

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN ALBANIA 2018

Executive summary

The full report can be found on ETF Open Space at:

https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Albania%20CPD%20survey%202018_rev_0.pdf

More information on the survey at:

<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/wikis/etf-international-survey-vocational-teachers-and-trainers-cpd>

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Introduction

Professional development of vocational teachers and trainers has been identified by the European Training Foundation (ETF) as a key driver for the improvement of vocational education and training (VET) systems across all regions: firstly, because they are the most important input in the VET system and secondly because teachers and trainers are critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, such as changes in organisations, curriculum, and development of work-based learning, technology and pedagogy.

The continuing professional development (CPD) survey 2018 builds on the 2015 survey. The main objectives of the survey 2018 are to:

- inform national policy makers about the condition and needs of vocational teachers and help them to monitor implementation and change;
- help policy makers to understand what is required to bring out improvements in quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of CPD, at the national and local levels;
- address other factors which influence the effectiveness of teachers such as their motivation and career structure;
- benchmark the state of the professional teacher workforce against other countries.

The research was carried out through close cooperation between the Ministry for Finance, Economy and Employment, the National Agency for VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ), vocational schools and training centres, and the ETF.

This survey is part of an international, comparative survey which also includes Algeria, Belarus, Kosovo¹, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia and Turkey.

Methodology

The literature review summarised information from previous studies and publications, official documents, reports from international donors and agencies in the fields of policy making regarding VET. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders served to validate information gathered through the literature review and gather evidence on strategy development and implementation, challenges, institutional changes, stakeholder dialogue, and to access administrative data. Two national online surveys were designed to explore the experiences of teachers, instructors, principals and trainers. Due to the small population size of the public VET sector in Albania, it was decided that the survey samples should include all teachers, instructors, trainers and principals of public vocational schools and vocational training centres.

The final dataset, based on which the assessment report is prepared, contains:

- 701 responses from teachers in vocational schools and 98 responses from instructors in vocational centres (total responses of 799 out of the 1,571 targeted), with a response rate of about 51% (64% for the schools and 27% for the centres);

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

- 25 responses from the principals of vocational schools and 7 responses from the principals of vocational training centres (total responses of 32 out of the 44 targeted), with a response rate of about 73%.

The surveys offer representative samples of the overall populations although it is possible that individuals who are averse to information and communications technology (ICT) were less likely to respond than others.

Conclusions and priority issues and recommendations

This section summarises the findings of the report and highlights those issues that were identified as most urgent along with the recommendations that were identified as most practicable².

The workforce

Teachers responding to the survey are mostly middle aged but only around 6% are close to retirement age. The share of teachers teaching vocational theory and vocational practice is 7% more than those teaching general subjects. One-third of teachers has less than five years of teaching experience and the majority of teachers have their whole teaching experience in the same school. The vast majority of vocational teachers and instructors have work experience in the industry of the vocational branch taught. Some 41% of teachers working in vocational schools do not have pedagogical training as part of their degree studies.

Teachers dedicate most of their working hours to teaching. Teacher cooperation and exchange of information average only 2.3 hours per week. The same is true for involvement in extra curricula activities and communication with parents.

School governance

There is a good level of representation of teachers, students, employers and parents in school management board. School directors make key decisions on teachers' recruitment and dismissal and students' admission. Teachers have authority on students' assessment, choosing learning materials, as well as some authority for determining the course content. Salaries, curricula and courses offered in VET are the exclusive responsibility of the national government, while budget allocation within the school is under the authority of the school board.

Priority issues	Priority recommendations
Lack of opportunities for professional development, government regulation and policy were identified as the most critical constraints on the effectiveness of principals.	More opportunities and better planning for relevant CPD. Principals should be consulted in policy making so that policy is complemented by effective school management.
52% of principals said that the quality of instruction was greatly hindered by the shortage of qualified/high performing vocational teachers, shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs, shortage of practice instructors and inadequacy of instructional materials.	Gaps should be addressed through recruitment of high quality teachers and instructors and targeted CPD and collaborative work to generate instructional materials.

² At a workshop that took place in Tirana on 30 January 2019.

The majority of principals said that insufficient internet access, inadequacy of computers for instruction and shortage or inadequacy of computer software for instruction had some negative effect upon school performance.	Incrementally equip all vocational schools with appropriate IT resources and planning for maintenance and replacement.
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Approaches to teaching

Classical methods of teaching dominate in vocational schools. However, other methods such as group work projects have started to be used. ICT and multimedia methods of teaching are used rarely.

