

COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICE IN VET TEACHER AND TRAINER TRAINING IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION

The background

This Compendium of “good practice” in the development of teachers and trainers in vocational education and training has been prepared for the South Eastern Europe Regional Seminar in Tirana organised by ETF in January 2005. All sixteen cases in the Compendium come from the South Eastern European (SEE) countries and have been written by participants of three previous ETF Seminars for the region held in Sofia (March 2002), Dubrovnik (March 2003) and Skopje (December 2003). This is the second volume of case studies from these Seminars, but this expanded version is the first one that is exclusively built on contributions from the region.

It has not been so easy to persuade teachers and teacher educators to contribute articles to the compendium. The ETF TT Network has now existed in three years. It started with a difficult reconstruction phase where participants, embarrassed and shy after the Yugoslav war tragedy, gradually had to learn to work together again. But a strong network culture has gradually been established, and in the next phase it is realistic to envisage the network to develop into a ‘community of practitioners’. However, there may still be a completely wrong feeling that there is not so much to report from the countries and also a certain insecurity about the importance of the role of teachers in VET reform. But teachers are the key to successful reform. And as the collection of case descriptions demonstrates, a lot of valuable innovative concepts and practices can be identified in this region. We know that there is a rich field of innovators of learning out there – but we don’t know them yet. This Compendium is just a start. It is based on contributions from volunteers who – free of charge – wanted to describe and reflect on own development work. All contributions had to be drafted in English, which is also for many an additional barrier, and have then been slightly adapted linguistically by the editors.

The need

The reform of EU and partner country VET systems has been underway for more than a decade. Initially major efforts were focused on reforming the curricula of the VET schools and training centres to align them better with the rapidly changing needs of the labour market. Significant investment in VET reform came from Phare and Tacis programmes, the EU action programmes in education such as Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates, and the creation of the EU agencies ETF and (earlier) CEDEFOP. From these investments come many opportunities for exchanging good practice. Sharing and learning from materials, expertise and personnel, institutional links and national reforms all contribute to the modernising of VET systems. But educational reform is not only about changing policies, regulations, curricula and teaching materials. Teachers and trainers are the point of contact with VET students and trainees. They have to handle the changes in curriculum and methodology and to fit their work to the changing needs of the labour market. This involves developing new skills, new flexibility, new experiences and new beliefs. In 1999 the situation and needs of VET TTT was summed up as follows:

The absence of a separate VET-oriented TTT system is pointed to in many of the National Observatory Reports on TTT from central Europe as a barrier to progress in implementing reform. There is widespread concern to bring the status of VET TTT into line with that of general education.

VET is set apart from general education by additional demands placed on it of which the following needs suggest special treatment of VET TTT:

- incorporation of social partners into many aspects of VET
- the integration of training and workplace learning
- continuous adjustment to labour market developments
- transparency and 'Europeanisation' of qualifications and international mobility
- special didactics relating to the huge range of practical skills across many professions.¹

A higher priority is now being given to VET TTT in the ETF Work Plan 2003 and in the CARDS programming for the South Eastern European countries.

The purpose

The purpose of this collection of examples of good practice in VET TTT is to stimulate developmental thinking for improved policy, provision and practice (3 broad levels) in the VET TTT sub-sector. In line with the well-established network strategies to support the dissemination and continuing exchange within and between countries. The examples relate specifically to TTT - teacher and trainer training. They are drawn from West Balkan countries and illustrate approaches to helping teachers and trainers and those who develop them to come to terms with the massive changes around them to solving the problems of policy, provision and practice.

The meaning

What do we mean by 'good practice' at these three levels? The ultimate test of good practice is that it raises the effectiveness of teachers and trainers in preparing their students and trainees for present and future employment or entrepreneurship in the modern labour market. The aspirations for VET also extend beyond questions of employability to the promotion of good democratic citizenship. Many fine words have been composed to inspire teachers and trainers to face these big challenges but 'good practice' implies action and achievement which is less easy to find than good intentions. The examples in this compendium describe specific outcomes that have contributed to improvement in TTT policy, provision and practice in the West Balkans. They cover a range of specific achievements and improvements from simple activities for teachers in their school to national policy initiatives and projects that impact also on the provision of VET TTT and the practice of teachers and trainers in their workplaces. They have been selected for their relevance to those seeking to improve the capacity of teacher and trainer training in VET systems and because they seem to make an impact on how teachers and trainers work with students and trainees.

The format

The case descriptions of good practice are broadly covering the broad field from large-scale examples that encompass all three levels of policy, provision and practice

¹ European Training Foundation: Innovative Practice in Teacher and Trainer Training in Vocational Education and Training. Advisory Forum Report, 1999.

to more specific innovations and developments. They are here arranged in alphabetic order based on country background.

Each example is presented in the same format of five questions as follows:

1. What? -description of the practice
2. Why? - the need or problem
3. How? - strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties
4. Who? - initiators, supporters, implementers
5. Results? - achievements, sustainability, recommendations

This simple format should assist the reader in understanding and comparing the examples. If the case descriptions, hopefully, inspire readers to start their own development work, it is easy to get in contact with the contact persons listed under each case to receive more material and advice.

An invitation

The compendium should be seen as a 'living document' to be elaborated and added to as our experience of 'good practice' expands. We invite the reader to use the format of five questions to draft summaries of their own experiences and achievements in promoting improved VET TTT. These can then be added to the 'living document'. Some of them can be presented at future Seminars. Such drafts for adding to the collection can be sent to:

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INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

1. Developing teaching Portfolios in “Hotel-Tourism” Schools (Albania)

What?

With the collaboration and support of an Austrian Kulturkontakt project, the Department of Vocational Education in the Institute of Pedagogical Studies in Tirana began to experiment from May 2001 with the compilation of the teacher’s portfolio in two Hotel-Tourism schools in Tirana and Saranda. The broad purpose was to improve teaching and to establishing a lasting tradition of portfolio use as a means to that end.

Why?

