

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN MOLDOVA 2018

Executive summary

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

[https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Moldova%20CPD%20survey%202018\\_rev.pdf](https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Moldova%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

Moldova is a country which has carried out extensive reforms of its vocational education and training (VET) system. This includes the development of new curriculum, the establishment of new kinds of VET providers, sector skills councils and a national qualifications framework. These reforms are intended to bring about greater efficiency in the VET system and better outcomes for learners, workers and employers. However, successful reform requires that those working in the system, in particular teachers and principals, are able and willing to implement these changes.

The purpose of the survey is to identify challenges and needs faced by VET teachers and trainers in continuing professional development (CPD) in order to improve the VET system in Moldova. Particular objectives are:

- identifying the main concerns of principals and teachers of vocational schools on CPD and planned reforms in the VET system based on collected background information;
- determining the key needs of vocational schools in order to improve the provision of school-based CPD;
- identifying the existing internal policy commitments and exploring the opportunities for future policy making with respect to CPD for VET teachers and for principals of vocational schools in Moldova.

The methodology consisted of a literature review, interviews with eight key stakeholders, and surveys with school principals and vocational teachers. The literature reviews and interviews aimed to understand the national context and the progress of recent reforms.

The sample for the surveys included all eligible schools: vocational schools (44 units), colleges (32 units) and centres of excellence (12 units). Some 661 VET teachers submitted responses from 88 different schools, colleges or centres of excellence giving a response rate of 15.1%. Sixty-three principals from 88 different schools, colleges or centres of excellence submitted responses, a response rate of 72%.

## Findings

### Teacher workforce

The vocational workforce is largely female (76% of teachers) and middle aged (61%). Just 13% are under 30. Most vocational teachers have no or little experience of working in the vocational fields that they are teaching: 68% have no practical experience at all. Teachers are formally qualified. The majority of vocational teachers completed pedagogical studies either during their initial studies or subsequently. However, only 61% had benefited from practice teaching in schools during their initial studies.

Issues	Recommendations
An aging teaching workforce	Consider how teaching can be made an attractive career for young people in Moldova
A largely female workforce	Consider how teaching can also attract men in order to set positive models to male students
The workforce lacks experience of the workplace and of practicing vocational skills	Include practical experience in the world of work as part of initial teacher education and CPD

## School governance

The research implies that school directors do exercise some authority over their schools but that they believe they are constrained by lack of resources, lack of staff and also by structural factors such as the wages policy and centralised political decision making. At school level there are formal mechanisms to ensure that stakeholders participate in school decision making. However, in some 50% of vocational schools employers are not formally represented in school governance. The interviews and literature raised the question about how much influence stakeholders can exercise: 50% of directors say that they take the main decisions alone. Directors also say they have too much work.

Directors identified as critical constraints the lack of qualified and/or performing professional teachers (47%) and the lack of adequate textbooks or other materials (44%). Identified as critical constraints were the lack of computers (for 38% of directors), the lack of appropriate software (43%), and the lack of support from parents/guardians (43%).

Some 50% of directors reported that student lateness was a daily or weekly problem. Absenteeism was reported as a weekly or daily problem by 45% of directors. Some 9% of directors said that vandalism or theft was a weekly problem. Intimidation between students was a weekly or daily issue at 12% of schools. Challenges facing schools and their leadership should be understood in the context of experiences of recent reforms and perception that the teaching profession is becoming less attractive.

Issues	Recommendations
Principals and administrative boards do not have authority to manage some key aspects of schools.	Delegate more budget and decisions to school management.
50% of vocational schools have no formal representation of business in their governance.	Require vocational schools and centres of excellence to include business representation and support engagement of business.
Schools lack resources, in particular textbooks, computers and software.	Research resource needs in consultation with schools and funding agencies. Empower schools and teachers in prioritisation.
Vocational schools do not have adequate staffing in terms of specialist teachers and practical instructors.	Review adequacy of staffing in relation to current and future programmes.
Students, parents and teachers are not contributing to governance adequately and, in some cases, are not engaged sufficiently in the success of schools.	Work at school and national levels to engage stakeholders more effectively in school governance, for example by providing training to administration board representatives.

## Approaches to teaching and links to the workplace

According to the survey the majority of vocational teachers are frequently or always making use of both traditional and more modern pedagogies such as group work (75%) and digital learning (69%). Teachers are also experimenting with new pedagogies. Some 59% frequently visit workplaces with their classes and only 47% visit students on placements or visit employers. Dual VET is being piloted in Moldova and 34% of VET teachers say that most of their students obtain more than 10% of their learning time in the workplace.

