Accelerated Funding Grant Progress Report Template

Status: Accepted

Country Ukraine	**Name of project this grant is contributing to** Ukraine - MLT AF (April 24, 2023)	**Grant ID** GPE0016254	**Project ID (if applicable)** SC230227
Grant Agent United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	**Grant Type** MLT	**Approval Date** 04/24/2023	**Grant Effectiveness / Start Date** 06/01/2023
Expected Closing Date 05/31/2025	**Grant Amount** 25,550,000 (USD)	**Timeframe Examined in this report** **From Date** 05/31/2023 **To Date** 08/31/2024	**Date of Report Submission** 09/08/2024

Implementation Progress

Overall Project Progress this Reporting Period

Overall Progress this Reporting Period 1
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Previous Rating
NA

Detailed Description including factors that lead to an upgrade/downgrade in the rating

Major Accomplishments

Output 1: Access to Learning Equipment for Conflict-Affected Children

During the reporting period, UNESCO successfully delivered 8,534 Chromebooks to conflict-affected regions of Ukraine, directly benefiting 4,282 girls and 4,252 boys, surpassing by more than 25% the target of 6,800 children originally planned. The delivery targeted regions heavily impacted by the war, including Chernihiv, Dnipro, Donetsk, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Sumy. This accomplishment was achieved through collaboration with UNICEF and in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU). The selection criteria for distribution prioritized children in de-occupied and frontline areas, particularly those lacking access to devices. Furthermore, UNESCO collected baseline data on the recipients, enabling future monitoring and evaluation of impact.

Output 2: Integration of Psychosocial Support and Socioemotional Learning in Education
Significant progress was made in integrating psychosocial support (MHPSS) and socioemotional learning (SEL) into the education system. The Typical Programme for Safe School Environment has been approved by the MESU and recommended to be used by all schools in Ukraine. Currently the Programme is tested in 12 pilot communities in 2 regions from which 110 master trainers have been trained and prepared to cascade training to additional 7500 teachers during September. The project also strengthened the capacity of Inclusive Resource Centers (IRCs) by hiring and training 12 experts to support school psychologist; providing essential diagnostic tools for children's special educational needs and training 40 specialists how to use them through specially designed online course.

Output 3: Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

The Teacher Professional Development (TPD) component successfully analyzed the existing TPD delivery model, resulting in the development of a Policy Brief that offers actionable recommendations to improve sustainability and effectiveness. A National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established to guide and support this component. Furthermore, three working groups were created to revise and harmonize legal TPD norms, and teacher/master trainer training materials were developed, laying the groundwork for continuous professional development.

Output 4: Strengthening Education Data Systems

The project made strides in modernizing the integrated Education Management Information System (EMIS). Key activities included the onboarding of the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) to coordinate the EMIS modernization efforts, development of software/data requirements specifications (SRS) for various sub-components, and the establishment of an Acceptance Commission to ensure the delivery aligns with MESU's requirements. The project aims to deploy the new digital solutions within the 2024-2025 academic year.

Implementation Challenges

Common Challenges Across Outputs:

1. Delays in Procurement and Approvals: Many components faced delays due to prolonged procurement processes and the need for MESU approvals.
2. Recruitment of Human Resources: Challenges to recruit qualified human resources for the project implementation due to the significant brain drain from Ukraine; competitive market and new mobilization law.
3. Impact of Power Outages and Digital Infrastructure Disruptions: Frequent power outages due to ongoing conflict have disrupted online learning and training sessions, affecting components that rely on digital delivery.

Component-Specific Challenges:

Output 1: Equipment Distribution Delays

Technical Specification Delays: The process of developing and approving technical specifications for Chromebooks caused delays due to the need to coordinate with both Microsoft and Google to balance the use of different operating systems.

Border Strikes and Customs Rules: Strikes at the Ukraine-Poland border and new customs clearance regulations introduced delays in delivery, but these were eventually mitigated through coordinated efforts among UNESCO, MESU, and logistics providers.

Output 2: Integration of Psychosocial Support

Light Rehabilitation of Educational Facilities: Difficulty to find qualified engineers, architects and designers who are willing to travel to site location (due to the fear of military checkpoints); lack of complete design documentation and lengthy process for school administration to obtain it; several changes to national construction guidelines which make works more complicated and expensive.

Output 3: Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

Delays in Course Development and Procurement: Course development was delayed due to extensive stakeholder consultations and alignment processes with several stakeholders (e.g. MESU, TTIs, Institute of Education Content Modernization, Ukrainian Institute of Education Development).

Output 4: Education Data Systems Modernization

Extended Onboarding and Compliance Requirements: The onboarding of BRDO was delayed due to the stringent compliance requirements and high-level expertise demanded, resulting in readvertisements and negotiations. The involvement of multiple UNESCO administrative layers also slowed down the process.

Coordination Challenges Between UNESCO and MESU: Initial coordination issues arose due to the centralized management of activities from UNESCO Headquarters, which have since been addressed by expanding the UNESCO Team in Kyiv.

Mitigation Measures and Next Steps

To address above mentioned challenges, UNESCO has implemented several mitigation strategies:

1. Enhanced Coordination and Communication Mechanisms: The establishment of the NAC and Acceptance Commission, along with the involvement of key stakeholders, has improved alignment and streamlined decision-making processes.

2. Adjustments in Implementation Plans: Components have adapted activities to respond to emerging needs and changing contexts, such as the adaptation of TPD courses to focus on immediate MESU needs related to the New Ukrainian School reform.

3. Strengthening Local Capacity: By expanding the UNESCO team in Kyiv, the project improved coordination with MESU and other local partners.

4. Accelerating Procurement Processes: Internal discussions within UNESCO administration have focused on optimizing procurement timelines for future activities to prevent further delays. Current efforts are underway to elevate the status of UNESCO in Ukraine from Desk to Anthena, which will lead to increased capacities to implement activities.

