

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN KOSOVO* 2018

Executive summary



* 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 – hereinafter 'Kosovo'.

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

https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Kosovo%20CPD%20survey%202018_rev.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 for teachers and trainers is widely recognised as a vital tool for educational reform. Research demonstrates that professional development can improve the quality of teaching and learning in a sustainable manner, increasing the effectiveness of education and training and adding value for learners, teachers and employers.

However, improving the quality and quantity of continuing professional development (CPD) is not easy. To assist policy makers it is vital that policy making, implementation and impact should be reviewed and understood – so that feedback and policy learning occurs. Therefore, this study is concerned to:

- set out current policy objectives with respect to improving CPD for VET teachers and trainers;
- describe the provision of CPD for VET teachers and trainers in Kosovo and the way in which teachers' needs are assessed and particular programmes are assigned to teachers;
- understand how the arrangements for CPD fit with other parts of the VET system;
- evaluate how well current arrangements are working;
- make recommendations about how current policies can be implemented and how the provision and allocation of CPD can be improved.

It is intended that this study will bring forward evidence to inform discussion, that it will inform thinking and action at many levels of decision making and that it will stimulate new enquiries and new proposals.

A key focus is upon helping policy makers to understand what is required to bring about improvements in quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of CPD but the survey addressed some of the factors which influence the effectiveness of teachers more generally, such as their motivation and career structure.

Methodology

The methodology included:

- desk review of documents and published research on the current state of CPD of VET teachers and trainers;
- interviews with 10 stakeholders responsible for policy, provision and implementation of CPD activities of VET teachers;
- survey of VET teachers employed at 71 vocational schools or centres of competence;
- survey of vocational school principals, in some cases including vice directors and coordinators of quality assurance.

The questionnaires were distributed in an electronic version to the identified stakeholders for the interviews after prior discussions and explanations about the project and the survey. In total 10 interviews were completed.

The literature review identified documents which deal with CPD for general and VET teachers in Kosovo. These documents include policy papers, reports of relevant institutions, research papers, reports of surveys and analysis, reports from different projects, statistical data from the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ASK), and the Evaluation Report for the Implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan in 2017.

All 69 public vocational schools and 2 private schools were invited to participate. Readiness to cooperate was shown by 62 vocational schools out of 71, from which 16 are technical schools, 12 economics schools, 12 professional schools, 8 artistic schools, 7 healthcare schools, 3 agriculture schools, and 3 centres of competence. The questionnaires were distributed to the chosen schools in online web-based format. The survey was conducted from 21 May to 8 June 2018.

The interviews took place between 18 June and 29 June. Interviews were carried out with relevant stakeholders who had been identified together with the country team. Interviewees included:

- head of VET Division,
- Teacher Training Division officer,
- expert for VET at Kosovo Pedagogical Institute,
- school principals,
- director of Municipal Education Directorate – Suhareka,
- regional VET inspector – Ferizaj,
- centres of competence deputy directors for quality assurance,
- quality assurance officer – National Qualifications Authority.

Out of the total population of 3,149 VET teachers, approximately 828 teachers responded to the questionnaire, which represent around 26.3% of the total. Forty-nine responses were obtained from school principals in 49 schools. All questionnaires were completed directly on the online platform.

Participation by region was similar for both teachers and principals, with the highest response rate from teachers in Prizren and lowest in Peja, while for principals the highest response was in Prishtina and lowest in Gjilan and Peja.

Findings

The analysis from the literature review and interviews point out that CPD in Kosovo is well regulated in terms of legislation and other policy documents. The results of analysis of the first year of implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017–2021 demonstrate achievements with respect to VET, adult education and teacher training (e.g. 26.6% of VET teachers received at least 30 hours of CPD over the previous 12 months). However, these rates are not sufficient to meet the targets set out in the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017–2021. Problems in implementation are explained by lack of resources or failure to effectively manage resources, limited capacity of national and local institutions to design, provide and manage CPD and issues relating to governance and accountability.

Some of the challenges that negatively impact the provision of CPD are related to the management of vocational schools in Kosovo. The management team is dominated by men, who are over 50, with more than half of them having no previous experience in other school management roles. Furthermore, many of them are politically nominated and not on a merit-based appointment. They have limited decision-making power, with many principals of vocational schools believing that they or their governing bodies have no responsibility with respect to staffing, admissions, deciding on courses, or on any salary or budgetary decisions. On the other hand, most schools have school boards with a formal business representation (65% of schools). Inadequate school budget and resources, government regulation and policies, the teachers' career-based wage system, and lack of support for CPD are the main factors holding back the effectiveness of school management.