The following factors determined the need for the teaching portfolio:

- The lack of teaching materials necessary for lessons, particularly for the 4th and 5th grades, as well as for the lessons of the 1st grades.
- Specialist teachers of the vocational schools in Albania are hired without taking any pedagogical training and therefore they encounter difficulties in putting together curricular materials. With the exception of training offered by Austrian specialists particularly on the professional subjects, in the Hotel-Tourism school (Tirana), the teachers lack any continued institutional training, which then leads to difficulties in drafting teaching materials.
- The movement of teachers away from teaching in search for better-paid work often creates skill shortages in teaching and making teaching materials (Hotel-Tourism a comparably new branch of VET).
- The creation of a group of experienced specialist teachers in order to convey up-to-date positive experience to younger teachers by encouraging them to produce portfolios
- The difficulty of self-evaluation or of the evaluation of specialist teachers by school directors.

Who?

The group of teachers includes specialist teachers from the schools of Saranda and Tirana, who already have experience in teaching. The teachers work independently from one-another, but on the basis of common experience that was established in the course of seminars and workshops. There are representative teachers from both schools, in the subjects of cooking, restaurant, tourism and economics, with a view to comparing and exchanging experiences.

How?

A series of seminars was organised at the same time as the compilation of the portfolio to support and encourage their production. The **goals** of these seminars were:

- Improvement of teachers' ability to improve the connection between teaching and the labour market, with this being reflected in the quality of the preparation of teaching materials and the portfolio;
- Evaluation of materials prepared by the teachers (as tasks set by the previous seminars), presentation of several ways of compiling support materials for the lessons and the selection of the most appropriate model.
- Discussion of criteria for drafting of the tests and selection of the most appropriate types of tests for each subject.

How?

Contents of the Portfolios

The portfolio will include:

- *Table of contents* – as an important introductory element that makes it easier to find information contained in the portfolio.
- *Brief summary of materials* contained in the dossier. It is advisable that for materials deemed as important, a brief summary is provided.
- *Examples of the class organisation structure*. Examples of the class plan, such as in practical subjects (cooking, restaurant, reception, etc.) whereby a variety of ways can be used to organise the students as well as various teaching methods.
- *Teaching materials prepared by the teachers* for the lesson (there is insufficient teaching materials in many subjects).
- *Student evaluation samples*. For instance, sample tests have been drafted. It has been suggested that the teachers' opinions be included with regard to the tests performed, the positive and negative aspects, teachers' needs in this regard as well as the incorporation of other ways of student evaluation (the tests are not the only instruments for their evaluation).
- *Student tasks*. Individual tasks as well as group work may be incorporated.
- *Photographs and tapes* as didactic media in practical subjects to increase the efficiency of the teaching and learning process.
- *Other aspects* according to the teachers' creativity.

Assessment of the Portfolios

For the purpose of portfolio assessment, it was suggested that the same model be used for all portfolios based on *broad professional competencies* and *key specialist competencies*. This is due to the fact that the teachers need to determine:

- the *path to be followed by the students in order to achieve this competence*,
- the *tools* that should be used
- the *time* that is needed for them to achieve this competence.

All the teachers have defined the key competencies for their subjects and have discussed the connections between key competencies and teaching objectives. In parallel, work is under way to *draft new materials and complete existing ones*.

Through group work the teachers themselves drafted the *outcomes* for the particular subjects. It is worth emphasising that in the course of group work, the teachers are grouped not only by subjects, but by the schools they represent.

The teachers practise how *“to read” a subject programme* and discuss the content in relation to their own knowledge of the vocational education curriculum. They practise constructing and sequencing objectives for achieving the goals of the teaching and learning process. The accurate definition of competencies and objectives is important for the *drafting of student assessment tests*. A lot of work was done during the workshops on the selection of the most appropriate tests for the respective subjects.

Why have a portfolio?

1. During the supervision of the teacher, many school directors or inspectors prefer to examine written materials that teacher uses in the teaching process. If the entire activity carried out during the lesson is “archived” in the portfolio, then the teacher feels more confident with the evidence.
2. The portfolio represents a good basis for the self-evaluation of the work done by the teacher and for continuous improvement in the future.
3. The sharing of positive experience between experienced and less experienced teachers becomes possible when it is documented in a portfolio.

How should the portfolio be organised?

The way that the portfolio is presented is of special significance. Several rules are suggested, which are taken into consideration by the teachers and help assessing the work carried out. These rules are:

1. Use hard cover folders with clasps that allow written materials to be inserted and replaced.
2. Number the dividing sheets between the materials according to the contents.
3. Prepare the materials with a computer using of appropriate fonts (in software such as Word Art, Clipart, etc) in order to develop computing and design skills
4. The same symbols need to be used and no more than three types of lettering or colours.

Teaching aids make up an important part of the teaching portfolio, because teaching materials are missing in a series of subjects. These materials are of particular significance because they provide an essential foundation for efficient lessons, facilitating the assimilation of the knowledge and skills by the students.

A lot of discussion during the seminars focused on the different models for drafting teaching materials. Some materials of the portfolio are drafted only for teachers, whereas other materials are used by both teachers and students. Elements of the modular system are considered during drafting the portfolio.

If the prepared material is to be distributed to students, the necessary information for them should also be provided. The preliminary requirements for students should be defined, the tasks or activities that the student should accomplish need to be described, the criteria for carrying out the activities may also be specified and the assessment techniques should be explained.

A special focus is given to the evaluation of teachers during the preparation of portfolio. So far, the assessment is made of presentations of materials by teachers at each meeting . In collaboration with Kulturkontakt, Austria, the criteria for the evaluation of portfolios are defined.

Results?

Given the success of the current project, this experience will be transferred to other teachers and on other subjects as well.

References used in developing the portfolios:

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2. Teacher training through “twinning” arrangements – Phare VET (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

What? – Description of the practice

One important component of the EU Phare VET Reform programmes is the partner school approach. It concentrates on learning three things through partnership between schools in different countries:

- curriculum development,
- the introduction of new school workshop equipment,
- teacher training.