Implementation of the Components/Objectives of the Project this Reporting Period

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Devices and connectivity	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

In January-February 2024, 8,534 Chromebooks procured by UNESCO under the GPE-funded programme were successfully delivered to the designated regions of Ukraine. Implementation of this component has directly benefited 4,282 girls and 4,252 boys of a school age from regions of Ukraine heavily affected by attacks, surpassing by more than 25% the target of 6,800 children originally planned, significantly enhancing our ability to support more children from vulnerable groups and further contributing to closing the digital divide in education.

The increase in the number of devices was achieved through the careful management of resources and a procurement strategy aligned with MESU's objective of providing more devices to children from vulnerable groups. In this effort, UNESCO led the procurement of Chromebooks under Component 1, following three agreed guiding principles: (i) maximize the number of devices within the combined budget of UNESCO and UNICEF without compromising performance, (ii) ensure that MESU could remotely manage the devices through appropriate licenses, and (iii) strike a balance between ideal specifications and cost-effectiveness, particularly in the context of the ongoing war and the significant device gap for learners.

To make an informed decision, UNESCO adopted a dual-lot procurement approach, inviting suppliers to propose devices with the same technical specifications except for screen size. The goal was to determine the exact number of devices that could be procured under each option and select the one that best adhered to the guiding principles. The winning proposals for each lot resulted in models with comparable performance, with screen size being the only difference. Importantly, there was a significant difference in the estimated quantities that could be procured with the combined UNESCO and UNICEF budget: approximately 10,500 units with 11.6-inch screens versus 7,000 units with 14-inch screens.

While larger screens may offer some benefits in terms of comfort for specific tasks, smaller screens can still support most educational activities effectively, especially in scenarios with budgetary constraints or the need for a higher quantity of devices. In this sense, UNESCO considered the 11.6-inch devices as the most appropriate for Ukraine's operating context, as they offered around 50% more units than the larger-screen devices while meeting all other technical specifications required by MESU for performance and management.

This substantial increase in quantity had significant implications for the overall impact of Component 1. The full budget allocated by MESU for Chromebooks was effectively utilized, with UNICEF piggybacking on UNESCO's procurement process according to UN cooperation rules, thereby reducing transaction costs, increasing efficiency, and raising the overall target of Component 1. This was especially critical in addressing the barriers many children face in accessing education due to a lack of devices.

The criteria for selecting regions and institutions/children were established by the MESU and local departments of education. MESU allocated devices based on the proportion of children studying remotely in regions with significant online learning, prioritizing de-occupied and frontline areas. Each region received a priority coefficient of provision, ranging from 1 to 2.

Local education departments then distributed the Chromebooks to schools based on specific requests, prioritizing children and families unable to purchase a device (verified by the school director) and internally displaced persons (confirmed by a certificate). Distribution is conducted on a first-come, first-served basis according to the requests received.

In cooperation with MESU, UNESCO collected basic analytical data on the profile of children who received devices (geographical location, displacement status, household size, age, sex, disability).

Despite key challenges and punctual delays during implementation, UNESCO ultimately succeeded in delivering all devices, surpassing the original target by 25%. While hurdles such as finalizing technical

specifications, border strikes, and new customs clearance rules posed potential risks, each of these was effectively mitigated through strategic adjustments and collaborative efforts, particularly with MESU. Notably, UNESCO's efforts to address these delays also benefitted UNICEF's share of Chromebooks, maximizing efficiency across both organizations. As a result, delays were kept to a minimum, and UNESCO completed the successful delivery of all learning devices, ensuring critical support for education in Ukraine. Below is a breakdown of the specific delays and the measures taken to address them.

Initially, in the spirit of neutrality towards co-financers Google and Microsoft, unified technical specifications for procuring both Chrome OS and Windows-based learning devices were designed to balance the needs of both systems. However, these technical specifications inadvertently excluded Chrome OS devices, raising concerns about the efficiency of the procurement process and whether bids would offer the best value for money.

In response, MESU decided to allocate funds equally between Chrome OS and Windows-based devices. New separate specifications for Chromebooks were then developed by UNESCO, in coordination with UNICEF, and approved by MESU. UNESCO led the procurement process for Chromebooks for both UNESCO and UNICEF.

The development of this solution, addressing concerns about limited competition and value for money, resulted in initial delays in the launch of the open procurement process, which impacted the delivery and distribution of the learning devices.

In late 2023 and early 2024, Polish truckers and farmers initiated strikes and blockades at the Ukraine-Poland border due to concerns over economic impacts and competition from Ukrainian imports. As a result, traffic was rerouted to the Ukraine-Hungary customs checkpoints, causing delays and congestion due to the increased pressure on these routes.

With trucking Chromebooks from Hungary to Ukraine being the only viable option, the devices were temporarily stored in the freight forwarder's Hungarian warehouse until the blockade ended. The Chromebooks successfully cleared the Ukraine-Hungary border in late January 2024.

In late 2023, Ukraine introduced new customs clearance rules for humanitarian aid to enhance efficiency and transparency, including implementation of a new electronic system for tracking aid importation and distribution. The implementation faced difficulties due to delays in fine-tuning the electronic system, which initially experienced operational issues. A complex solution to the issue was developed through joint efforts by the UNESCO, MESU and freight forwarder teams. Despite these efforts, a relatively insignificant delay in importation and distribution of learning devices still occurred.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Psychosocial support and social and emotional learning	Satisfactory (S)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

At the start of the implementation of MHPSS project component, first task undertook was the analysis of current policies, laws, guidelines, directives and other documents governing the field of MHPSS in education system. Based on this analysis, following documents were produced:

• Developed an Analytical Note on the psychological services within the education sector in Ukraine, and a Concept Note with key recommendations for the transformation of the MHPSS system in Ukraine.