Monitoring of teaching performance is done by direct observation performed by principals or other members of the management, but not mentors. However, whatever the result of the appraisal, there is little or no follow up. In almost half of vocational schools in Kosovo, there is a shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials and books, computer hardware and software, insufficient internet access, and lack of sufficient consumables to develop practical skills. The shortage of special needs teachers was a critical issue in almost one third of vocational schools. Principals doubted that there was strong cooperation with local businesses. Student attendance is problematic in almost half of the schools.

More than half of teachers frequently or always use progressive approaches such as group work and differentiated work for students. It is not common for students to use ICT in classes, however more than one third of teachers are using ICT frequently or always to prepare instructional materials. Direct interactions with employers are unusual for about half of teachers and lecturers.

Kosovo Education Policy has progressed with the development of the Quality Assurance Strategy for Kosovo Pre-university Education 2016–2020, the Strategic Framework for CPD Kosovo, the National Development Strategy 2016–2021, KESP 2017–2021 and several regulating acts that enable implementation of the teacher licensing system, career and professional development of teachers and educational workers. This framework is intended to make a coherent relationship between career development, standards and quality. The licensing process is ongoing; from 2012 to 2017, 96.5% of teachers were awarded the career license. To obtain a career license teachers must participate in CPD; however the process of teacher performance assessment has not yet started. Moreover, no clear action plan exists for future development of this process. The harmonising of career grades with the wage system has not taken place due to lack of budget and so the career structure has not been implemented. There has been little progress with respect to initial education for VET teachers. A functional reorganisation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) has been agreed in order to increase the capacity to improve policy implementation.

Currently there is no organisation that has responsibility for leading, coordinating and making coherent CPD for vocational teachers. It is accepted amongst the key actors that there is no good coordination between them: MEST, the Council for Higher Education, the State Council for Licensing and the schools¹. In consequence, it is difficult to ensure that decisions about recognition, provision and allocation are made rapidly and consistently. Employers or employer organisations do not contribute to the shaping or provision of CPD for vocational teachers. According to some interviewees, some organisations are unable to fully exercise their functions – for example, the municipal education directorates do not obtain delegated funding, the schools are not able to obtain trainings that would fulfil their training plans and the Inspectorate does not judge the quality of teaching and learning.

Organisations and institutions that support CPD in Kosovo have limited experience and capacity (in terms of human resources and budget) to provide specialised CPD for VET teachers. CPD targeted at VET teachers has been delivered by NGOs supported by donors and regulated by MEST. Trainings have been organised for VET teachers by EU Kosvet, GTZ (GIZ), Swisscontact, Danida and Lux Development. The Faculty of Education currently offers a master's degree for VET teachers; however, participation is relatively low.

The responsibility for the design of CPD programmes belongs to CPD providers but programmes and providers must be accredited and formally recognised by MEST. Early in the calendar year, MEST

¹ This finding was confirmed during the workshop held on 19 December 2018.

should make public calls for training programmes, which address the needs of educational reform priorities, the teacher licensing system and professional teacher development. The State Council for Teacher Licensing decides which CPD programmes and qualifications may be recognised for the purposes of teacher licensing and promotion. The MEST Teacher Training Division publishes a catalogue that details the offer – enabling teachers to apply for programmes that are relevant to their needs, licensing and careers. In addition, CPD providers may seek accreditation for teaching qualifications, developed in accordance with occupational standards, through the Kosovo Qualifications Framework.

Although a system of accreditation for providers and programmes exists, it must be questioned how well it works to generate high quality CPD for VET teachers, which meets all of the relevant needs. In addition, some stakeholders have expressed concerns that participation in CPD programmes offered by MEST Teacher Training Division together with donors prior to 2013 are not eligible for recognition for the purposes of licensing.

MEST is responsible for the provision of financial resources for CPD based on the Strategic Framework; to support education reform and the implementation of Kosovo Curriculum Framework, and to ensure the performance standards are met. Most of CPD is directly funded by MEST and very little is delegated to municipalities or to schools. CPD for VET teachers is mostly funded by development partners rather than MEST.