This typical example is from the Phare VET project in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1997-2000. It related to the Profession: “Electricity” and operated in three pilot schools:

1. Srednja Strucna Skola TESANJ, Patriotske lige bb. (Bosniak school)
2. Transport/traffic and electro school DOBOJ (Republik Srepska)
3. EU partner school: Slagelse Technical College, DK

The Phare pilot project ran from Feb. 1999 to April 2000. The initial phase concentrated on finding ways to “shape” the workshops when new equipment would be available. The joint development team started with development of new curricula. A modular model had been chosen which, with some adaptations, turned out to be very useful. The pilot schools together with Slagelse TC developed a broad curriculum entitled “Electrician/Electro-mechanic” to reflect that in future, vocational education will be less specialised and more adjustable than the former narrow specialisation. The curriculum particularly emphasised practical training and gave higher priority to electrical subjects and linked natural sciences with content related to the practical application in the profession. The new and broader curriculum is flexible and will enhance the employability of graduates.

By allocating 40% of time to practical training it is expected to solve the increasing problem of motivating students. Practical training at the schools has been expanded to 1, 2 and 3 days in the first, second and third school year, respectively. Teachers have to shift their teaching methods towards a more holistic, inductive and project-based approach and to replace the former very frequent theoretical student tests with practical tests.

The Bosnian group went to Slagelse twice: 6 teachers and two principals the first time, and 2 directors and administrative staff the second time. This element in the partner-school arrangements was particularly valuable. They were introduced to a totally different school culture based on student-activating methods. They saw how the Danish dual VET system functioned in practice (2/3 of the programme spent in a company). With the support of the Danish team they succeeded to find companies in the communities of Tesanj and Doboje willing to function as practical training sites for students.

Why? – The need or problem

In BiH VET teachers are basically good in the fundamentals of electricity, in theoretical understanding of academic knowledge and the more abstract pedagogics. They know the modern theories, concepts and jargon but they are unable to translate this knowledge into action competencies interwoven with the specific subject matter in the occupational field. Teachers have acceptable pedagogical skills in general didactics, but they need upgrading in the vocational subject area and in particular special didactics (Fachdidaktik) or the specific "pedagogical subject matter" which for the VET teachers is often tacit (in their unconscious mind) and internalised. In addition, they need skills in organising differentiated learning processes of varying levels of difficulty to support students with lower learning abilities. They also need training in how to organise "the democratic classroom" as well as how to configure and arrange of school workshops based on modern principles of work practice.

Occupational subject teachers feel that they are involved in teaching a profession (in this case electricity) that will narrow the gap in achieving EU levels of qualifications and competencies. This is the best point of departure for pedagogical, didactical and methodical innovation and is also a motivational factor. They are as proud of their profession as in any other country. *"They will follow you the North Pole if you start from here!"*

In BiH there has been a distinct division between teachers with a theoretical approach and tasks of teaching and those with a practical approach. Teachers of theory are highly qualified in all basic knowledge of the technology in use in Bosnia until recent times. Similarly, teachers of practice are well qualified, but within a quite narrow field of specialisation. To integrate theory and practice in curriculum implementation, individual teachers need to combine the two forms of expertise. There is a need for all electricity teachers to be trained in the pedagogical use of a wide range of simple and advanced electrical equipment.

The new curriculum creates the need for widespread teacher training across the system. Concretely, up-skilling needs to focus on:

- Pedagogical methodology with emphasis on practical training aspects of fundamental electricity subject-matter
- Pedagogical methodology with emphasis on practical training for older technology as well as novel and advanced technology.

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

"An electricity teacher is first and foremost an electricity teacher all over the world. We are all interested in our subject and that is more important than anything else. This was the atmosphere in which we worked together. And this was our approach. (Klaus Thrane, Head of Electricity Department, Slagelse TC)

However, the Phare project only required development of new curricula as well as specifications of teacher training needs. Teacher training was not included. A training needs assessment was undertaken and pointed out needs for special didactics directly related to the introduction of new

technology (changes in techniques, work organisation and man-machine interfaces requiring an updating also of work-process knowledge ("Arbeitsprozesswissen").

The requirements are two-fold:

- first teachers of theoretical and practical subjects related to the occupation must learn themselves to understand and master the new technology,
- then they must learn to organise learning processes based on the acquired new knowledge, skills and the novel technology in the school workshops.

When the EU Phare project ended in April 2000 additional support was clearly needed. A Danish-funded follow-up project was funded (EURO 90000), about twice as much as the Phare VET contract signed with Slagelse TC). The following training input was provided:

- 2 weeks in BiH, 2 Slagelse teachers
- 2 weeks in BiH, 2 Slagelse teachers
- 1 week in BiH, 3 Slagelse teachers.

Experience from the Phare project had shown that the active teaching from two Danish teachers proved necessary to accomplish efficient hands-on training with this relatively complicated and advanced equipment. This need for intensive training by 'shadowing' is very time-consuming and is often neglected in development projects. Too much focus has been placed on purchasing of new equipment coupled with quite general, context-free teacher training. But there are serious barriers to widespread use of this intensive hands-on training. It is costly and EU partner schools cannot do it in central and eastern European partner schools without money.

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

The initiator of the particular twinning component was the Phare VET reform programme for BiH which selected 6 occupations and 12 pilot schools as pilot areas; EU schools were selected based on an open tendering procedure. The activities were supported by Phare money and a Danish bilateral grant. The framework for implementation was organised by the Phare PMU in Sarajevo and a group of experienced teachers from two BiH schools and one Danish VET school implemented the activities.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

One important and general lesson for development projects organised in accordance with the Phare VET programme philosophy can be drawn. If the 8 electricity teachers had not received the intense TT programme (3 x 1 week with 2-3 Danish vocational subject teachers) focused on special didactics, they would have hardly been able to use the new equipment for teaching and training. Pedagogic strategies in teacher and trainer training must start with the specific subject matter ("Fachlichkeit"). The group came a long way because the "twinning" teachers were respected as being highly competent teachers. The BiH teachers learned innovative pedagogical methods "behind the backs" of their Danish partners by identifying with and imitating them and by having time set deliberately aside for more formalised action-reflection learning. Pedagogics should probably never be "context-free" in vocational teacher training. It should meet the teachers where they stand in the classroom or in the

workshop. Mentoring and "shadowing" principles as a basis for experiential learning are highly functional in VET teacher training.