• Policy recommendations for creating a physically and psychologically safe educational environment have been developed:

1. Recommendations for amendments to the laws of Ukraine to create a system to ensure the safety of children and other participants in the educational process.

2. Recommendations for amendments to the Budget Code, which propose the allocation of a separate subvention from the State Budget to local governments to create a safe, barrier-free educational environment.

3. Recommendations for the policy of referral of students for mental health care.

4. Recommendations for the policy of providing professional support and assistance to practical psychologists and social educators (supervision).

5. Recommendations on the procedure for introducing additional positions of psychologists-supervisors in the staffing of the IRC.

6. Development of a training program for teachers "Organization of a Safe Educational Environment: Emergency Response".

7. Protocols for teachers' response to psychological trauma and emergency situations, instructions (algorithms) for teachers on how to respond and adapt the educational process to the individual needs of children in case of detection of signs of distress, which can be further developed in the form of methodological recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science.

8. Standard (minimum required) list of diagnostic tools to identify psychological problems caused by war.

9. Recommendations on the procedure for interagency cooperation between state authorities, local self-government bodies, educational institutions, special institutions and social protection institutions for children on security issues in the educational environment, coordination, interaction and support of security specialists.

10. Recommendations on changing the legislative framework and introducing a deputy head for security and a security coordinator (specialist) in the staff of regional, Kyiv and Sevastopol city state

administrations in educational institutions.

11. Procedure for early warning and evacuation of participants in the educational process in the event of an attack or risk of attack on an educational institution (already approved by a joint order of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 18.08.2023).

Understanding of the current MHPSS ecosystem allowed UNESCO to develop a pilot program on safe environment which is being tested in 12 communities in 2 regions (in 244 educational institutions, including 122 schools and 122 kindergartens): Odessa and Zhytomyr. This pilot program approaches the topic of safety in schools from two perspective: psychological and physical safety, which means that multiple teams in local level are involved in its implementation: parents, students, teachers, psychologists, social workers, local administration, police, firefighters, etc. The Program framework curriculum has been approved by the MESU (Order 814 attached to this Report) and recommended to all schools to be used. For the development of the capacity of multidisciplinary teams at the regional level, in February 2024, 19 school safety specialists from local governments were trained on school safety. In May 2024, 110 teacher trainers were trained on building a safe educational environment in response to an emergency in educational institutions. In September 2024, a training of trainers is being delivered on a single multidisciplinary programme 'Safe Educational Environment: Emergency Response' for 7,500 teachers and 350 members of multidisciplinary teams.

To strengthen Inclusive Resource Centers (IRCs) for the provision of MHPSS services, 12 psychologists from 12 IRCs were trained on supervision of school psychologists. 20 SAFA and MPR diagnostic tools that are validated in Ukraine were purchased, and 40 IRC specialists were trained and certified to use them to identify children's special educational needs, including children of early age and symptons caused by the war. An online course on the use of diagnostic tools (PEP 3, CASD, Conners-3, Leiter-3, WISC-IV) was also developed for IRC specialists.

Additionally, an online community of practice (CoP) of teachers and school psychologists has been established. Currently, this CoP number 22,000 members. The purpose of this online community is to provide ongoing professional support to teachers and school psychologists by contracted experts on topics and areas they choose. For school psychologists three online clubs (clusters) have been established:

1. The Self-Care Club offers a comprehensive training program that includes five webinars, independent work, and final testing. Participants who complete all tasks will receive a certificate. This club is focused on helping psychologists, social educators, teachers, and education managers build self-care skills, manage stress, and prevent burnout by understanding their personal needs, values, and resources, while also learning how to establish healthy personal boundaries. Future sessions will cover practical techniques for self-reflection, stress management, and cognitive skills training, alongside strategies for developing self-compassion and reinforcing personal boundaries.

2. The Group Interaction Club. The club's training program includes five webinars, independent work, and final testing. Participants who complete all requirements will receive a certificate. The goal is to equip practical psychologists, social educators, teachers, and education managers with theoretical knowledge and practical skills to design group activities in educational settings. In addition to the topics covered in the first webinar, the club will explore the structure and design of training sessions, facilitation methods, and the dynamics of group interaction, particularly in online formats.

3. The Diagnostic and Consulting Club. This club is designed to enhance the diagnostic and consultation skills of psychologists and psychology students. It focuses on practical techniques for emotional stabilization and effective client interaction, equipping members with tools to better support students and families.

Regarding the educational infrastructure work, four questionnaires have been developed (for electrical works, structural work, design works and furniture and equipment), distributed to 30 educational institutions in 12 communities and their replies have been analyzed. Results were used to develop ToRs and scope of work for the team of consultants who will be hired by UNESCO to carry out technical supervision work, develop BoQs, and supervise implementers.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating
Teacher's professional development	Satisfactory (S)	

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

The Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Component has successfully advanced in the implementation of its three main lines of action, namely: a) system capacity strengthening; b) content curation and contextualization on pedagogical innovations for Teacher Professional Development; and c) upskilling of TTIs Lecturers, Education Administrators, School Leaders and Teachers.

- Diagnosis of the TPD delivery model

UNESCO conducted an in-depth analysis of the sustainability and effectiveness of the current TPD delivery model of the existing 25 Regional Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs). It was instrumental to inform the rest of the Component's activities making sure they respond to the most urgent and relevant needs. This diagnosis focused specifically on the strengths and weaknesses of the TPD delivery model in TTIs looking into their human and technical resources as well as institutional and normative settings. The analysis also extended to the general overview of TPD provision by non-state providers, which are emerging

as key players in this field. Moreover, the study explored the main gaps in the TPD course content offered by TTIs as well as training gaps as identified by teachers. Finally, the diagnosis provided actionable recommendations to improve TPD sustainability and effectiveness in Ukrainian TTIs and beyond.