Teachers rated highly their own efficacy to teach but rated themselves as less effective when it comes to getting students to follow classroom rules, motivating less interested students and controlling disruptive behaviour. Teachers were least likely to believe that they helped students to develop a

commitment to work in their vocational branch – this is a particular concern since a strong transition to employment is perhaps the most distinctive aspiration of VET education. The national curriculum shapes teaching to a much greater extent than the perceived needs of employers or exams.

Only a minority of VET teachers appear to be strongly motivated and satisfied in their work. Teachers were most positive with respect to their own learning and improvement (43% strongly agreed). However, 26% said that they were not motivated to master challenges and 78% of teachers and 75% of school directors said that they thought that the teaching profession was not valued in Moldova.

Issues	Recommendations
Many teachers judge themselves as relatively less effective at motivating learners to learn and to pursue their vocational profession.	Teachers should be supported to adopt more engaging pedagogies that motivate learners. Better links with the workplace and more placements could support a vocational commitment from students.
Although there is good evidence for work-related learning in the classroom there is less evidence of direct interactions with the workplace and employers.	Schools and teachers need support and encouragement to improve links with employers and workplaces.
There is a particular lack of appropriate computers, computer software and consumables for practical work – some classes lack appropriate instructional materials.	More investment is needed in computers, software and consumables. CPD may help teachers to make better use of existing resources.
Teacher satisfaction and motivation is at a moderate level. Teachers and directors believe that they are undervalued.	Teachers should be encouraged to take greater responsibility in planning programmes, developing pedagogy, leading organisational change, making links with businesses and innovation. Teachers should have opportunities to have additional responsibilities and performance recognised in diverse ways.

## Policy and implementation

Education policies place great emphasis on VET as a tool for economic improvement envisaged as a way to provide a better match between the supply of human capital and the current and future needs of the labour market. CPD for teachers does feature within these strategies. The strategy implies that VET teachers will be able to implement new curricula and they will bring about competences that are relevant for learners and employers.

Issues	Recommendations
CPD should help to fulfil the agreed Action Plan and Strategy.	Clarify the implications for CPD from the Strategy and Action Plans, e.g. with respect to numbers, types of training and timeline.
Meeting the expectations of the Action Plan will depend upon the capacity of CPD providers and schools and teachers, for example, to absorb and apply new skills in teaching and learning.	Review whether progress is being made in relation to activities and their impact upon teaching and learning.

## Organisations and institutions

In Moldova, the Ministry of Education sets priorities for CPD and providers, universities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and can propose training programmes which must be nationally accredited by the specialist quality assurance agency. Universities also exercise a quality assurance process upon their own programmes. Providers are expected to monitor provision.

Issues	Recommendations
There is a need to develop the capacity of business and industry to contribute to the governance and provision of CPD for VET teachers and trainers. Need for more opportunities to organise the observation visits or in-service training courses that take place in business premises.	Consider how the sectoral committees can contribute to coordination, promotion and regulation of CPD for VET teachers.
Need to extend provision of CPD although resources are limited and sometimes limited to short-term funding.	Develop database of accredited providers and programmes. Encourage sharing of existing provision and development of new providers and offers where opportunities exist.

## Design and quality assurance

Although providers may consult with potential beneficiaries it is not clear that the design process does generate CPD which is well matched to the needs of VET teachers. It seems that professional specialists and employers and sector councils have little involvement in quality assurance. It is not clear whether there is a process to evaluate the quality of CPD in order to judge whether it is relevant and effective.

The funding of CPD is largely controlled by the Ministry of Education and donors – although universities, centres of excellence and individual teachers make some contribution to financial decision making. This system does not encourage local training providers to offer CPD that is relevant and inclusive (for all teachers and schools). It is not clear how much is spent on CPD for vocational teachers, how this spending is distributed, and whether spending is changing over time.

Issues	Recommendations
Lack of information on total spending on CPD for vocational teachers.	Publish and analyse budget and spending on CPD.
Lack of evaluation of CPD that feeds back into design, quality assurance and accreditation.	Teachers and schools should evaluate effect of CPD and feed back to providers and regulators.
Programme accreditation decisions do not take into account sufficiently the needs of teachers, schools, learners and employers.	Schools, teachers and employers should have involvement in design and quality assurance process – e.g. be consulted.
Schools have little influence over CPD design and offer.	Through projects, delegated budget or partnerships schools should be able to help shape CPD.
There is no online catalogue of CPD where providers, regulators and teachers can access an up-to-date and comprehensive snapshot of provision.	Create and maintain an up-to-date, online catalogue of accredited CPD opportunities along with costs, credits etc.

