Coaching Approach
Concept for an intervention in the Social Inclusion Component within the AlbVET Program

Draft, Version April 2010
1 BACKGROUND

In the course of its economic growth and the decreasing poverty level\(^1\) the issue of inclusion of special need groups has become increasingly important for Albania. Without negating the overall challenges Albania is facing, both in regards to the labour market\(^2\) and to the vocational education and training (VET) system\(^3\) it is widely acknowledged that individuals from certain groups are facing particular challenges and disadvantages due to their economic, social and cultural situation. They often belong to the poorest and least educated population in Albania. In recent years the Government of Albania (GoA) has started to give special attention to individuals of these groups.

One of the specific challenges marginalised individuals are facing are systematic disadvantages on the labour market. Enabling them to access VET and to attain a respective graduation or certificate is therefore expected to substantially increase their chances for labour market integration as it eliminates one of the major reasons for discrimination: the lack of qualification. However, in reality vulnerable individuals often face multiple disadvantages. This implies that a unique focus on ensuring their access to appropriate and relevant technical training courses is likely to miss the desired impact if the individuals remain to be weight down by other factors.

The Albanian VET Delivery Support Program AlbVET dedicates one of its four operational components to the issue of inclusion of special need groups in VET (for an overview on the other components see Annex 1: Fact Sheet AlbVET Programme). The main goal of this component is to support labour market integration of vulnerable people, be it through employment or self-employment. The main purpose of the component is to enhance capacities of public and private providers to develop and implement appropriate programs for special need groups, to tap the necessary resources and to facilitate access for participation. The economic goal therefore builds the core of the component. However, addressing some social goals simultaneously will be crucial for the success of the intervention. To address this complex situation the component aims at the following outputs: elaboration and sharing of an overall concept (output 1), the development / revision of relevant and appropriate training programs (output 2) and the facilitation of targeted programs in collaboration with other organisations and (public and private) institutions (output 3).

The underlying concept paper provides in its first part background information on the context (chapter 2) and the theoretical framework and international debate (chapter 3). In the second part the coaching approach is outlined (chapter 4). This approach builds the basis for the activities related to output 2 and 3 as well as for further and wider discussions with relevant stakeholders (output 1).

\(^1\) Over the past years Albania has had a stable economic development with continued growth of about 6% and the poverty level decreased from 25.4% in 2002, 18.5% in 2005 to 12.4% in 2008, with 3.5 % still living in extreme poverty.
\(^2\) The major challenges as regards to the labour market include: (i) improvement of the overall business and investment climate, formalisation of the labour market and the creation of new jobs.
\(^3\) The major challenges of the current VET system include: (i) labour market relevance, (ii) attractiveness for potential students, (iii) quality of delivery both as regards to teaching and learning processes and to compliance with European professional performance standards, (iv) participation of the private sector at all levels.
2 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 OVERALL CONTEXT

In recent years Albania has moved considerable steps forwards in acknowledging the importance of social protection and inclusion with a specific focus on special need groups. On the one hand Albania has signed and ratified most of the major international human rights treaties. On an international level, this obliges Albania to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with these treaties including adaptation of its national legislation and setting up of appropriate monitoring mechanisms. On the other hand there are a number of national sector and crosscutting strategies aiming to ensure the inclusion of all Albanian people in all fields of life. The main strategic directions in this regard are outlined in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007 - 2013 (NSDI) and further specified in the National Strategies for Social Inclusion and Social Protection 2007 - 2013. Furthermore, in the process of European integration, the development of a National Action Plan for Social Inclusion is a standard requirement for EU accession and is currently being elaborated. Over the past years, GoA has moreover approved a number of national strategies directly addressing specific target groups or working fields. In this regard most relevant are the National Strategy for improving Roma Living Conditions, the Strategy for People with Disabilities, the Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2008 – 2010, the National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence but also Pre-University Education Strategy 2005 – 2015 and the Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training. Overall, it is widely recognised that the existing strategies and the legal framework provide a solid basis for the inclusion of special need groups in general and in particular also in the VET system and the labour market. However, Albania is often criticised when it comes to implementation and monitoring. Two of the major shortcomings in this regard are that no budget is allocated to any of these strategies and many are even missing a concrete action plan. Another shortcoming when addressing the needs of vulnerable groups is the lack of relevant and appropriate statistical data as regards to these groups.

