapers (including online media outlets)
- Periodic press releases