The diagnosis was informed by rich and multiple data sources including an extensive literature review, interviews with TTIs' trainers, a TTIs consultation session and two online surveys. In June-July 2023, UNESCO developed and conducted two surveys, namely, TTIs Capacity Survey and TTIs Digital Survey. The former aimed at understanding the current state of TTIs' capacity to provide TPD. The TTIs Digital Survey focused on the digital infrastructure available to TTIs and understanding key associated issues.

As a result of this analysis, UNESCO developed a Policy Brief 'Understanding the needs of Ukrainian Teacher Training Institutions', which is an action-orientated document tailored to the needs of MESU decision-makers and planners, TTIs directors and other key national/regional institutions involved in TPD provision. Its results were presented to the main actors in the TPD system and shortly they will be disseminated further. The Component is contributing to address a number of those recommendations, specifically those that put forward a need to revise the regulatory TPD basis and to fill in teacher course gaps.

- Establishment of a technical steering group to accelerate Component's implementation

As foreseen in the project document, in January 2024, the National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established. The creation of NAC ensures the sustainability of the Component's results and a strong buy-in from the key government partners. Its primary role is to advise UNESCO on several critical areas, including conducting analytical work, revising educational norms, developing courses, supporting the Community of Practice, and overseeing the training of teacher trainers and master trainers.

The following institutions are represented in NAC: Directorate of the School Education of MESU; Department of Education Content, Language Policy and Education of National Minorities; Institute of Education Content Modernization; Ukrainian Institute of Education Development; Reform Support and Recovery Team of MESU. It is chaired by Andriy Stashkiv, a Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine. Currently, NAC is established, fully operational and its meetings take place on a regular basis. The NAC will remain active until the completion of the Component's implementation.

- Revision of TPD standards, norms and operational protocols

The analytical work presented earlier, provided clear guidance on how the TPD regulatory basis should be updated to improve its coherence and respond to emerging needs. Different documents requiring revision or development have been identified in the analysis and then confirmed through exchanges with government partners. MESU proposed to establish working groups to proceed with the revision of these documents. UNESCO has facilitated their creation as well as continues moderating their ongoing activities.

The operational processes of establishing the Working Groups were agreed upon with MESU and the NAC. Given the current TPD needs, it was agreed to create three Working Groups to update and harmonize the selected legal norms:

• Working Group #1: Focusing on upgrading existing legislation on TPD (Resolution #800 and Resolution #1187), introducing changes in licensing requirements for both non-state and state TPD providers, and establishing robust quality assurance mechanisms and standards for TPD.
• Working Group #2: Analyzing the best practices and proposing methods for the application of micro-credentials in teacher professional development.
• Working Group #3: Reviewing and updating the provisions on Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) and adapting them to the current Ukrainian realities.

Over 10 interviews were conducted by the UNESCO Team to assess the experience and motivation of experts and to assign them to the relevant Working Groups. In total, more than 30 national and international experts were appointed to the three Working Groups. On July 26, 2024, MESU signed three Decrees to commence their work. The first meetings of the Working Groups were held on August 13, 14, and 19, 2024. Each of the groups will hold five additional meetings to complete the work by the end of 2024.

- Launch of course development following the adaptation of activities to the rapidly changing needs

The project team dedicated substantial efforts to adjust Component's activities due to quickly changing needs in teacher professional development. Multiple consultation sessions and bilateral meetings were organized during the months of July-November 2023 to further refine the scope and target priority areas, which led to certain adaptations to the initial project document as presented later. These activities were essential to ensure Component's relevance in a fast-changing environment.

These efforts led to the definition of the TPD course topics that will be created as part of the program as well as the approach for the Community of Practice and hybrid training modalities. The training courses will be focusing on the implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) reform for grades 7-9. The development of these activities has successfully started.

Component / Objective	Level of Progress this Reporting Period 2	Previous Rating

E-governance in education sector	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)

Brief description of the major activities undertaken and the relative level of success in fulfilling the project outputs and outcomes planned for this reporting period:

The e-governance Component faced delays in the implementation of its four main lines of action, namely: (1) Support to establishment of unified legal framework, policies, data standards and coordination mechanisms (2) Development of digital services for education planning, management and learning (3) Alignment of data systems within education and integration with government level data systems and national e-governance online services for citizens (4) Establishment of data systems for planning, management and learning at all administrative levels.

(1) Support to establishment of unified legal framework, policies, data standards and coordination mechanisms

The ongoing efforts focused on onboarding technical expertise to improve MESU's capacities for coordination and IT project management, quality assurance and business requirements analysis. After late onboarding of BRDO to play this role, focus was given to analysis of existing legal and policy frameworks on e-governance and their adaption to education sector when relevant, ensuring alignment with national e-governance frameworks, as per project work plan and implementation strategy.

Additionally, work on establishment of a strategic framework for generalization of the use of unique identifiers for learners and HR resources managed by MESU has been initiated, with exploration of technical options available for MESU to integrate education data systems with civil registration databases. The framework is scheduled to be released for October 2024.

Looking ahead, the next steps include the development of an overarching technical architecture for integrated, sector-wide data systems in education, targeted for completion by October 2024. Till now, mapping of the existing technical architecture of EMIS was completed, enabling the project to identify gaps and duplications. The end goal of this work strand will be to develop a TO BE version of said architecture - which will include decisions regarding each of the IT solutions - which of the other systems should it integrate with or should it be "consumed" by some other system.

The work on development of a global sector-wide data model and data exchange standards to enable integration of on-the-shelve school management and Learning Management Systems (LMS) within the global sector-wide EMIS architecture has been also initiated, with development of data protocol specifications and their review by IT developers and experts, in coordination with DECIDE project and Ministry of Digital Transformation.

