

Project Name: *UPSHIFT*

Organization(s): UNICEF – Innovations Lab Kosovo

Country: Serbia

Partners: Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

Website: <http://kosvoinnovations.org>

Brief Project Description:

UPSHIFT combines some of the leading approaches to youth and adolescent development, social innovation, and entrepreneurship, to empower marginalized youth and adolescents to become social innovators and entrepreneurs. Using cutting-edge experiential learning techniques, UPSHIFT teaches youth and adolescents how to understand community challenges and design and build impactful solution in the form of products or services.

UPSHIFT’s methods are non-formal, non-traditional educative methods, which use interaction and human-centered design techniques to instill in youth professional transferrable skills, such as: entrepreneurial skills, communications, financial literacy, and technological skills of the 21st century.

Target Population:

The target group is adolescents and youth from Kosovo aged 14-24 with emphasis on the most vulnerable groups including: (1) young people from rural communities; (2) girls and women; (3) young people with disabilities; (4) young people from minority communities; (5) young people from lowest income quartile.

Target Results:

The key outcome indicators are:

- Average percentage change in beneficiaries’ self-assessment of increase in knowledge and skills in design, development, and implementation of social change projects
- Average percentage change in beneficiaries in self-assessment of workforce readiness post-participation vs. pre-participation.
- Average percentage change in beneficiaries’ self-assessment of increase in transferable skills such as: communication, problem solving, critical thinking etc.

Interesting Features & Innovations:

- Methodology is focused on innovative, inclusive practices of by youth-for youth, and human-centered design.
- Unique delivery mechanism enables a wide range of partnerships, from public institutions to tech-companies, utilizing open-source technologies to develop social solutions.
- Has been successfully piloted and implemented in Kosovo in multiple cycles and replicated in more than 16 countries around the world.
- Organizes Social Impact and Venture workshops to instill in youth social entrepreneurship skills.
- Capacity building for external partnership principles on which UPSHIFT is based, such as design thinking and human-centered design.