2.2 SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

The eventual target group of the AlbVET the inclusion component are individuals – and in particular young ones – who experience systematic and multiple disadvantages in their social and economic life’s. For various reasons they fail to fit within the broader VET systems and labour market structures more systematically than the majority of the population. Looking at who is mostly affected, many of these individuals belong to specific sub-groups characterised by broad socio-demographic characteristics. Groups whose individuals are most likely to miss out on VET in Albania include school drop outs, school leaving youth, people from remote areas, orphans, Roma and Egyptians, people with disabilities, trafficked people and people at risk of being trafficked as well as women in vulnerable situation such as single mothers, divorced women and widows. As mentioned above, individuals from

---

4 In particular this includes the International Covenant on Economic, social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

those groups often face multiple disadvantages in various issues. Those issues can among others be related to education, income, savings, missing networks, shelter, health etc. (for a more detailed description of the vulnerabilities of each of these groups see Annex 2: Background note on vulnerable people in Albania and Annex 3: Background Note on Roma communities). Moreover, these disadvantages are likely to have a cumulative effect i.e. interacting in such a way that they compound the difficulties faced by the individuals. Many of those individuals do also not only belong to one of the above target groups but meet the characteristics of two or more. While it is not realistic for a project intervention to address all of those disadvantages simultaneously it is important to be aware of them and take them into consideration when working with these groups.

2.3 RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

In general, relevant stakeholders and potential partners include different government institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGO), the private sector and institutions in the field of social work. Not specifically outlined at this stage are private training providers who might become partners in the provision of specific occupational training courses. However, many of these providers have been supported in previous project activities of almost 20 years Swiss support to the Albanian VET system. Their capacities and potentials are therefore well known by the implementing agency.

2.3.1 Government Institutions

Within the public sector most relevant institutions for this component are either under the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) or the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO). In VET the MoES is responsible for providing vocational education at upper secondary level. Formations of 2+1+1 year’s are offered at 40 vocational schools throughout Albania. This system is currently undergoing a major reform and AlbVET is supporting its implementation in two occupations i.e. hydraulic systems fitting and most likely IT. The MoLSAEO on the other hand is responsible for issues directly related to employment. This includes both, passive and active labour market measures. The active labour market measures consist mainly of an employment promotion program and the provision of vocational trainings through ten public VET centres. However, the report of the European Training Foundation (ETF) on the labour market situation of Albania (2006) seriously questions the contribution of those centres, both in regard to meeting the requirement for technical skills and to the process of re-integrating unemployed people. The report suggests that the MoLSAEO should not necessary continue to supply trainings themselves but rather enhance the national employment service (NES) to become a supplier of labour market intelligence to the VET system. For the time being this option is though not subject to discussion within the Ministry. In addition, the MoLSAEO is also responsible for accrediting the curricula of any vocational training courses which are not provided within the formal system. Other relevant stakeholders within or related to the MoLSAEO are the local employment offices and the directorate for monitoring the cross-sector strategies including its technical secretariats for monitoring the strategies for Roma and people with disabilities. These secretariats are part of the MoLSAEO and are relevant as they should not only monitor the implementation of the strategies but also coordinate the different activities in these fields. It is assumed that for the implementation of
the coaching approach the labour offices in the concerned areas are the most direct partners.