Overall, this first sub-component is getting back on track now that BRDO service provider is onboarded, and no new major delay is foreseen for its implementation.

(2) Development of digital services for education planning, management and learning

The activities included the establishment of an Acceptance Committee responsible for overseeing the transfer of digital solutions to MESU. Additionally, BRDO started developing software requirement specifications for all sub-components of the EMIS (AIKOM) architecture targeted by the project notably for pre-school education, vocational and technical education and extracurricular education services provided by MESU.

SRS for TVET sub-sector were completed within the reporting period and used to launch procurement operations: the onboarding of a contractor for the deployment of a School Management and distance education solution (SMS/LMS) for TVET institutions based on SRS previously developed by the project is at final RFP award stage, with an anticipated fund commitment increase of 15-20%.

BRDO team is currently working on SRS development for ECCE data systems as well as for extracurricular education, though extensive consultations with stakeholders and compilation of end-users' stories to inform scope of requirements. Once released, those SRS will be used by the project to launch new calls for proposals and for onboarding technology providers for implementation of the solutions.

This component of the project is facing delays, notably for release and deployment of features and solutions described in the SRS. The main difficulty for the project is that each software/data system implementation involving educational institutions as end-users must be closely aligned with recurrent administrative requirements of each scholastic year. The fact that only one SRS was released before the beginning of 2024-2025 school year, means that all other digital services linked to ECCE and extracurricular institutions are likely to be deployed in production only for the next school year 2025-2026.

(3) Alignment of data systems within education and integration with government level data systems and national e-governance online services for citizens

Based on the strategic framework for generalization of the use of unique identifiers for learners and HR resources under development, technical discussions with Ministry of Digital Transformation have been initiated. These include options to leverage SSO (single-sign-on) technologies to connect MESU data systems with government level id.gov.ua identity service, or with MYRIAA. As Ministry of Digital Transformation is willing to also expand government services offered to citizens through its DIIA platform, negotiations with MESU are still ongoing about the scope of education administrative services to be deployed on DIIA and on data integration modalities between DIIA and MESU EMIS. Among potential features to be integrated in DIIA, MESU is exploring deployment of a learner's digital registration system on DIIA portal, as a mean to establish a centralized and more transparent queuing system for enrolment of learners in educational institutions, notably in pre-primary centers where the number of seats remains limited compared to the needs.

The work on deeper integration of EMIS with all-Ukrainian School Online has not yet been initiated.

(4) Establishment of data systems for planning, management and learning at all administrative levels.

Under this sub-component, the project mainly focused on drafting of an EMIS data analysis and reporting architecture. Series of meetings with Business Intelligence experts took place to determine the best suited data analytics engine and to explore options for connection of the data analytics tools with the various data registries composing EMIS.

In parallel, the project completed identification of all statistical reporting requirements and their mapping with available data sources, in close coordination with the Institute of Education Analytics (IEA). The project is now documenting the calculation methods for retained indicators as well as drafting the structure of the statistical reporting forms and dashboard to be later designed and implemented through the project.

Continued Relevance

Detailed Description

Changes in the Crisis and Humanitarian Context

The ongoing war in Ukraine has led to new challenges impacting project implementation. A significant issue is the increased risk of power outages and disruption of digital infrastructure due to constant shelling of civil infrastructure. These disruptions particularly affect online learning and project activities that rely on digital tools, such as the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) component. Frequent power outages have disrupted live training sessions and hindered the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), making it difficult for teacher trainers and master trainers, especially in remote or conflict-affected areas, to continue their work without interruptions. Power outages also affect the effectiveness of UNESCO's staff to work dur to the limited availability of electricity in the households. . In additional to 11 mil Ukrainians who emigrated Ukraine since 2022, Bloomberg is estimating that an additional 400 000 will leave Ukraine due to power supply issues. UNESCO office is preparing contingency plan preparing for the option for UNESCO staff to work from temporary office location outside Kyiv in case there is further deterioration in the electricity availability.

Additionally, there has been an intensified mobilization following a new law enacted on May 18, 2024, which has stricter regulations and penalties for men not registered for military service. This has increased the number of individuals liable for service, affecting the availability of experts involved in preparing training courses, the trainees enrolled in future courses as well as architects, engineers and designers needed for rehabilitation of educational infrastructure. Employees of Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) can also be called up for military service at any time, creating uncertainty and potential disruptions in project activities

The psychological impact of the prolonged war has further affected the education community, particularly children, who are dealing with trauma and stress that impede their ability to focus on online learning. This has reduced the effectiveness of online education modalities, which are critical given the shift to distance learning due to security concerns.

Several new needs have arisen during this reporting period:

Increasing Needs of Inclusive Resource Centers (IRCs):

The war has complicated the situation for IRCs, which are responsible for assessing and supporting children with special educational needs. Due to the significant increase in the number of IRCs—from 633 in 2021 to 713 in 2024—and a doubling of applications, the need for additional diagnostic tools and certified specialists has become critical. The project's component on procuring diagnostic methods and training specialists remains essential to meet these expanding needs.

School Safety Initiatives:

The relevance of training multidisciplinary teams and teachers on creating a safe educational environment has increased in light of the joint project by MESU, the Ministry of Digital Transformation, and the Vice Prime MESU titled 'School Offline.' This initiative focuses on transitioning educational institutions back to offline learning while ensuring both physical and psychological safety for students and teachers.

Support for the New Ukrainian School (NUS) and New Ukrainian Teacher:

There is a growing need to support the implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) reform for grades 7-9. MESU, in collaboration with the Profile Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Education and Science, has requested UNESCO to repurpose funds initially allocated for the national LMS to support the New Ukrainian Teacher project's research phase. This project aims to study the teaching profession comprehensively and propose necessary policy changes to advance reforms in teacher policy.