From the survey results, 47% of vocational teachers in Kosovo participated in some kind of CPD over the previous 12 months. Compared to 2015 where participation was 56%, this represents quite a significant decline². The participation of teachers in conferences remains the same; however, there was an increase from 18% to 32% of teachers who were able to visit and learn from other schools. Training on business premises was sharply up from 16% (2015) to 35% (2018). Some 62% of vocational teachers participated in at least 30 hours of CPD (48% in 2015). This suggests that the duration of CPD has increased for those that had access to CPD. Only 42% of all teachers had more than two training hours overall which is the minimum CPD requirement to retain any kind of license. There was little change in the percentage of teachers participating in CPD (37%) which directly addressed their profile or sector (36% in 2015). A general training programme that addresses pedagogy for vocational teachers is offered yearly to about 200 teachers: professional didactics and methodics and didactics. MEST Teacher Training Division is offering seven to ten CPD programmes for VET teachers annually.

There are legal requirements that each school should have an annual development plan that provides suggestions for CPD according to training needs analysis of the teaching staff. This plan should be agreed with the municipal education directorate; however, implementation remains an issue as few schools have a realistic plan in place.

Around 33% of teachers participate in CPD in their schools. Some of this CPD takes the form of cascading learning obtained from external seminars. This kind of CPD is relatively low in cost and well connected to practice in schools. Around one third of vocational teachers say that they are receiving mentoring. However, access to a mentor and the training and subject expertise of mentors vary considerably between schools. On the other hand, the level of planned collaboration between VET

² ETF, *Continuing professional development of vocational teachers and trainers in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A regional picture*, 2018

teachers is relatively high and it suggests that there is a collaborative culture in Kosovo's vocational schools.

Professional development needs and school planning mechanisms are in place but not functioning well. Schools are supposed to carry out the analysis, taking into account professional standards, the needs of individual teachers and the school development plan. However, the planning process is only formal and does not actually influence implementation. Training needs are not accurately identified and even where the real needs are identified, it is difficult for schools to obtain CPD provision that matches these needs. Schools and municipalities do not engage in making decisions about priorities, as a result the CPD offer does not reflect their priorities.

The aim of CPD is to improve teaching performance and quality. Teacher feedback and review are used for improving teaching quality. The findings from the survey and interviews show that VET teachers are benefiting from feedback that positively impacts their self-esteem and their performance. However, there are opportunities for much greater use of various forms of feedback: mentors are not appointed in vocational schools, the status of quality assurance coordinator is not solved in all schools and teachers are not providing feedback to one another directly or through their professional bodies.

Recognition and incentivisation of CPD need to be done through a career structure for teachers and a system of licensing. Around 71% of vocational teachers responded that there were incentives to participate in CPD. On the other hand, the cost of CPD and lack of support from their schools were perceived as barriers by 43% of teachers. The major barrier, according to teachers, was the absence of relevant CPD being offered. The evidence suggests that there is a real need for CPD since both principals and teachers identify training needs. The survey also shows that teachers usually value the CPD they obtain. However, there is a limited offer and limited budget. Schools and municipalities lack the mechanisms and capacities for organising and coordinating sufficient and relevant school-based CPD. In some cases there is no transparent process to ensure that CPD for VET teachers is fairly distributed and that the needs of all individuals and schools are taken into account.

Recommendations

At the level of national policy making, planning and regulation, appropriate authorities and agencies should cooperate to:

1. provide more CPD tailored to meet the specific needs of vocational teachers;
2. ensure that all teachers are able to access appropriate CPD to meet the needs of licensing and that VET teachers are motivated as envisaged by the licensing system in order to incentivise and recognise career structure;
3. explore whether CPD offer can be extended and made more responsive by accrediting high quality online and video programmes or blended programmes;
4. place greater emphasis on the observation of teacher performance, through internal and external quality assurance processes, in order to identify needs for professional development and evaluate its impact; support might take the form of guidance or capacity building for inspectors, principals, quality assurance coordinators and coordinators of work-based learning;
5. develop a process and offer support to identify professional development needs in schools (which may include an enhanced role for teachers to help them to identify their own needs) and to plan CPD provision for schools;

6. appoint quality assurance and work-based learning coordinators and nominate mentors in all vocational schools;
7. strengthen the role of mentors and appoint the coordinator for work-based learning in vocational schools to support close cooperation with local businesses and other stakeholders;
8. design and offer CPD that supports progression through the career structure and that is appropriate to support the outcomes of performance appraisal;
9. complement career licensing by implementation of a professional career system which will motivate teachers and confirm valuation;
10. implement an EMIS system to collect and organise data to make it possible to track the progress of VET teachers through the licensing process and through the career ladder, and to understand their professional development needs and track and record their CPD;
11. modify the CPD offer to meet the needs identified by schools and ensure that all teachers, schools and regions have equal access to CPD programmes;
12. support school-based CPD across clustered schools (vocational schools can be clustered regionally or according to sector).