2.3.2 Non Governmental Organisations

In Albania exists a wide range of NGO – national and international. However, the number of influential national NGO and policy research institutions is limited and many interventions remain stand alones without a wider impact. Up to date funding of those organisations depends largely on foreign donors and mechanisms to enhance civil society participation remain weak. In addition there is a number of international NGO and organisations active in various fields of economic, educational, social and cultural aspects of life. So far, none of the bigger VET projects has a specific focus on the inclusion of vulnerable people. However, various NGO and international organisations working with and for the concerned target groups are using vocational trainings as an instrument to support their beneficiaries in their economic and social integration and development. They either offer vocational training courses (mostly short term courses of two to three months) by themselves, finance participation in trainings or encourage their attendance in public VET centres whose courses are offered for free for those groups (see 2.4 existing measures). On the other hand there are a few NGO like private training providers who are offering specific courses for these target groups. A feasibility study on employment possibilities of Roma including an overview of different vocational training offers has recently been conducted by Common Actions Against Poverty (CAAP) and will be published soon. In particular the Don Bosko training centre in Tirana offers a very specific course for vulnerable individuals. The course is offered in cooperation with businesses and UNICEF and address issues such as marketing, self presentation, self-confidence and other life skills and includes an internship in businesses. The course has a duration of three to four months and the content is adapted according to the need of the respective group. In general most of the organisations eventually face similar challenges. First of all, due to cultural, financial and geographical reasons it is often difficult to motivate individuals to participate at specific courses. Secondly, occupational trainings are often not sufficient for those people to find adequate work afterwards. This challenges the incentive for the individuals to participate in trainings at all in particular as the attendance often implies considerable opportunity costs for them and their families.

Overall, the coordination among NGO and between NGO and government institutions is relatively unstructured and happens often only informally. Two exceptions are the All together against child trafficking coalition (BKTF) which consists of nineteen national and international NGO assisting and protecting vulnerable children and the town of Elbasan where the municipality has developed a Social Action Plan aiming to better coordinate the different activities. However, there is a row of national and local organisations and institutions which are potential partners for the AlbVET coaching approach as well as for a more structured discussion and exchanges at national level.

2.3.3 Private Businesses and Labour Market

In the Albanian economy the agriculture sector accounts for 21.7% of the GDP and absorbs more than 50% of the active labour force. The production sector produces 20.3% of the GDP and the services sector covers 58%. However, only 33%
of the active labour force is employed in the non-agricultural private sector\textsuperscript{6} and about 16\% in the public sector. The private sector in Albania is highly scattered and quantitatively dominated by small and very small entities. More than 85\% of all registered businesses have yearly turnover of less than ALL 8'000'000 (CHF 100'000) and less than eight employees. A large part of these businesses are organized as family businesses. Quantitatively bigger and professionally organized entities represent a minority. They are primarily active in low skills areas including textiles, shoe fabrication, construction, a few big hotels, petrol distribution and in emerging retail chains. In general, the Albanian labour market is characterised by its large informal sector. The ETF Human Resources Development Country Analysis (2008)\textsuperscript{7} highlights the facts that the formal sector labour demand is largely restricted to the public sector and selected private branches such as banking and to a smaller degree tourism and construction. A majority of the Albanian workers however, are employed in informal and often occasional arrangements. Productivity tends to be lower in the informal sector which among other things is one of the reasons for their low investments in skills. While the informal labour market represents a substantial share of the total employment, it is rarely documented as regards to its impact on employment and skills need. Against this background it is highly important for any intervention targeting labour market inclusion to carefully assess the potential on the local labour market and systematically address potential partner companies for internships and eventually employment.

2.3.4 Social Work and Facilities

The field of social work and facilities is still quite new in Albania. Historically most of these services have been taken care of within the wider family structures and since the opening of the country in 1992 increasingly by NGO as mentioned above. However, with the economic development of the country this field has recently become more important. In the public sector the social work is still strongly focused on passive support including provision of economic help and medical support. A recent feasibility study conducted on behalf of AlbVET has shown that education of social workers is mainly happening at University level. Only the Don Bosko Centre in Tirana does offer a two years training as social animator at post secondary level reaching an equivalent to the bachelor level. In addition there are some private organisations who offer short courses in very particular subjects such as conflict management, human rights, babysitting etc. The experience of Don Bosko shows that there is an increasing demand for such skills in particular also from the private sector.

2.4 EXISTING INSTRUMENTS AND MEASURES

To enable project activities to better link up with existing instruments and measures an overview is provided below. However, their current limitations in terms of numbers and diversity, stage of development and available funding need to be taken into account.