Despite the evolving challenges, the project remains highly relevant, and adjustments have been made to ensure it continues to meet emerging needs:

Adapting to New Contexts: Project activities have been adapted to remain relevant to the changing needs. For example, funds were repurposed to support the New Ukrainian Teacher project's research phase,

directly aligning with MESU's immediate priorities for reform implementation.

Ensuring Flexibility: The project has demonstrated agility in responding to the shifting needs by redefining the focus areas, such as prioritizing the development of courses that support NUS reform and expanding support for IRCs.

Leveraging Government Support: The Ukrainian Government's recent allocation of UAH 1.5 billion to support the modernization of TTIs offers opportunities for synergy with the project's activities, potentially scaling the impact of training courses and enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the project.

Strengths or Positive Assets to Mobilize

The grant has several strengths and assets that could be further mobilized to ensure implementation success:

Existing Frameworks and Partnerships: The established frameworks, such as the National Advisory Committee (NAC), MHPSS Task Team, and partnerships with local and national stakeholders provide a solid foundation for implementing activities effectively. These should be leveraged to enhance coordination, reduce delays, and build consensus more efficiently.

Experience from Previous Interventions: The experience gained from previous MHPSS projects and other UNESCO initiatives in Ukraine has proven valuable in accelerating the implementation of similar activities under this project. This experience should be further utilized to overcome challenges and optimize project outcomes.

Potential Synergies with Government Initiatives: The recent government funding for TTI modernization aligns well with the project's goals. This synergy should be maximized to enhance project impact, ensuring that activities funded by the government subvention complement and amplify the project's interventions.

Standout Grant Practices, Emerging Lessons, Stories and Products

Detailed Description

Concerning good and innovative practices, as part of the TPD component, the establishment of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) can be highlighted as it ensures the sustainability and agility of the component as well as a buy-in among government partners. It convenes online as needed, with a minimum frequency of once every three months. The NAC plays a critical role in advising UNESCO on challenges faced by the TPD component and provides recommendations on the most effective course of action. The NAC prioritizes the most urgent TPD concerns that can be addressed within the project's timeframe and available resources.

Concerning impact stories and knowledge products, as part of the MHPSS component, a sociological study is currently being conducted on the impact of all activities on key indicators of physical and psychological safety during the project. The results will be published in January-February 2025. Meanwhile, a number of interviews, videos and photos are being collected during the implementation of the activities, which can be shared once finalized and subtitled in English.

As part of the TPD component, UNESCO developed a comprehensive Policy Brief 'Understanding the Needs of Ukrainian Teacher Training Institutions' that provides a deep dive into the current landscape of TPD within Ukraine's TTIs. Key Highlights of the Policy Brief are as follows:

1. Overview of TPD Provision:
• Detailed insights into how TPD is currently being provided by TTIs in Ukraine.
• An examination of the role and impact of non-state providers in the TPD ecosystem.
2. Challenges and Gaps:
• Identified key challenges affecting the long-term viability and effectiveness of the TPD system delivered by TTIs.
• Highlighted critical gaps in the TPD course content offered by TTIs.
3. Recommendations:
• Proposed actionable recommendations to enhance the sustainability, effectiveness, and content of TPD programs in Ukrainian TTIs.
4. Impact and Utilization:
• The Policy Brief was presented to the NAC and received approval, validating its findings and recommendations.

• The insights from the Policy Brief have been instrumental in defining the focus of the training course content, selecting the appropriate modality for training courses, and facilitating discussions on the Learning Management System (LMS) platform for hosting the developed courses.

The Policy Brief is a significant milestone in advancing teacher training in Ukraine. It sets the stage for more effective and sustainable professional development by addressing current challenges and offering strategic recommendations. Policy Brief is currently being reviewed by the Chief of Section and will be shared during final quarter of 2024.

In addition, a summary report of the Digital Survey of TTIs was developed by the UNESCO team. The Digital Survey questions focused on how TTIs managed their Moodle platforms, human capacity to support the Moodle platforms, as well as other tools, digital equipment and software. 12 TTIs responded to the survey. The responses indicated a lack of staff dedicated to Moodle development, maintenance and support in many TTIs and a need to upgrade the availability and quality of tools, equipment and software in TTIs.

One story: Ukraine: Additional 11,000 laptops provided to students to support learning continuity | UNESCO

Coordination

Detailed Description

Coordination with Education Cluster was established prior to the start of the project implementation. However, it was focused and strengthened through UNESCO's initiative to establish and lead MHPSS Task Team under the Education Cluster. Currently there are 34 active members (NNGOs, INGOs, CSOs) with clearly defined two year operational plan. UNESCO is currently coordinating efforts of MHPSS TT to develop ''Teacher Wellbeing Guidelines'' which will be used by all members. The challenge remains to involve MESU representative to provide guidance to the TT in an effective way. Certain progress was made through recent UNESCO's support to the Deputy Minister in charge of MHPSS in form of the establishment of the support office, i.e. recruitment of three national experts to support the work of the Deputy Minister in the area of MHPSS. With these human resources in place, we are advocating for the increased involvement of the MESU in the works of MHPSS TT.

During the development of MHPSS concept within MHPSS component, and after extensive consultations with external stakeholders, it became obvious that mental wellbeing of education actors is closely linked with physical safety and security within the school environment. Therefore, a successful collaboration was developed also with the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Fund of the President for Education, Sport and Science. Within MHPSS component particular cooperation was established with different governmental entities on local levels within two regions where MHPSS project is piloted: Odessa and Zhytomyr.