Most teachers relate theory to practice and design work-like tasks for their students. However, 25% to 50% of students have very limited direct interaction with employers, e.g. they go on visits to businesses at best occasionally. About half of teachers seldom visit workplaces and or have contact with employers seeking to recruit students.

Access to work-based learning exists for a minority of vocational learners: according to teachers, 38% of students have at least 10% of their learning in the workplace. Teachers are, to a large extent, happy with students' behaviour in class, but students' motivation in class is still questionable for 24% of teachers.

National curricula and teachers' planning and annual and detailed lesson plans are the main drivers of teaching. Teachers are also influenced, but to a lesser degree, by their knowledge of what employers want and by assessment requirements.

Priority issues	Priority recommendations
Consumables for practical skills are sufficient for only 26% of teachers. Other instructional materials are absent for 20% of teachers.	Investment in consumables to permit high quality practical learning in schools for all.
Only 15% of teachers report having access to adequate computers and software needed for the learning process; adequate internet access is not present according to 48% of teachers.	Investment in computers, software and internet access.
The majority of teachers believe that they are not appreciated or valued socially.	Create opportunities for teachers to have their achievements recognised within and beyond the profession.

Policy and implementation

A legislative and strategic framework is in place. Preparation of the national action plan on teachers and trainers training should take place, but it will require a commitment of financial resources needed for implementation of training and other CDP programmes. The new VET Law assigns to NAVETQ the function to coordinate VET teacher training. A respective draft by-law on NAVETQ has not yet been adopted, i.e. until now no institution is formally in charge. In addition, NAVETQ would require additional human and financial resources to fulfil its new responsibilities. Funding for teacher training remains constraint and not enough to satisfy all needs.

Introducing a comprehensive in-service teacher training and assessment, including (i) peer mentoring programmes and (ii) instruments to track teacher effectiveness, remains a challenge. Research has taken place to explore the needs of vocational school directors and managers. There has been some

training activities and a network of directors has been established. There is a government initiative to organise a 'School Directors Academy'.

Priority issues	Priority recommendations
Responsibility for leadership and coordination of CPD for VET teachers is not clearly assigned.	Assign responsibility and resources to NAVETQ.
There is no action plan nor adequate resources to implement the commitment to large scale, systematic provision of CPD for VET teachers and instructors.	The ministry should consult with NAVETQ and other actors, providers, schools and stakeholders to develop and publish a strategy and an action plan.
The 'Fundamentals of didactics on VET' will not be compulsory for VET teachers and instructors without pedagogical training after 2020.	Revised 'Fundamentals of didactics on VET' programme should be made compulsory for all new teachers and instructors in vocational schools that lack pedagogical training.

Organisations and institutions

Responsibilities for strategic leadership, coordination and encouraging provision, quality assurance and recording with respect to CPD are shared between the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Employment, NAVETQ and the Institute for Educational Development (IED). None of these organisations currently has full authority and capacity to implement systematic provision of CPD for vocational teachers and instructors.

International donor organisations are active, in partnership with national agencies, in providing CPD as part of larger VET development projects.

There are very few national organisations that provide specialised CPD to vocational teachers in Albania. Employers, higher education institutions and teacher associations make little contribution to CPD for vocational teachers.

Priority issue	Priority recommendation
Responsibility for leadership and coordination of CPD for VET teachers is not clearly assigned.	Assign responsibility and resources to NAVETQ.

Design and quality assurance

Currently, the IED has the responsibility for designing the Teachers Qualification Standards, the Teachers Qualification Programme, the accreditation of training providers, the organisation of exams and certification. These responsibilities, for vocational teachers, should be transferred to NAVETQ according to Law 15/2015. NAVETQ cooperates with the IED to prepare the exams for vocational teachers.

An obligatory programme on Basic Didactics in VET (lasting 24 days) has been designed, approved and implemented by NAVETQ since 2015, supported by GIZ, Swiss Development and KulturKontakt. No specific budget line is allocated to CPD at either national or provider level. Most of the costs of CPD for vocational teachers are covered by donors.