- **Active labour market measures**: Law no. 7995 (20.09.1995) on promoting employment\textsuperscript{8} builds the basis for active labour market measures. Possible

\textsuperscript{6} Employment Strategy 2007-2013
\textsuperscript{7} Nikolovska, M., HRD country analysis – Albania, ETF working paper, May 2008
\textsuperscript{8} Partially modified by law no. 8862, 7.03.2002 and law no. 9570, 3.07.2006
measures under this law include among others (i) the employment promotion program (EPP); (ii) free access to public training centres for individuals from groups in need; (iii) the obligation to employ a person with a disability for every 25 employees (article 15); and (iv) availability of state funding for employers who hire unemployed female job seekers from special vulnerable groups for four or six wages.

- Social assistance and care services: Law no. 9355 (date 10.03.2005) on social assistance and services determines the provision of social services, economic assistance and disability benefits for individuals and social groups in need (article 1.1). These services can either be provided by government institutions themselves or through contracts with private providers licensed by the MoLSAEO (see article 28.8). So far different NGOs have been licensed to provide such services but up to date none of them has received any public funding for their services.

- Employment Fund: The aim of the Employment Fund is that businesses who don’t apply with the legal requirements (such as hiring a person with disabilities for every 25 employee) pay deposit money to the fund. On the other hand, companies who would like to employ people from vulnerable groups can apply for funds. However, despite its legal basis this fund has not yet been established.

- Establishment of a computer based information system: A comprehensive database on vacancies, jobseekers and training activities is in process of being established in the head office of the NES in cooperation with two regional offices.

- Second chance project: This project allows and supports children who dropped out of school to re-enter school and finish at least the compulsory nine years.

- NGO and cultural centres: As mentioned previously specific activities for certain target groups by a range of (local, national, international) NGOs, projects and cultural centres.

- Career counselling: The development of mechanisms for professional orientation and career counselling has been set as a priority by the MoLSAEO and should be supported by the above mentioned database. However, so far no structured and systematic career counselling is in place.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATE

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following coaching approach is not only based on the contextual facts mentioned above but also on some theoretical considerations. First of all, research on improving access and equity in education in general and VET in particular often distinguishes between two philosophical positions, the structural barriers and the so called individual characteristics philosophies. The view on structural barrier emphasises the systems and structures that create barriers to entry VET (and later

---

9 In accordance with Order No. 782 (04.04.2006) “on Tariffs of Professional Formation System” free courses are provided in public training centres to groups in need such as Roma community, trafficked women and girls, people who have been released from jail, orphans and people with disabilities if they are registered as unemployed job seekers in the employment office.


the labour market) for disadvantaged groups. The critical question therefore is why respectively how systematic and structural barriers create a system which fails to meet or adapt to the diversity within a country. Research in different countries shows that this includes issues such as enrolment processes, selection procedures, prejudices internalised by teachers but also pedagogical philosophies applied in a system (for an outline of the four main pedagogical directions see 3.2). Improving inclusion under this perspective requires reviewing and adapting organisational systems and structures. Existing barriers need to be removed and more flexible responses to manage diversity identified and introduced. Opposed to that, the individual characteristics position focus on measuring and understanding the individual characteristics and experiences associated with exclusion. It therefore addresses the question of who is missing out. Under this approach equity goals are advanced by identifying groups of individuals with similar generalised characteristics in regards to their social, economic, ethnic and other backgrounds. Programs to overcome disadvantages are then developed based on these characteristics. The main limitation of this approach is the underlying assumption that there is a certain homogeneity within the groups. In reality however, significant diversity exists among these individuals. Ignoring this fact by developing a “one size fits it all” approach risks to be little successful in reality. Experience from different interventions emphasises that the following three dimensions are crucial to be considered:

- Identification and Recognition of characteristics which are more specific than those of the broader group characteristics.
- Combination of the two above approaches: Interventions addressing individual characteristics by taking into account the specific and structural barriers within the VET system, the labour market and the wider community are eventually most promising.
- Balancing economic and social goals: Evidence suggests that programs for individuals who have to overcome multiple disadvantages should not only focus on direct and immediate labour market outcome but also consider social goals such as greater community involvement or a sense of social connectedness.