In the context of the devices distribution component, effective coordination with MESU established from the very start of the project, especially with the Deputy Minister for Digitalization. A number of technical and procedural issues had to be solved and agreed in order to complete successfully this component.

As part of the TPD component, main actors in charge of TPD have been systematically consulted through the NAC modality. The component was presented to the Education Cluster on 27 October 2023. This was a great opportunity to showcase the project, inform all relevant actors of its activities and look for potential synergies. The Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation has also been systematically consulted throughout the component's implementation on areas falling under his purview.

As part of the E-governance component, the Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation has been systematically consulted throughout the component's implementation. The implementation of the e-governance component requires close coordination between MESU and MoDT to ensure integration of EMIS within broader government data systems and digital services. Regular meetings are taking place to ensure such coordination and are facilitated by the Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation. Yet, an arising difficulty is the broader digital transformation agenda pushed by MoDTE, which sometimes leads to contradictory choices or brutal changes in implementation strategies. For instance, unclarity from MoDT remains on the scope of the MYRIAA solution, which is high on the political agenda, with high risk of duplication with MESU online services under deployment. MYRIAA is seen by MoDT as an educational mobile application aiming to provide all citizens with equal access to knowledge and allowing children, parents and teachers to navigate modernized and more effective administrative processes for education. It is also envisioned by MoDT as a digital solution for teaching and learning. In addition to providing online resources, it shall use artificial intelligence technology to reduce the workload of teachers and to provide personalized learning for students. The app will also help automate the management of educational institutions to enhance their security and ability to communicate with the State.

The acceptance commission mechanism proved to be a useful tool to synergize views on modernization of EMIS and to ensure adequation of the implementation with MESU's requirements, as well as to

engage other stakeholders involved in the digitalization of education services, such as DECIDE team.

Following release of Software Requirement Specification documents, UNESCO also plans to organize meetings with the Education Cluster to eventually engage NGOs and other stakeholders in the delivery of services and digital solutions to MESU institutions.

Results Framework and other Supporting Documentation

#	File Name	Document Type	Description
1	RF_completed.xlsx	Results Framework	Results Framework
2	?????_???_814_???_06_06_2024_??????_????????_???? ???.pdf	Variable Part Confirmation	MESU Order 814 which approves and recommends Safe Education Environment Curriculum Framework
2	TPD_Letter_to_UNESCO_.pdf	Variable Part Confirmation	MESU request to repurpose TPD funds

The documents listed were submitted with the progress report. If you'd like access to them, please contact the grant operations officer for your country.

Financial Reporting & Grant Management

Financial Reporting on GPE Grant

Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate

Approved Budget to Date	Cumulative Expenditure	Cumulative Financial Absorption Rate	Level of Financial Absorption
12,150,000	4,554,171.93	37.48	Off Track

Since the financial absorption is not rated as 'on track', please provide an explanation that identifies the main activities that have been delayed and their corresponding unspent amounts, as well as reasons for the delay and steps taken to ensure that expenditure absorption gets on track in the next reporting period.

During the reporting period 7,978,300.00 USD was transferred as a first tranche, out of which 4,554,171.93 was spent.

Below are the major activities which were underspent:

1. Improvement of infrastructure of IRC and schools (1,5 mil USD). As explained in detail in previous chapters, this was due to the difficulties in the recruitment of technical team members. Currently UNESCO is in the final stage of signing contracts of recruitment of team of 6 experts.

2. TPD system strengthening (400,000 USD). As explained in detail in previous chapters, it was decided to modify this component after both TTIs and MESU agreed that this component should be potentially implemented at the later stage, and instead focus on the new request to support New Ukranian Teacher Reform (request attached in the annex).

3. Development of digital services for education planning, management and learning (1 mil USD). This component of the project is facing delays, notably for release and deployment of features and solutions described in the SRS. The main difficulty for the project is that each software/data system implementation involving educational institutions as end-users must be closely aligned with recurrent administrative requirements of each scholastic year. UNESCO is working with MESU on developing plan to mitigate this issue in the upcoming period.

Budget Variance Analysis for the Current Reporting Period

Total Approved Budget for the Current Reporting Period

Total Expenditure for the Current Reporting Period

12,150,000   4,554,171.93

Explanation for underspending or overspending in excess of 10%
Reasons for underspending are explained above.

Management Performance

Level of Management Performance   **Previous Rating**
Satisfactory (S)   NA

Detailed Description

Managing and implementing projects in Ukraine presents several challenges due to the evolving emergency context and the specific status of UNESCO in the country. UNESCO was one of the last UN agencies to establish a presence in Ukraine, which meant it took some time to build its operations and visibility. This delay impacted the initial stages of project management, as the organization had to navigate an unfamiliar landscape and establish a solid foundation.

One of the first significant challenges was recruiting both national and international staff, made more difficult by the ongoing brain drain and the stricter conscription laws in place. This recruitment process was only completed in May 2025, but there remains a challenge in hiring a technical team of engineers and architects needed for educational infrastructure work under the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) component.

Furthermore, UNESCO currently operates in Ukraine with a "Desk" status. This designation means that projects are heavily managed and supported by UNESCO Headquarters, leaving the local office with limited autonomy to manage initiatives independently. While efforts are underway to upgrade this status from "Desk" to "Antenna," which would enhance the autonomy and capacity to implement projects, certain processes, like procurement, continue to take considerable time.

Ukraine is also recognized as a country with a high corruption risk, and this, combined with lengthy negotiations to develop Terms of Reference (ToRs) with stakeholders and the necessity for their approval through UNESCO's internal procedures, has led to delays in project implementation. Moreover, the market for service providers is limited, and their availability remains a concern.

The security situation in Ukraine remains volatile, with increasing attacks on critical infrastructure, such as the electricity grid. These disruptions directly impact the ability to carry out activities according to planned schedules. Another challenge is the frequent changes in senior management teams within national and local stakeholders, necessitating repeated clarifications of the project's objectives and activities to maintain alignment and momentum.