However, in this project only two pilot schools received training. The challenge is now how to transmit the new curricula and methodologies to the approx. 40 VET schools in BiH offering electrician education. The two pilot schools are well placed and qualified for starting a cascading process throughout the country. In the two BiH schools, teacher training needs were described as related first and foremost to special didactics (pedagogical subject matter), mastering of new technology and new work organisation, and support related to practical, actual teaching. Courses on new teaching methods per se, on more general foci such as how to organise student-activating methods, cannot stand alone. It is a clear finding that more direct support for teachers struggling in the field with transforming new curricula and integrating new pedagogic equipment should be upgraded. *"I can directly release my existing knowledge and skills and relate it to all the new methodologies"* (Electricity teacher in the VET school in Tesanj).

At the same time more general courses on teaching methods are needed but in a different form. Taking 1 principal and 2 teachers out of their context and sending them to courses far away from the school is not optimal. In the future this broad teacher training should take place directly at the school with a bigger group of teachers so that training may also support the development of the whole group. Needs exist for both types of teacher training, however. The "twinning" arrangement functions well with vocational theory and practice subjects teachers. All teachers, however, would profit from this kind of support dedicated to the new content and methods of teaching their subjects. Teacher training probably functions best as an integral part of performing the concrete job functions as a teacher, also in the general subjects.

Source: "Final Evaluation of BiH Phare Reform", ETF, 2001

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3. Building a network of mentors (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

What? – Description of the practice

This example of good practice involves building capacity for teacher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina by creating a network of mentors across the country. It is a training of trainers project intended to create an infrastructure to cascade new ideas and methodologies widely to the teaching profession. The seminars are organised by EU office in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the approval of Federal Ministry of Education and Ministry of Education of Republica Srpska. Activities at the seminar are led jointly by European experts and local experts.

Why? - The need or problem

The mentors will be trained to disseminate their knowledge and skills to other teachers, inspectors, consultants and school principals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in both entities - the Federation and Republica Srpska. The goal is to make a network of mentors in the country as a base on which we can build our future educational reform.

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

Three seminars were planned for this training, in November 2002, February 2003 and May 2003. Each seminar was four days long. The majority of the participants were VET school teachers. After successful completion, the newly trained mentors receive a certificate. They become official mentors and they continue to train other teachers all over the country in different aspects of teaching process: curriculum development, adult education, evaluation and new interactive methodology.

Sixty people were included in this training. They are from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina, both entities Federation and Republica Srpska and from different cantons. For example, there are four people from Canton Sarajevo who teach at two PHARE VET pilot schools. They are already familiar with the modular approach and new methodology in teaching. Teachers of practice, theoretical and general subjects make up the group.

The workshops consisted of plenary sessions and workshops. There were also tasks to do between seminars about which reports were given in the following seminar. While they are in workshops they are divided into four groups. Each group worked with an EU VET expert as follows:

- first group - training for modular curriculum development
- second group - training for adult education
- third group - training for evaluation
- fourth group - training on new methodology

The following is an example of a task carried out between seminars by group three. It can be done in any school as an evaluation test for the new teaching methodology. Of course, it is important to be careful with new things in an old system of education. There are three steps in the experiment:

1. Choose a class and make a lesson plan that will be realised
2. Make a questionnaire that students will fill in unsigned about the class that you previously prepared and realised
3. You yourself evaluate the class and then compare your own judgements with the results of the questionnaire completed by the students

That has just been done in my school for a Geography class and three reports for each step one have been sent to EU VET office in Sarajevo. The first report is about the Lesson Plan, the second outlines the results of the students' questionnaire and the third report is the teachers' evaluation of the lesson'

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

The overall project is already contributing to modernising teaching processes, but unfortunately only in a number of schools. We hope that we will take advantage from the differences that are present in our country - national, cantonal, cultural and curricula and we hope that we will eliminate some of the disadvantages. With the help from EU experts we feel confident of making progress, a good TT net in Bosnia and Herzegovina. and good connections to the rest of the TT net in south east Europe. At this early stage of the project no significant difficulties have been encountered. These are likely to emerge later during implementation but we are working with the assumption that 'problems are challenges' and that 'to fail is to learn'!

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4. In-service training for the 'psycho-education' of adolescents in tutorials (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Why? – The need or problem solved

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, war and post-war stresses such as aggressive behaviour, suicide and apathy are still manifested in different ways in adolescents. It is very hard for teachers to communicate successfully with these students and even harder to teach them what the curriculum requires. Considering needs of young people, especially those strongly affected by the war and post-war circumstances, experts in education have searched for ways of giving them more professional psychological and pedagogical help through regular educational work.

Who? - Initiators, supporters, implementers

To help young people and teachers, a project 'Curriculum for the emotional education of adolescents' was led by American author Ann Vernon at four three-day seminars. Approximately thirty-five pedagogues and psychologists, including staff from all the pilot schools attended. Using this model, the Pedagogical Institutes in Sarajevo, Republika Srpska and Tuzlansko-Podrinjski canton developed a project to help secondary school students to learn strategies for dealing with problems characteristic for their age. Material support for this project was given from German Association for Science and Development (GTZ) in Sarajevo. The local contribution was in the form of classrooms for lectures and workshops. Participants are promoted into mentor pedagogue or psychologist who continue education of other teachers. Ministries of Education from the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republica Srpska, gave the support.

How? - Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The Pedagogical Institutes suggested six schools for the project. They got ministerial approval for their involvement in the project. Schools were chosen to participate that had children who were unable to get a real picture about themselves and to adjust better to the real world by following the regular curriculum. The project included 15 schools from Canton Sarajevo, 15 schools from Republica Srpska and 5 schools from Tuzlansko-Podrinjski canton. They were a mixture of VET schools and general secondary schools.

What? – Description of the practice

The project was realised in three levels:

1. Pedagogues and psychologists from this schools were educated through seminars
2. Pedagogues and psychologists then educated teachers-tutors from their schools (each of them had five teachers)
3. Teachers implemented the new methods in their classes

Education of pedagogues and psychologists was realised in four three days seminars that had basic education of cognitive, emotional, social and development of personality. The seminars also enabled exchange of experience concerning implementation of the project.