International experience has further shown that any support to individuals with special needs and multiple disadvantages often require follow up throughout various issues and stages of the individual development processes. In regards to VET and labour market integration this implies that support should not be reduced to occupational training. This principle is further supported by research showing that additional education and training has a smaller impact on the individual’s employability for marginalised individuals than for the majority population.

---

3.2 PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

This chapter outlines in a few sentences the main lines of pedagogical approaches in regards to special need groups without going into details. Broadly speaking the following four main pedagogical approaches are distinguished:\footnote{See European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2003): Special Education Across Europe in 2003, Trends in provision in 18 European countries and Hinz A. (2004): Vom sonderpädagogischen Verständnis der Integration zum integriertspädagogischen Verständnis der Inklusion?!


- **Exclusion:** Specific individuals are completely excluded from the system. They fully rely on their families and immediate environment.

- **Segregation (two track approach):** This implies two distinct systems i.e. individuals with special needs are placed in special schools or special classes. In many cases individuals in special classes do not follow the mainstream curriculum and are (at least until recently) often subject to a separate legislation i.e. there are different laws for mainstream and special needs education. It is particularly in Switzerland and Belgium where special needs education is fairly well developed. However, overall there is still limited evidence that this leads to an improved integration of these children at a later stage of their development.

- **Integration:** Individuals are integrated into mainstream classes; however, they continue to be identified as such and to receive special support.

- **Inclusion:** Refers to a process where the system attempts to respond to all individual according to their characteristics and needs without a specific reference to those with special needs. any of them as individuals with special needs. Inclusion emphasises the shift of policy focus from special education to responding to the diversity within a common school for everyone. However, as mentioned in Vislie (2003)\footnote{Vislie L. (2003): From integration to inclusion: focusing global trends and changes in the western European societies. European Journal of Special Needs Education, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003) pp. 17-35.} the two notions of integration and inclusion are frequently mixed and mostly considered as overlapping.

The four categories of these pedagogical concepts however do not only apply to general education but also to VET and situations at the labour market. In this respect the below coaching approach clearly envisages inclusion of special need groups into the labour market. As regards to the participants from the target groups this implies that nevertheless inclusion has to be a realistic option as regards to their physical and psychological condition.

3.3 TRENDS IN WESTERN EUROPE

There is an increasing recognition among Western European countries that inclusive education provides an important foundation for ensuring equality of opportunity for people with special needs in all aspects of their life including general education, VET, employment and social life. The current tendency in the European Union is to develop policies towards inclusion of individuals into mainstream schools and providing teachers with varying degrees of support in terms of supplementary staff, materials, in-service training and equipment. Countries aiming at providing inclusive systems highlight the view that the curriculum framework should cover all participants. Adaptations are then done in the form of an individual educational
programme. The European trend in this regard is to use individual documents (individual development plans) to specify the individual needs, goals and means and to define the degree and type of adaptations to be made to the mainstream curriculum and then continuously evaluate the progress. Those individual development plans then also serve as a sort of a “contract” between the different actors i.e. respective individual respectively parents, teacher and other professionals.

Over the past years many countries have started to pay more attention to those youngsters whose successful access to the VET system and / or the labour market is particularly at risk. In many countries there are a variety of instruments, measures and projects in place in order to identify those individuals early and support them respectively. Amongst others such instruments include career counselling, mentoring programs, job placement and other active labour market measures. In recent years, also the term case management has been introduced in the context of VET. The main goal of case management is, to combine the two functions of personal accompaniment with a focus on enabling the individuals to help themselves on the one hand and the coordination and cooperation with relevant stakeholders on the other hand. The case management approach with its focus on individual solutions represents a clear change from a supply oriented perspective to a demand orientation. While it is acknowledged that such instruments can never just be copied from one country / context to another their main principles and ideas are a highly valuable basis for the development of more specific approaches.