Revisions to the grant

Detailed Description

A non-cost extension will be needed for three components: MHPSS (NCE for one year), TPD (NCE for 6 months), E-GOVERNANCE (NCE for one year).

MHPSS and E-governance components do not entail any significant revisions. However, due to the delays in project implementation, an additional time will be needed to complete these two components.

For the MHPSS component, activities related tot policy analysis and development, developing capacities of multidisciplinary teams and inclusive resource centers are well on track. However, only infrastructure improvement activity is delayed as explained in previous chapters. Delays are mostly related to the difficulties of recruitment of qualified technical staff who are predominantly men and therefore at the risk of military conscription; delays in receiving complete project design documentation from selected educational facilities; changes in legislation and applicable technical guidelines related to the bomb shelter construction.

E-Governance output is facing significant delay in implementation, mainly due to the extended duration of the procurement process to onboard BRDO, which is the pivotal service provider for coordination and delivery of most activities. This delay was mainly due to the high-level of expertise expected by MESU, complemented by strict mandatory compliance requirements for bidders in terms of previous expertise in

digital transformation of public services and in education, which lowered competition and led to readvertisement and extensive price negotiations. Compliance of the process with UNESCO procurement rules and regulations has been strictly checked at every administrative step, further delaying contracting of the service provider. Now that BRDO is on-board, the project component is getting back on track. Internal discussions within the UNESCO administration took place to avoid the observed delays in future procurement exercises. BRDO team was also resized to ensure accelerated delivery of remaining contract outputs, and particularly of SRS documents, to enable UNESCO to trigger parallel procurement processes for each part of the AIKOM architecture to be enhanced.

Another challenge for this component of the project is that for the first year, all activities under this output were coordinated and implemented directly from UNESCO Headquarters, leading to sub-optimal communication with MESU related to project implementation. This issue has been solved through the expansion of the UNESCO Team in Kyiv and its involvement in the delivery of output activities.

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
MESU	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
MHPSS TT	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Task Team
WG	Working Group
IRC	Inclusive Resource Center
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
SRS	Software Requirement Specifications

Annex 2: Global Numbers Reporting Template

Provide the data related to GPE's three global numbers for this reporting period below:

- Textbooks purchased and distributed
- Teachers trained
- Classrooms built or rehabilitated

Note: For cofinanced grants, please provide the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 50 percent of a teacher training activity, the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant for the number of teachers trained through that activity would be 50%. If the unit of analysis in the indicator is the number of schools and not classrooms, please enter an estimated number of classrooms and provide an explanation in the comments box.

GPE Indicators

Textbooks purchased and distributed

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments
1		0	0	

GPE Indicators

Teachers trained

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments
1		0	0	

GPE Indicators

Classrooms built or rehabilitated

#	Indicator	Actual Number Achieved (during this reporting period)	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)	Comments
1		0	0	

Annex 3: Cumulative Beneficiary Children Reporting Template

Provide the **cumulative number** of children of pre-primary, primary and secondary school age (both in school and out of school) and other students (adolescents beyond secondary school age and adult learners participating in basic education programs), who **directly participated in project activities, received project-supported incentives or services, or benefited from project interventions so far. Also provide relevant disaggregated values by sex (applicable to all grants).** If appropriate and available, provide disaggregated values by varied subgroups and by education level. Reporting beneficiary data cumulatively means counting all beneficiaries as a running total, adding up all beneficiaries since the start of the grant. Data on beneficiaries are to be collected using the methods and tools proper to each project. It is understood that some disaggregated data will only be collected if a project expressly targets specific subgroups through their interventions and uses their own methods for counting beneficiary children/other students.

Note: For cofinanced grants, please provide the numbers for the entire program and indicate the proportion that can be attributed to GPE grant. For example, if the grant's financial contribution accounts for 40 percent of the program that is cofinanced by GPE and other donors, enter 40% in the "% attributed to this grant.

	Pre-primary (optional)	Primary (optional)	Secondary (optional)	Others (optional)	Total	% attributed to this grant (for cofinanced grants)

Number of children/other students who directly benefited from the project over the entire duration of the project		2,649	5,885	8,534	100
Of which, female		1,308	2,974	4,282	100
Of which, children/other students with a disability (optional)		256	377	633	100
Of which, refugee children/other students (optional)					
Of which, internally displaced children/other students (optional)		1,671	3,488	5,159	100
Of which, out-of-school children (optional)					
Of which, children/other students from marginalized ethno-cultural/ linguistic minorities: specify which ones (optional)					

Provide any comments on beneficiary children/students, if needed. This could include, for example, the definition employed by the project for a particular subgroup (including a more granular description of these subgroups), the approach/tool used to calculate the number of beneficiaries overall or by subgroup, any limitation of the approach/tool employed for this calculation and reasons why data on beneficiary children/students are unavailable. Please provide the number or proportion of girls for varied subgroups in the comment section below, if available.

[1] Highly Unsatisfactory - The project has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory - The project has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory - The project has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs, but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory - The project is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderaten shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory - The project is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory -The project is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.

[2] Highly Unsatisfactory - The component/objective has major shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is unlikely. Unsatisfactory -The component/objective has significant shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. Moderately Unsatisfactory -The component/objective has moderate shortcomings or delays that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs, but a resolution is likely. Moderately Satisfactory- The component/objective is expected to achieve most of its major outputs efficiently with moderate shortcomings or delays. Satisfactory- The component/objective is expected to achieve almost all of its major outputs efficiently with only minor shortcomings or delays. Highly Satisfactory-The component/objective is expected to achieve or exceed all of the major outputs efficiently without significant shortcomings or delays.