Sixteen workshops were held with 15 to 17 year-old students of the first and the second class in these schools. Workshops were in the form of tutorials from above-mentioned psychological-pedagogical fields. Topics included:

- inter-personal communication between students
- expressing individual problems and needs
- improving of student-teacher communication,
- developing empathy and respect for others' needs,
- active listening and to assertiveness.

Results? – Successes, sustainability, recommendations

The project is continuing in the schools. First the mentors educated in their own schools. Then teachers who had received the training opened up their classrooms for mutual observation. Evidence of the benefits of this project for students and for teachers includes better student-student and student-teacher communication. Students are now able to express their needs better. Ministries of Education as well as Pedagogical Institutes evaluated the project and GTZ are still supervising. Their interim report expressed satisfaction with the project.

One additional result of this project is Handbook for teachers that will be published by UNICEF in Sarajevo.

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5. Teacher Training in schools: Peering into classes (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

What - description of the practice

Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities: Federation of BiH and Republica Srpska. They have their Ministries of Education and Republica Srpska has a Pedagogical Institute. The Federation consists of ten cantons and each canton has its Ministry of Education and also Pedagogical Institute. We have a Federal Ministry of Education but we do not have a Federal Pedagogical Institute although the Pedagogical Institute from Sarajevo canton tries to create seminars for people from the wider region. So, we also had different curricula and different schoolbooks. There was a strong need for the school system in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be reformed, first at the state level and then bringing schools closer to modern technology, new teaching methods and the standards of school systems in EU countries.

School reform in our country began with the PHARE-VET project. My school the 'Mixed Secondary School for Catering and Tourism' in Sarajevo was one of 12 pilot schools in the PHARE-VET programme. The first focus for reform was the curriculum. Teachers from pilot schools created new curricula under the supervision of EU experts with the approval of Ministries of Education from both entities. Three teachers formed a team for each subject. After the new curricula received ministerial approval, we had to implement them in classrooms. Because it was hard to implement the new approaches, we decided to have special experimental or 'respectable' classes in which the teacher sets a date when other teachers can come to observe and criticise.

Why - the need or problem

In implementing the reforms in the classroom we faced a number of problems:

- classes of thirty students or more are hard to organise in groups or pairs and to control the class at the same time
- teachers did not have books for their subjects
- teachers had to find material, prepare it and copy it for the class
- not all teachers knew how to use the computer for modernising the teaching process.
- more time was needed than previously for lesson preparation
- students did exercises in groups and pairs, helping each other so it was harder to evaluate individuals for their knowledge in addition to their activity
- instead of the traditional fixed tests, we had to adjust the system of evaluation to the level of student, therefore we can no longer force less self-disciplined students to learn by punishing them with low marks.

A self-help approach involving mutual collaboration and 'peering into classrooms' seemed to be one way of overcoming these problems and introducing new practices in the classroom.

How - strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

At the beginning of school year 2001-2002 teachers of related subjects, for example languages, agreed to set a date and class where they wanted to show how they worked using new curricula, teaching technology, teaching methods also new forms of evaluation. Other teachers are guests in the class. They observe and criticise but they do not evaluate formally. Teachers of other subjects are invited and also practice teachers, history teachers, geography teachers, etc, depending on the topic of the class so that some correlation between subjects is present. For example, a language teacher usually observes a class of another language teacher but a English language teacher might go to a geography class if the topic was the United Kingdom. The principal, his assistant and my mentor (another more experienced English language teacher) are informed about the class and at least one of them was usually present. They also comment on the lesson. Usually 8-10 teachers were present, including school management to see what other teachers do.

This motivates us to give of our best. We ask our friends for advice, search on Internet or try to find new teaching methods in teachers' magazines. We all want to show something new and good and how we control the situation in classroom while at the same time solving the above-mentioned problems in the best way. It was at first a real challenge to prepare for the demonstration class. We had to be well informed, computer literate and spend more time reading. Another problem was to criticise and to be criticised. We were afraid and shy at the beginning but later on we became familiar with this new approach to teacher training. The principal sometimes offered financial motivation. But the main motivation was to receive positive feedback if you did well.

Who - initiators, supporters, implementers

Following the PHARE-VET training workshops, school management initiated this practice. Teaching staff were supporters and implementers. Sometimes we had guests from outside of the school, members of EU office, some foreign guests whom we wanted to show how we modernise and sometimes members of Pedagogical Institute and the Ministry of Education. They only gave their comments.

Results: achievements, sustainability, recommendations

Our big achievement is that we organised ourselves. We did not wait for others to start the implementation of the new approaches but were encouraged by our principal who wanted us to modernise and to develop ourselves. We all took computer and language courses. The Pedagogical Institute gave regular seminars but that was not enough for us. Achievement was also increased through conversation, opinions and constructive criticism of colleagues. We became competitive and creative. More and more teachers became ready to use new teaching methodology and improved with experience. This is a good example of life-long learning and a good example of effective and low-cost on-the-job teacher training. You regularly see something new. It seemed to be the only way to help each other in the absence of an institution to take the lead. The teacher training is in your school and you can see and experience innovative work not just listen to lectures.

This school-based approach to teacher training is still being sustained in our school. It is easier now than it was at the beginning. We are less shy and afraid of showing ourselves and expressing our problems in the class, with students, materials and evaluation as we search for solutions. For the time being we are alone, like an island, but at least we have a sense of progress and hope that formerly was absent.

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6. Counteracting student passivity in a teacher education course on 'Andragogy' (Bulgaria)

What? Description of the practice

The motivation of students is increasingly difficult for teachers and teacher trainers. Many young people try to receive a diploma with too little effort in acquiring knowledge and skills and upgrading of personal qualities. This attitude to learning strongly influences the organisation and delivery training. The passivity of students in the training process (listening of lectures and reproduction of learned material during the examinations) does not allow them to realise their cognitive, social and personnel potential.

The following methods are used in a teacher education course on 'Andragogy' at Sofia University to counteract student passivity and to extend their self-knowledge:

1. Carrying out practical tasks: *conducting of an interview with adult learners (each student interviews 3-5 adults). The interviews include questions about:*

- Why the respondent continues his or her education,
- What kind of difficulties the respondent meets during the learning process,
- what kind of techniques and methods the respondent applies to improve learning,
- what is the respondent' learning style,
- what kind of training methods the respondent prefers,
- how the respondent manages time in order to carry out all personal obligations, etc.