4 COACHING APPROACH

Based on the above background AlbVET has developed a coaching approach. This approach serves as a basis for the intervention within the social inclusion component of AlbVET as well as for further discussions of the topic “employability of vulnerable individuals” with relevant stakeholders. In short, the coaching approach is a systematic and structured approach where vulnerable individuals are accompanied by a coach over a longer period of time going through several steps contributing to increased employability.

4.1 RATIONAL AND GOAL

The main goal of the coaching approach is to increase the employability of (young) vulnerable individuals by supporting them to be integrated in the labour market, be it through employment or self-employment. The rational behind the coaching approach contains a number of elements which build the basis for the approach and are necessary to work towards the above goal. These are:

- **Self-motivation and -initiative:** the coaching approach builds on the individual’s self-motivation and self-initiative. Self-motivation is considered to be the crucial pre-condition for a successful process of personal development. However, it is acknowledged that for many young people this is not sufficient. Moreover, self-motivation is often challenged by bad experiences and sometimes also by the high level of dependencies on state support and other transfer payments and support. In the short run maintaining such dependencies often seem to be the “easiest” and moreover most beneficial solution for all actors. However, in the mid and long term they reduce the incentives to change the situation and risk to
reinforce further marginalisation. Supporting individuals to identify their personal pathways and stepping (at least partially) out of such dependency traps is the driving force behind the underlying approach. It is acknowledged that this focus implies lengthy processes and risks to have “drop outs” along the process.

- **Individual characteristics perspective:** the coaching approach is to a largely applying the individual characteristics perspective. To avoid falling into the trap of treating the target group as a largely homogenous group specific steps and measures are defined and adapted for each individual during the process. Such decisions are recorded in individual development plans which serve as a reference document but also as a contract between the individual and the coach. The main focus of the individual learning contract is on economic goals but can also include social objectives. Focusing on the individual perspective does not mean that structural issues are taken into consideration. They should be addressed whenever possible and reasonable. However, the rational to focus primarily on the individual as opposed to the structural approach is mainly due to the current situation in Albania. It seems fair enough to say that the overall VET system and labour market is currently struggling to cope with some major reform processes. Therefore focusing on a bottom up approach and producing some best practices seems appropriate at this stage.

Overall, the coaching approach needs to be understood as an approach bringing together the two elements of the (i) support and accompaniment the individuals and (ii) cooperation and coordination with and between relevant stakeholders.

### 4.2 INTERVENTION POINT

The coaching approach is located at the transition process from school to work and is addressing individuals who fall out of the mainstream system. As emphasised in the first part of this concept individuals from vulnerable groups often lack the necessary skills and don’t have access to the mainstream paths and programmes or the respective programmes are not in a position to be considered as beneficial to their school to work transition. That vulnerable communities miss out of the mainstream system more often and systematically than the majority population is, as mentioned before, caused by many factors and their integration therefore requires some additional efforts beside the mainstream processes. Concretely, these individuals require a competent and professional accompaniment in their school to work transition process. They not only need to be supported in requiring occupational skills but also in the development of their personality, self- and social competences and accessing information and networks. As illustrated in the graphic below, the coaching approach is therefore located outside of the mainstream processes. However, one of the aims of the coaching approach is to support individuals making use of and being integrated into the mainstream system.
Graphic 1: School to work transition

4.3 COACHING CYCLE

The coaching cycle is the main element of the coaching approach and describes the process along which the individuals are supported by a coach. The individuals participating in a coaching cycle are selected based on clear, easy and transparent selection criteria which are agreed upon between the coaches and the project and are equally applied for all target groups. These selection criteria are based on the educational, economic and social status of a person. As mentioned before self-motivation of the individuals is one of the crucial and absolutely necessary pre-condition for a successful participation, both, as regards to the individuals aim to change his/her situation and to his/her willingness to contribute to the process with time, effort and to some extend also financially. Self-motivation measures can be applied; however the process can not be started without. In addition, the selection criteria should also ensure that the application of positive discrimination is limited as much as possible. Positive discrimination in most cases implies negative discrimination for others. In this sense positive discrimination risks to further enforce exclusion as it leads to frustration and increased intolerance by outsiders. The selection criteria of participants should therefore not be defined too narrow but ensure that the design allows individuals from the different vulnerable groups to equally access and participate in the program. In addition, gender balance within the group has to be ensured. Once the participants are selected the coaching cycle will start. One coaching cycle will last for 18 up till 24 months and each coach is accompanying about ten individuals. The coaching cycle is based on a group process i.e. all participants are starting at the same time. The process starts with an initial phase of elaborating so called individual development plans with each participant. This instrument emphasises the fact that the coaching cycle is an individualised

