

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN MONTENEGRO 2018

Executive summary

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

https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-01/Montenegro%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

The purpose of the research is to understand better the condition of vocational teachers in Montenegro, in particular with respect to their professional development, but also more widely with respect to their attitudes, behaviour and the environment in which they work.

Methodology

The methodology includes three strands:

- analysis of documents and research publications, in particular with respect to the policy framework;
- analysis of interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders;
- analysis of responses from the online surveys conducted with VET teachers and school principals.

All of the teachers and principals from all of the vocational schools were invited to participate in the survey; 393 VET teachers and 40 principals responded from 37 schools – response rates were 22% and 93% respectively.

Most VET teachers in Montenegro are well qualified and have a permanent contract of employment. However, a significant portion of them has little or no initial education in pedagogy, i.e. didactics and teaching methodology. Teachers do not spend a great deal of time collaborating professionally with colleagues and frequently work many years in just one school.

The research confirms that school principals exercise authority particularly in the areas of recruitment and initiating new programmes. They report high engagement with all stakeholders and claim to share decision making widely. However, the legal requirement requires only one representative of employers on the school board – which is limited. Principals report that their ability to manage effectively is constrained by their multiple responsibilities, lack of resources and heavy regulation.

Most VET teachers say that they are frequently differentiating learning tasks and relating learning to practical problems. However, many make frequent use of traditional pedagogies dependent on teacher-talk and repetition of tasks. There is relatively little use of group work and assessment data is not frequently used to tailor learning tasks to students. While many teachers do teach through work-like learning tasks in schools, most teachers report relatively little interaction with employers.

Students are said to be motivated but the vast majority of teachers do experience interruptions and nearly a third of teachers say that they do not enjoy teaching any of their classes. Teachers are not satisfied with learning resources available for the students. In particular, there is a lack of consumables for practical skills, digital learning materials and access to the internet. The school information technology infrastructure is judged inadequate by many teachers. Most of the time students do not use digital learning resources.

The system defines minimum requirements for professional development and a definition of professional progress of teachers. Schools must develop biannual continuing professional development (CPD) plans for teachers and teachers are obliged to maintain their professional portfolio and make an annual professional development plan.

The key institutions and their responsibilities are well established in Montenegro. The VET Centre has recently appointed an officer to take a national coordination role for CPD for VET teachers. The Chamber has demonstrated its commitment to VET and has been able to support a number of recent initiatives. Cooperation has been particularly strong with respect to improvements in work-based learning and the training of company-based trainers. However, it appears difficult to construct a consensus on effective action to address persistent problems for VET teachers, such as under-provision of CPD focusing on specialist needs. Obstacles to cooperation between organisations persist, which stop them acting together to agree and implement strategies for CPD. The VET Centre does not have budget or capacity to deliver extensive VET programmes. There are not many providers able to offer relevant CPD.

The VET Centre is not involved in the training of teachers of general subjects in vocational schools, which comes within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Educational Services (BES). However, although the teachers may participate in some BES programmes their particular needs are not targeted.

It is not clear how much is spent on CPD for VET teachers in Montenegro or how the VET Centre decides which programmes should be offered freely to schools. Schools do not have dedicated budgets to purchase CPD so there is a concern that they will try to meet the licensing requirements by making use of 'free' training even if that does not match well to their training needs.

The survey indicates an impressive increase in CPD participation – from 76% of VET teachers in 2015 to 91% in 2018. Participation in CPD addressing the vocational specialism of teachers was up from 40% in 2015 to 67% in 2018. CPD that took place in a business environment was up from 27% to 32%. Montenegrin vocational teachers undertaking training obtained an average of 41 hours of CPD (within or outside of school). Some 61% of participants received at least 30 hours over 12 months in 2018.

More vocational teachers participate in CPD out of school (84%) than in school (67%). Modern methods of CPD are becoming more widespread in Montenegro. Participation in CPD involving active learning was up from 66% in 2015 to about 85%. Participation in CPD involving new technologies was up from 53% (2015) to 66% (2018). Almost one third of vocational teachers participated in some form of digital or video-based learning.

The use of new methods of CPD is not yet 'normal'. Around one third of vocational teachers did not participate at all in collaborative activities with other teachers or in CPD using new technologies. Principals receive mentoring and training immediately after their appointment but this is mainly focused on administrative duties and regulations. They do not receive CPD which addresses such issues as the improvement of teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation of school performance. They do not benefit from ongoing CPD which would help them to meet new challenges or exploit new opportunities, such as building stronger relationships with local businesses.