2. *Oral presentation and summary* of the data and information by each student. Students in this course have the right to choose the way they will be examined (the other students take a written examination).

3. *Creation of a Mind Map* – by the whole student group. That map contains contextual fields, which include the summarised data from the conducted study. Using this map all students can identify easily and quickly the training needs of adult learners.

4. *Working groups* – using the available data the students develop a draft programme for trainers. The programme involves:

- identification of the target group,
- techniques for scanning of target group' expectations, level of knowledge and learning styles,
- training methods,
- results expected from the learning themes,
- a short description of training content.

5 *Final phase* – “expert assessment” by a team of students (with arguments - positive and negative sides of the programs). The three best programmes are announced and everybody can make a copy after a permission of the “authors”.

Why? – The need or problem

Situation and needs:

- Students can receive more information about themselves by talking with the others. As interviewers the students realise the difficulty of asking questions without having the relevant knowledge and skills. Thus they are motivated to study andragogy (Adult Education) in order to communicate with adult learners.
- Usually the respondents are people who have bigger social experience than the students – their explanations are not scientific, they include examples from their personal life.
- For successful performance of the task the students have to talk also with representatives of formal and non-formal organisations. In this way the students practice their communication skills (clear presentation of the purpose of the visit, formal conversation, satisfying personal expectations, etc.)

I started the project in order:

- to build up a positive attitude in students towards acquiring educational content on andragogy and developing their cognitive, social and meta-cognitive skills;
- to collect data about gaps in the knowledge and skills of adult learners, to change the programme design and the instructional design to meet the learners' needs;
- to create the basic preconditions for interactive training and active learning for the students;
- to upgrade students' skills for problem solving, team working, development of projects and assessment of the achieved results;
- to facilitate the establishment of positive ethos and the further development of the relations between the students.

Who? - Initiators, supporters, implementers

I created a model for learning management (modified the components of a model from the distance learning) on the basis of my personal experience and observations. The next step was trying it out in real conditions. I started with part time students and then continued with full time students. The approach was carried out firstly in the discipline "Andragogy" (for students in the department Social Education) and then in the discipline "Didactics" (for students studying Primary School Pedagogy with foreign language).

After upgrading of some components of the programme I started its implementation in my Master training course "Management of Professional Development"

Results - success, problems, sustainability, recommendations

Through the process I was confronted with a lot of difficulties. Finding time was a problem –the preparation of training materials and documents for that kind of training as well as the checking up of students reports take a lot of time – but it is worth doing all these activities.

The result is that students:

- learn more about themselves, about their positive and negative characteristics (for that purpose not only practical tasks, but also many others techniques, diagrams and test are used);
- develop skills for design of their work and for management of the learning process and time;
- upgrade their skills in delivering oral presentations and defending their opinions;
- extend their interactions with people who have richer experience of the world;
- acquire important techniques for learning, for assessment of their personal achievements and for review of their colleagues' reports;
- change their attitudes to learning – knowledge is not a goal, but an instrument for goal achievement.

The results for the teacher:

- Working under that project I have been upgrading a lot of my skills and that reassures me to extend the approach and to update its design.
- Carrying out qualitative analyses on the reports of my students I can participate in a lot of national and international conferences. Most of my analyses are published and accessible for the colleagues interested in the field that I am working.
- The program that I use in the training includes development of a portfolio on behalf of the students, which contains many interesting ideas on how to structure textbook content, how the students can learn easier, what kind of difficulties they meet, etc. In the near future I am going to organise an exhibition in the faculty with the students' reports.

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7. Developing partnerships in the field of electronics through a Leonardo da Vinci mobility project (Bulgaria)

What? - Description of the practice

The Leonardo da Vinci Project "MOBELCOM-2000" provided the opportunity for mobility in the area of the electronics and communications. The project was initiated by the Academician Ivan Tsenov Vocational School of Electronics in Sofia. The aim of the project was to provide students from the vocational school of electronics with opportunities to use methods of 'virtual management' through the Internet - finding partners, co-ordinating with other organisations and running the project. A system of tests was made available for the selection of candidates.

Why? – The need or problem

"Improving qualification and vocational education - realised values"

The main aim of "MOBELCOM-2000" is to improve basic vocational qualification in the field of electronics and to reduce the number leaving school without proper vocational training for a job in the modern labour market in firms and companies in the area of electronics, computer technology and communications.

The project meets important needs in the electronic industry. Vocational schools' equipment in Bulgaria is outdated and meagre. Our electronic industry is in crisis and in a process of reorganisation. Further development of this kind of industry, as well as our EU-integration, demands specialists of high competence, corresponding to present international standards. The project allows our students to improve their qualifications by practising in countries already advanced in electronics and by receiving a vocational qualification certificate.

Who? - Initiators, supporters, implementers

The Leonardo da Vinci programme and the Academician Ivan Tsenov Vocational School of Electronics school board formed by the parents of the students provided the initiative and the funding for the project. 50 students enjoyed a month's practice in Germany in three organisations - "VITALIS" from Leipzig and "Arbeit and Leben" from Hamburg.

Results? - Achievements, problems, sustainability, recommendations

The students have developed their professional competences in the modern electronic firms in Germany - one of the countries with the highest technical standards. All the partners and organisations are experienced in the international projects. Results of the project can be summarised as follows:

- improving professional and communicative German language
- getting to know the culture of the accepting country
- acquiring good manners and habits of behaviour
- acknowledging for professional qualification the certificates issued by the organisations and the host-firms

- improving possibilities for the users in the labour market
- work and social contacts will contribute to Euro-integration of our students in the field of electronics.

There were few problems, but one organisation had problems with finding appropriate work places for some of our students, so five of them started their practice a week later. After the practice had been finished we received letters from our partners who highly appreciated the practice carried out by our students and expressing willingness for further co-operative work.