---

15 Source: Swisscontact Capability Statement: Transition from School to Work

16 This is opposed to a process where individuals start to be accompanied anytime throughout the year.
process in the sense that the goals as well as some of necessary steps and measures are defined for each individual specifically. The coaching cycle itself is then divided into joint modules within the group of participants and individual elements such as specific occupational trainings, internships and other activities. The joint modules are mostly related to issues such as group and learning processes, communication, presentation and conflict resolution skills, motivation, cordiality, team work ability and other self-, social- and methodological skills. The individual skills are then more related to specific occupational skills and include specific trainings, internships etc. Additionally, the coaching cycle includes a community building component. Taking into account that the targeted individuals are often not only economically disadvantaged but also socially and culturally marginalised the community building component in form of specific small action projects aims at contributing to increased self-esteem and intercommunity interactions. For the main structure of the coaching cycle see Annex 1. In addition, it is likely that the implementation of the coaching cycle requires the development respectively revision of some more training courses according to the needs of the participants. Such specific needs will need to be continuously assessed and respective steps taken accordingly.

5 STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The main goal of the coaching approach is increased employability of vulnerable individuals. Therefore the concerned individuals and the coaching cycle are in the centre of the approach. However, the coaches, their role and capacities are a crucial element in the whole process. Generally speaking, the coaches have to functions; first of all they accompany the individuals along their transition process. Secondly they cooperate with and coordinate between the relevant stakeholders. While many organisations and projects working with and for the concerned target groups have activities applying some of the basic ideas and principles of the coaching approach most of them do not have any staff member specifically trained for such activities. Therefore the implementation part of this concept does not only look at the level of the eventual beneficiaries but also at the level of the coaches and the level of the training for these coaches.

5.1 LEVEL OF COACHING CYCLE

The coaching cycle is the level where the individuals i.e. the eventual beneficiaries of the coaching approach are accompanied in their transition process. As outlined above, coordination and cooperation with relevant stakeholders is highly relevant in this process. While the relevant stakeholders vary from case to case it is still important to be aware of the most important ones, which are shortly outlined below:

- **Parents**: Parents are primary responsible for their children until they obtain full age. However, experiences and studies clearly show that in many cases they continue to substantially influence and in some cases even control their children afterwards. Therefore the likelihood that a participation which is not supported by the parents is not successful is increased. A close exchange and understanding of background, fears and intentions of parents is therefore crucial.
• **Training providers:** The process will for all participants include some kind of trainings be it occupational and / or soft respectively life skill related trainings. This might also require some support to develop or revise relevant and appropriate training programs for some specific needs.

• **Private business:** Establishing and maintaining links with the private businesses aims at both, creating possibilities for internships but also facilitating employment after at the end of the coaching cycle.

• **Labour Office:** The local labour offices are in charge of unemployed people and should be included in the process from the beginning. On the one hand they should be motivated to refer potential candidates registered as job seekers to coaches. On the other hand, as mentioned above they have, beside passive labour market measures, also some active labour market measures available to support increased employment. How these funds can be used to support participants during the coaching cycle needs to be further elaborated with the concerned labour offices but also at the national level.

• **Bank / Micro finance institutions:** The level of self-employment is particularly high in Albania. However, individuals from marginalized groups have for different reasons more difficulties than others to access credits. Facilitation of self-employment including links to loan institutions will be relevant for certain individuals (potential partners are Opportunity Albania or Pro Credit Albania).