## Volume of provision

According to the survey, the general rate of annual participation in CPD for vocational teachers in Moldova is 78%, which is near to OECD average. Of those that participate, 66% obtain at least 30 hours per annum. Participation in CPD relating to the vocational specialism of vocational teachers is relatively low, just 46%, while participation in CPD that takes place on business premises is only 17%. Online and video CPD is significant involving some 43% of vocational teachers for an average of 100 hours per annum. CPD that leads to formal qualifications involves 18% of vocational teachers for an average of 200 hours per annum. Some 68% of principals participated in at least 30 hours of CPD workshops annually.

According to administrative records, about 22,000 vocational teachers and principals participated in programmes offered by the 16 centres of training and professional development attached to universities. There is no aggregate record of CPD provided by centres of excellence, NGOs and donors.

Issues	Recommendations
Not enough CPD dedicated to the specialist vocational skills and pedagogy of VET teachers.	More specialised CPD programmes for VET teachers.
Teachers have little CPD that enables them to learn directly from those in the workplace or to observe workplace practices.	Partnerships between employers, CPD providers, schools and centres of excellence could be set up to engage employers in CPD.
Data on CPD provision is not unified and cannot be analysed to understand trends and issues.	Data on what, where, and how much training has been provided should be collected and stored in a common database.
Alternative modes of CPD, for example online learning, observation visits, networks and mentoring may offer ways to extend participation and duration of CPD.	Centres of excellence and/or centres of training and professional development could function as hubs to disseminate diverse modes of CPD.

## School-based CPD

Mentoring has been encouraged by new regulations and 42% of principals report that mentoring is in place for all new teachers beginning in their schools. However, there is no provision of mentoring in some 21% of vocational schools. Some 43% of VET teachers have some experience as mentors but only 37% have received training. Formal induction exists in less than 50% of vocational schools although some kind of informal and administrative induction is normal.

Issues	Recommendations
Not all beginning teachers are able to access mentoring.	Ensure that all vocational schools have capacity to mentor.
Not all mentors have received training.	Ensure that all mentors receive appropriate training.

## Relevance and impact

The survey provides evidence that key CPD topics are being addressed in Moldova and also that about two thirds of participants judge CPD to have had moderate or high impact on their teaching. CPD relating to ICT, the curriculum and the subject area have relatively high impact. The fact that 20% to 30% of participants judge that CPD had no or little impact suggests that there are issues of quality and/or mismatch.

Issues	Recommendations
Decisions about provision (design, funding, criteria) should take account of the training needs of schools and teachers as well as national priorities.	Attention should be given to surveys but also to needs analysis carried out in schools and also to inputs through consultations with stakeholders.
More than 20% of all CPD has little impact, according to teachers.	Irrelevant or low quality CPD should be eliminated. CPD should be closely connected to teaching practice in order to maximise impact.
CPD is not linked to whole organisational development but only to individual and national objectives.	CPD should be linked to school development strategies so that school leadership is committed to converting CPD into improvements in teaching and learning.

The survey demonstrates a significant training gap. At least 47% of non-participants expressed a medium or high need for CPD with respect to every topic listed. The topics of relatively greatest need are: cross-curricula and transversal skills; addressing the challenge of learners at risk of dropout; updating professional skills; and ICT skills and knowledge of new technologies. The interviews suggest that teachers need support and CPD in order to apply new pedagogies and to help them adapt to the changed conditions of teaching in Moldova.

## Recognition and incentives

Teachers are expected to undertake CPD as required by the Teacher Regulations and the School External Evaluation Framework. There is no requirement that VET teachers complete a certain volume or certain kinds of CPD. There is no formal system that determines how the professional career of a teacher or their status or salary benefits from CPD. CPD is not clearly linked to the development of professional careers so that vocational teachers see it as a way to improve their performance, gain extra responsibilities and advance their careers.

Teachers are encouraged to develop a professional development portfolio by participating in CPD programmes. However, it is not clear what the portfolio is used for. CPD does not seem to be seen by school leadership as a tool to bring about school improvement, hence improvements in teaching resulting from CPD are not given strong recognition.

Issues	Recommendations
CPD is not clearly linked to the development of professional careers so that vocational teachers see it as a way to improve their performance, take on additional responsibilities and advance their careers.	CPD should equip teachers to take on additional responsibilities and progress in their careers.
CPD is not strongly linked to school improvement.	Schools should prepare CPD plans which link staff development to school improvement.









# Where to find out more

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