A meeting of participants, teachers and students from the vocational school of electronics was held. Many of the users shared their impressions of the practice. The total assessment is positive. We have been satisfied with the opportunities for professional practice in West Europe. The students expressed their yearnings for continuing this initiative until it becomes a tradition. We recorded the discussion on the video-cassette. During our study in Hamburg a video film was made about the language course, the culture programme and several work places. 'The Alphabet' newspaper, issue 47/2001, described the project in an article titled "Travelling on a practice to Germany" where we shared our experiences with a wider audience. In the compendium attached to the Leonardo da Vinci programme for 2001 our project is included among the listed successful ones.

It would be useful to follow up the schools that have experienced successful mobility schemes in order to assess the long-term effects of the experiences provided.

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8. Framework for Development of National State Examination Programmes on Vocational Theory and Practice (Bulgaria)

Why? – The need or problem

The Vocational Education and Training Act (ZPOO) now effective in Bulgaria requires vocational qualification rank to be obtained by passing State Examinations on vocational theory and practice. The theoretical examination is carried out according to a national examination programme for the respective profession or specialism. The practical examination is based on practical tasks implemented according to national evaluation criteria. Formerly, vocational qualifications were also acquired by passing State Examinations on vocational theory and practice but each school developed its own examination programmes and practical tasks and, usually, there were no written evaluation criteria.

The need to satisfy the evaluation criteria laid down in the ZPOO, called for development of a new evaluation tools. It comprises:

- A framework for the development of examination programmes;
- A National State Examination Programme on Vocational Theory for each profession and specialism;
- National State Examination Evaluation Criteria on Vocational Practice for each profession and specialism;
- Instruction on the terms and manner of passing the examinations.

What? – Description of the practice

Here, we shall focus only on the first part of the tool, the developmental frame for the examination programmes. It could be regarded as an operation algorithm. It is intended for all work groups preparing specific examination programmes in all vocational directions.

Frame contents

(Modification of “Electrical Engineering, Electronics, and Power Engineering“, intended for second vocational qualification rank):

State Examination on Vocational Theory

The Examination Programme for the State Examination on vocational theory should contain:

1. The professional competence required by the ZPOO and the profession standards required to attain second vocational qualification rank.
2. Selected topics from the educational subjects on which the competence and the evaluation criteria are based.
3. Equivalent complex topics, including the contents of several educational subjects and the evaluation method.

4. A list of the examination topics (examination tickets) representing a formulation of the integrated tasks. The structure of each examination ticket corresponds to a given integrated task and its content.
5. Each examination ticket on vocational theory should contain:
 - The title of the examination topic;
 - The evaluation criteria for the student's answer;
 - The illustrative material (if required by the topic);
 - The evaluation method.

The evaluation criteria and the illustrative material are submitted for use to each student. The evaluation is effected after a point scoring system. The rules for score awarding and transformation of the awarded points into grades are submitted additionally to the work groups.

State Examination on Vocational Practice

The examination on vocational practice aims to evaluate the students' professional skills and competence, corresponding to second vocational qualification rank. The practical examination is carried out through individual examination tasks, developed by the respective school. They should comply with the evaluation criteria supplied with the examination programme. The evaluation criteria should reflect the specificity and level of activity and the observing of labour safety, characteristic of the given profession. They should account for:

- proper selection of materials and tools;
- effective organisation of the work place;
- observing the technological requirements in implementing a given operation;
- observing of the operations' technological succession;
- testing of the finished article;
- quality of the finished article;
- other conditions depending on the vocation.

Each school allocates its measurement indices for the assigned criteria. The evaluation is effected after a point scoring system. Each criterion is assigned a maximum number of points to be awarded, if strictly observed. In addition, the evaluation rules are submitted to the work groups.

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The work on the Frame started in February 2001 and continued for about a year and a half. Its initial version was developed by a team of lecturers from the Vocational Education Sector of the DIUU, and complied with the leading European scientific tendencies in the field of professional competence evaluation. This version, as well as the subsequent working versions, was discussed with the experts from the Vocational Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science (MON) between February and September 2001. The approbation took place in November 2001 at the DIUU in the

form of topical programmes. Participating were lecturers from the DIUU, experts from the MON, teachers and directors from vocational schools in 5 vocational directions. It was expected that, using the frame, each work group would prepare its own Model State Examination Programme on Vocational Theory and formulate Model State Examination Evaluation Criteria on Vocational Practice. Upon discussion of the approbation results, some corrections were made and a final frame version was elaborated. This part of the work was performed by the representatives of the MON and the DIUU and continued until the end of August 2002. From September to October 2002, the teams of the MON and the DIUU prepared auxiliary materials for the working groups in each professional direction. Using these materials and some brief training programmes the representatives of the MON and the DIUU introduced the working groups to the tasks ahead. The groups included teachers and directors of vocational schools, as well as employers who played the role of evaluators of the finished product.

The members of the working groups were selected by definite criteria:

- representatives of both big and small schools,
- representatives from both big and small towns,
- priority for teachers experienced in development of educational programmes, textbooks, and other materials (such as those from the PHARE modular education project),
- people possessing a high level of qualification.

The initial stage of the Frame's development and approbation was funded by the DIUU whereas the development of the auxiliary materials and the examination programs was funded by the MON.

In the course of work some difficulties emerged. They arose from the fact that, so far in Bulgaria, the professional competence of school graduates has not been evaluated on a national level, but only at school level. Moreover, the manner of development of the examination programmes by the so-called integrated tasks is a new one, requiring of each working group's participant to have an overview on the profession and the competence acquired during the education process. Another problem relating to the practical examination is the varying material facilities and equipment in the various vocational schools. They sometimes differ greatly from one another, thus making the formation of national evaluation criteria more difficult.