• **School / Teacher:** By having daily contacts with the pupils teachers can play a crucial role in identifying potential young persons at risk at an early stage. This would allow them to refer those students to a coaching process before they fall out of the system. However, it is to say that because of different reasons the proposed approach will not be able to focus on pro-active actions but will rather be a re-active instrument supporting those who already fell out of the system.

Based on the above, the implementation structure on individual level can be characterized as follows:

![Implementation structure at the level of beneficiaries](image)

*Graphic 2:* Implementation structure at the level of beneficiaries

### 5.2 LEVEL OF COACHES

The coaches, their role and capacities are crucial for successful coaching cycles. The coaches themselves are working as part of an organisation or project which works with and for a concerned target group. Through this institutionalisation it can
be ensured that on the one hand the coach him-/herself already has a good connection to the target group respectively works in an environment with this access, on the other hand synergies with other activities of the organisation can be created. As the work as a coach is highly challenging, it requires committed and initiative personalities. However, peer coaching and learning between the coaches shall be enhanced through learning tandems or groups supporting each other through exchanges of experiences, constructive feedbacks and new ideas. The structures at the coaches level therefore looks as in the graphic below:

**Graphic 3:** Implementation structure at the level of coaches

### 5.3 LEVEL OF TRAINING FOR COACHES

As mentioned above, the profile of coaches is not yet very familiar in Albania. Therefore, the future coaches will require specific training before implementing the coaching cycle. This training shall take place using some principles from the dual system, mostly applied in the German speaking countries. Concretely, this implies that over a time frame of two years the coaches spend part of their time in trainings and part with implementing the coaching cycle as staff members of an organisation. The training is organised in a way that the coaches always learn new elements before they have to apply it within coaching cycle. Therefore the training is always one step ahead of the coaching cycle in terms of its content. The interaction between the training of the coaches and the implementation of the coaching cycle is visualised in the graphic below:
IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE AlbVET SOCIAL INCLUSION COMPONENT

Within the Social Inclusion component of AlbVET Phase II an initial cycle of this coaching approach starts to be implemented. Due to the limited time frame of the current project phase (until June 2011) and the current (political) limits to develop and implement sustainable financing mechanisms on the one hand and institutionalise sustainable structures on the other hand the intervention is initially focused on content work and is implementing one cycle of both, the training of the coaches and the implementation of the coaching cycle. Such concrete implementation allows the project and its partners to gain concrete experience and information on the feasibility of the coaching approach. Concretely, the initial implementation includes the following outputs and activities:

- **Level of Coaches:** A market relevant professional profile and curriculum for coaches is developed and the training of at least 10 future coaches implemented.
  
  **Activities:**
  - The profile coaches and their curriculum is developed with external expert support.
  - The future coaches are trained as a group in cooperation with a local training provider and external expert support where required.
  - The coaches are recruited through local organisations, institutions or projects working with and for the concerned target groups. This includes in particular NGO working with Roma / Egyptian minorities, people with disabilities, vulnerable women and other very poor groups of the Albanian society.

- **Level of Coaching Cycle:** The sequences of the coaching cycle are elaborated, the coaching cycles implemented in a limited geographical region and relevant and additional appropriate training courses for the participants are revised, developed and made available.
  
  **Activities:**
  - The sequence of the coaching cycle is elaborated and agreed upon in cooperation with the coaches as part of their training modules.
  - A coaching cycle with a total of about 80 to 100 individuals is implemented.

---

17 The development and institutionalisation of a sustainable structure for implementing the coaching approach is not considered to be feasible neither within governmental structures nor another organisation within the given time frame of the project phase.
Some specific training courses are revised or developed in cooperation with the training provider and made available in terms of fees, times, location and accessibility.

The activities shall, whenever possible, be based on existing structures, institutions and procedures. In parallel, the questions of financing and institutionalisation possibilities shall be further assessed and respective options elaborated. On the basis of these options and the conclusions of the concrete activities recommendations for further implementation will be presented at the end of the current project phase. However, it needs to be taken into account that one full coaching cycle can take up to two years which will require project support beyond the current phase II of AlbVET.