Priority issues	Priority recommendations
Formal responsibilities for CPD for vocational teachers are currently exercised by the IED in cooperation with NAVETQ.	Responsibilities for CPD for vocational teachers should be formally assigned to NAVETQ together with the School Development Units.
No specific budget line is allocated to CPD at either national or provider level.	Define budgets for CPD for vocational teachers at national and provider (within the School Development Units) levels.

CPD provision

The survey provides strong evidence that the level of participation by vocational teachers in CPD in Albania has improved since 2015. Some 80% of vocational teachers participated in formal in-service training (62% organised in schools and 70% out of schools) up from 65% in 2014/15. The average duration of CPD has also gone up: the percentage of participants with 30 hours or more in-service training per annum increased from 33% in 2015 to 47% in 2018. Some 53% of vocational teachers say that they accessed CPD, which addressed their specialist vocational profiles (up from 23% in 2014/15). However, the duration of this training was relatively short (30 hours or more for only 25% of participants). CPD involving business and observation in other schools also increased.

Participation in CPD is affected by 'external' factors. Younger teachers obtained more hours of CPD. Large cities, followed by towns, have the highest participation of teachers in in-service training and the largest share of those with more than 30 hours of training. Small towns and rural areas have the lowest participation and volumes of training.

Modern methods, such as active learning, collaboration and new technologies, are present in CPD. However, there is much CPD that offers little active learning for teachers and the use of collaborative learning and new technologies are occasional rather than normal. More than 90% of principals participated in CPD aimed at principals.

Priority issue	Priority recommendation
Almost 50% of vocational teachers obtained no specialist vocational CPD; those who did received only low volumes (average 25 hours).	NAVETQ and School Development Units and donors should cooperate to provide appropriate specialist CPD for vocational teachers – including teacher placements in industry.

School-based CPD

Schools have a formal responsibility to research training needs, plan and organise CPD but in practice, unless they are involved in a donor-funded project, this responsibility is not fulfilled and little training is implemented. Legislation has been passed to set up School Development Units; however, they cannot become operational without by-laws, funding and appointments.

Some 70% of teachers have taken part in some kind of induction at their new school; however, less than 50% of teachers obtained a formal induction to their school. Team teaching, mentoring by experienced teachers and scheduled meetings with principals and/or colleague teachers are the most often used activities for induction programmes, while peer review and networking are the least used. Mentoring is available in about 50% of vocational schools.

Feedback for teachers' performance is commonly provided by the school principal; there is relatively little feedback from mentors, other teachers or external bodies.

Priority issue	Priority recommendation
SDUs are not yet operational.	A clear action plan should be published and cooperation established to implement the SDUs across Albania.

Relevance and impact of CPD

Some 71% to 84% of participating teachers report that the impact of particular CPD programmes on their teaching was moderate or major. CPD relating to teaching in a multicultural/multilingual setting and teaching students with special needs was judged to have less impact.

Overall, about one-third of teachers reported an unmet training need for particular kinds of CPD. Training gaps were highest for CPD addressing new technologies in the workplace (60%), teaching students with special needs (54%), teaching cross-curricular skills (53%), and approaches to developing cross-occupational competences for future work (52%).

Priority issue	Priority recommendation
There is no coherent and reliable process through which information about development needs can inform strategic priorities for CPD.	Equip NAVETQ with tools and authority to carry out this responsibility.

Recognition and incentivisation

Records of participation in CPD are stored in teachers' individual portfolios in schools. There are two electronic databases that could record the CPD participation of vocational teachers and permit analysis but neither of them is currently operational or updated.

Participation in CPD is a formal condition of career progress. However, there is little or no relationship between the competences developed through CPD and the responsibilities of higher career teachers.

The barriers that exist for a significant number of teachers are: the lack of incentives for participating in CDP (40% of teachers); no relevant professional development offered (37% of teachers); and time requirement conflicting with the work schedule (33%). The main barriers for principals to participate in CPD are: time requirement conflicting with their work schedule (37% of principals); the lack of employer support (29%); and no relevant professional development offered reported (28%).

In general, principals can afford CPD and they think that it is worthwhile, while for a significant minority of teachers the cost is unaffordable and CPD does not bring an adequate benefit.

Priority issues	Priority recommendations
There is no comprehensive electronic database of CPD participation so there is no accurate aggregate record.	Operationalise one of the existing databases or establish a new dedicated database.
Some high quality CPD is not accredited for the purposes of accumulating credits in relation to career progress.	Quality-assured programmes should carry appropriate credits.

Where to find out more

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<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu>

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