Planning of CPD is a requirement for schools and for each teacher, and each school should have a CPD coordinator to manage the process. Unfortunately, the process does not appear to be shaping priorities nor greatly influencing CPD provision. Furthermore, there seems to be little effort to measure the effect of the trainings completed on the quality of teaching after the training.

Mentorship is a well-defined process, and novice teachers are assigned mentors. According to some interviewees, the number of feedback sessions between mentors and novice teachers during this process is low. It appears that most mentors share the subject specialism of their mentees but only

half of all active mentors have been trained. A considerable number of teachers, contracted on an initial or temporary basis, never receive mentoring.

Most teachers participated in CPD that addressed the core issues of subject knowledge, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. Many vocational teachers did not participate in the particular forms of CPD that they needed. The gap is particularly high with respect to new technologies and the use of ICT, current practice in the workplace as well as training addressing students with special needs or early leavers.

The survey raises doubts about the efficiency of CPD in Montenegro since for almost all types of CPD teachers were more likely to report no or limited impact upon their teaching than moderate or major impact. Low impact may be due to a lack of quality assurance or a failure to link CPD to practice. Low impact may also be due to a mismatch between provision and need.

Although professional standards have been developed and agreed there is almost no evidence on how these standards are affecting CPD of teachers and principals or informing the training programmes on offer.

The Bureau of Educational Services and the VET Centre record their own provision and the provision of accredited programmes but data is not collected in a form that permits analysis to see how much CPD is received by vocational teachers. Information on the participation of teachers in CPD (including trainings) needs to be consolidated into one register.

The volume of CPD appears sufficient to enable teachers to meet the relicensing requirements. Currently, however, only some kinds of CPD are recognised for licensing, for example formal qualifications, digital and online learning do not contribute to licensing. Professional development for principals, with the exception of induction training, is not well tailored to need.

Priority recommendations

1. Extend the pedagogical training for newly appointed VET teachers. This could be done in various ways: compulsory one-year traineeship programme guided by a mentor; a series of active workshops over the training year; a blended programme; a programme supported by the university.
2. Improve the involvement of social partners in school governance.
3. Train principals on how to conduct teachers' appraisal process and establish appraisal as regular practice in the school, involving other relevant senior teachers.
4. Encourage teachers to make extensive use of a wide range of pedagogies to engage learners and address low-level disruption.
5. Encourage CPD and online collaboration between teachers to share teacher-designed instructional materials and good practice.
6. Vocational schools should improve cooperation and communication with local and regional employers to expose students and teachers to employers and hands-on experience. Possible strategies include teacher placements in industry, industry representation on school boards, school-business partnerships, and initiatives from business associations and chambers.
7. Minimum requirements for CPD should not be the main driver for most teachers. Rather they should provide the framework within which teachers benefit from relevant and useful CPD that leads to improvements in teaching and/or career progress.

8. More involvement of stakeholders in designing policies and supporting quality assurance.
9. Stronger involvement of industry in designing training programmes for VET teachers, but also training of in-company trainers. This implies stronger involvement of employers' representatives in governance, design, quality assurance and delivery of CPD for teachers and school principals.
10. School CPD coordinators should be able to communicate their training needs to those responsible for prioritisation, design and accreditation and should monitor and provide feedback on the progress and impact of CPD.
11. Develop the qualitative criteria for selecting the CPD programmes to be offered and develop evaluation processes to improve the impact of CPD and increase efficiency.
12. Ensure that decisions about priorities take into account up-to-date information about needs – explore whether schools can take greater responsibility for CPD decisions.
13. CPD for principals of vocational schools should be reviewed in relation to their needs and best practice in other countries. Mentoring, peer learning and dedicated CPD to support new challenges may be relevant.
14. Encourage diverse, sustainable modes of CPD, for example by empowering teacher associations and making use of online communities and peer learning.
15. Design and implement a Montenegrin education information system module, which will record the type of CPD and the number of training hours for each teacher and teacher's portfolio.
16. Licensing requirements should take into consideration forms of professional development apart from seminars (e.g. digital learning, relevant formal qualifications).

Where to find out more

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www.etf.europa.eu

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info@etf.europa.eu



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