With respect to CPD provision, CPD providers, vocational schools and local authorities should cooperate to ensure that:

13. there is an increase in the number of places on master programmes for VET teachers at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pristina;
14. there is a system for recognition of previous achievements to accelerate progress towards meeting the requirements of VET teachers normative 05/2015 and 14/2018 for normative of general education teachers;
15. the capacity of in-service teacher training providers increases (or is supplemented by new providers) by the State Council for Teacher Licensing and the National Qualifications Authority to provide appropriate CPD to all VET teachers and enable them to meet legal requirements of the licensing system and improve their teaching;
16. there is support for school-based CPD which is tailored to need and cost-effective, for example induction, mentoring and peer review;
17. there are partnerships that could develop the existing contributions of centres of competence, the University of Pristina, private training providers and NGOs, within and outside of Kosovo, to increase the range, inclusivity, sustainability and quality of CPD provision;
18. there is a system for evaluating the impact of CPD at school level, through teacher appraisal process or mentoring.

The Teacher Training Division of MEST, the VET Council, the VET Centre, vocational schools and wider stakeholders should:

19. design a CPD programme that fulfils the teaching standards based on the Strategic Framework for CPD and the National Qualifications Authority criteria for validation and accreditation;
20. review the process by which CPD is assigned to individual teachers and to schools, for example making use of observation, inspection and peer review activities;
21. give consideration to establishing a system for credit recognition and certification of CPD programmes offered by development partners in cooperation with MEST, before 2013;

22. enhance the capacities of the school quality assurance and work-based learning coordinators and municipal education directorates on need identification and organising and addressing the CPD;
23. examine whether there should be an increase of provision of CPD in the domains of new technologies in the workplace, knowledge of the curriculum and teaching students with special needs;
24. empower ambitious teachers to contribute to and lead improvements in teaching, developing new instructional materials and links with employers by giving them additional responsibilities, salary incentives, special status or involving them in projects, enhancing twinning and other similar local/regional and international partnerships.

With respect to funding, responsible authorities and stakeholders should cooperate to:

25. empower schools and municipalities in decisions about spending resources on CPD in order to encourage efficient and responsive use of scarce resources;
26. encourage vocational schools, training providers (including donors), municipalities and central agencies to work together to obtain the best value from resources;
27. develop new formula for financing vocational schools, taking into account the specifics of different profiles and explore new funding opportunities for CPD such as public-private partnerships, school provision and new international opportunities;
28. publish data on spending on CPD for VET teachers, and establish a unique budget line for CPD for VET teachers at ministry level.

Ministries and national agencies, vocational schools, businesses and their representatives should work together to:

29. support and construct partnerships between vocational schools/training centres and companies (private and public sector) to support collaboration and share training and professional development;
30. involve industrial bodies, business associations and private sector representatives in the process of identification of training needs, designing and validating of CPD programmes and provision;
31. implement competency standards for in-company trainers, work-based learning instructors and work-based learning coordinators;
32. help VET teachers and practical instructors to update their knowledge of current working practices in industry through direct contact with industry.

At the level of institutional responsibilities and governance:

33. The VET Department should be permanently represented in the State Council for Teacher Licensing.
34. MEST should put in place a process for greater coordination at strategic and operational levels for CPD for VET teachers. This might be achieved through an enhanced role for the Agency for VET and Adult Education (AVETA) or through the VET Department together with the Teacher Training Division or through an inter-agency body.
35. The Council for Vocational Education and Training should engage stakeholders and play an active role in the strategic planning of CPD for VET teachers.

36. AVETAE should play a role in the design and implementation of CPD programmes for VET teachers, quality assurance coordinators, coordinators of work-based learning, teachers of professional practice and instructors, and should advise MEST in revising policies for the VET teacher licensing system.
37. The mentoring system at school level should be improved and the role of education inspectors strengthened to provide guidance and advice to teachers in order to enhance performance.

Where to find out more

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