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

The initiator for development of the evaluation tools was the Department of Vocational Education and Training of the MON that directly implements state policy in the field of vocational education and training. The major partner was the lecturers' team of the Vocational Education Sector of the DIUU at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Distributors and implementers were:

- MON, which published and dispatched the examination programme package to the vocational schools;
- DIUU which elaborated the training programmes for application of the new examination (held at regional and school level);
- the Regional Educational Inspectorates (RIO) of MON,

- the vocational school directors and teachers who train the students for the State Examinations.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

The most encouraging achievement is that, by the end of 2002, the evaluation tools were completely developed for all vocational directions (18 in number) of those completing second vocational qualification rank. In the direction of “Electrical Engineering, Electronics, and Power Engineering” alone, 36 examination programs were developed. The total number of participants in the working groups from all professional directions so far (December 2002) is over 500. Each of them, through his/her team work, acquired new experience, new skills, shares positive ideas and practice, established new contacts, which is a reported achievement. Another achievement has been the effective collaboration of the representatives of the major partners, the MON and the DIUU. In the short run, programmes for the third vocational qualification rank are to be developed.

Recommendation: Following the first application of the new evaluation tools (in the end of school year 2003/2004), MON and DIUU’s team, jointly with representatives of the working groups should make an overview of the programmes, assess the quality of their implementation and introduce corrections where necessary.

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9. A strategy to give added value to the TTT component in the CARDS programme - formulation of Terms of Reference (Croatia)

What? – Description of the practice

A central focus for the Western Balkan countries at the moment is to establish a clear understanding of the state-of-play in vocational teacher training in each country. On this basis it is possible to seek answers to the question:

What is to be done in the upcoming CARDS programme and what should be the immediate and urgent priorities in relation to the TOR under formulation?

This process implies VET sector assessment, policy advice and crystallisation of many dimensions of TTT into a strategic approach. At the same time it requires balancing many interests and achieving a consensus in the country. Croatia has just managed this process and one can learn from the example.

Three Croatian Working Groups were set up and formulated thematic reports in the 3 fields of relevance for the upcoming CARDS programme:

1. decentralisation and governance,
2. curriculum development, and
3. teacher training.

Each group produced reports (75-100 pages) with critical background descriptions and analyses as well as recommendations for change. Summaries were produced and formed the background for an intense 4-day seminar in January 2002 which, supported by 4 external experts and the country manager from ETF, through many discussions took forward the recommendations to strategic "bullet points" in the TOR.

The VET TTT component was particularly interesting because of its close linkages with other components. This is not at all surprising as the elements are closely connected, and the challenge is to design a reform process that systematically upgrades the joint development of framework structures and actors and builds upon these internal linkages. This constitutes a highly stimulating environment for teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees involved in what can best be called an accelerated collective learning process.

Why? – The need or problem

In their background study, "*Teachers' and Trainers' Training in Vocational Education and Training*", Dr. Vlado Luburic et al. define a number of problems in the existing VET TT practices in Croatia:

- Lack of a Lifelong Learning perspective in pre- and in-service VET TT
- Three ministries responsible for different parts of the provision of VET TT without much co-ordination
- No post-graduate or scientific education available for teachers
- No specialised VET TT institutions in Croatia

- No vocational subject theory and methodology developed
- Incomplete in-service upgrading CVT system for teachers which is not based on empirical training needs assessment
- Unsatisfactory realisation of the teacher trainee year in schools due to lack of qualified support and supervision
- Weak knowledge and skills related to the market economy and technological development
- Low participation of VET teachers in available programmes
- Clearly inadequate executive, administrative and pedagogical skills of VET school directors.

Four different teacher categories exist, three of which (the vocational subject teachers) are trained for the job as a teacher in a consecutive model. This pedagogical training is short and is provided by nine universities specialising in general pedagogy. No 'critical mass' of vocational education specialists exist and the methodology of vocational subjects is missing in VET TT.

To solve these problems substantial changes are proposed:

- Innovation of pedagogic-psychological and didactical-methodical education with emphasis on specialised methodology in pre-service VET TT
- A trainee year to be supported by trained mentors and exams to become more relevant
- Innovations in continuing teacher and school manager training
- Evaluation of work, indicators for success and quality
- Implementation consisting of "institutional homes" with competent VET staff and research links
- Set clear deadlines and priorities
- Funding

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The TT Working Group had 5 Croatian members with substantial expertise in VET TT and they had six months to undertake the work. The process was financed by a grant from ETF with contributions from Croatia. The group reported its findings to the seminar and during the seminar criteria for selecting elements in a reform of VET TT were agreed. Firstly, VET teacher education should not be seen in isolation but go hand in hand with the simultaneous changes in framework conditions involved in the VET reform. Secondly, instead of separate interventions in pre- and in-service VET TT a coherent, systemic level approach was chosen in Croatia.

This approach to teacher training stimulates innovative teaching and modernisation of learning processes through solving new problems stemming from reform pressures. Furthermore, it stimulates the combined ambitions of:

- Reform implementation
- Pedagogic innovation
- Qualification of teachers

The strategy is based on the principles of 'action learning'. Learning is optimised in development projects in which you risk something to innovate your teaching practice. You do not learn by just solving problems, but through acquiring the knowledge and theoretical understanding necessary to reflect on the change processes initiated. This supporting role will have to be undertaken by consultants – and Croatia teacher educators should be trained for this task.

It is also a "quick win" strategy. The organised interplay between experience-based learning from a changing practice and the use of mental/cognitive structures offered by formal education establishes a combination of *to know* and *to act* (action competence) so critically in need of development in most of Eastern Europe.

However, there are difficulties in reducing many well-substantiated proposals for change into a few central issues to be included in the Terms of References, even if based on criteria. Four days of discussion were helpful in creating a consensus, but for the authors of the Croatian self-study it was difficult to part with so many good ideas based on sound analysis. In this distillation process external experts are clearly needed as 'midwives'.

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

The initiators of the project were the ETF country manager and the Ministry of Education and Sports in Croatia. Other public institutions in the VET TT field supported the activities and a good team representing the substantial stakeholders was formed to undertake the analytic work. The anchor institution around which the activities took place was the National Observatory set up by ETF in Croatia. A group of three external experts from EU countries and one from Slovenia was recruited to participate in the crystallisation phase and to support the groups in making hard choices. Results were then forwarded to the group drafting the final Terms of Reference.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

What elements should be in the first CARDS programme for Croatia?

1. Establish new mentor training programme

The "dual" character of Croatian VET pre-service TT has many qualities but needs strengthening through a professionalisation of the one year of service under supervision in a VET school. At the same time the university-school interplay should be reinforced. There is a need to support the actors in the Ministry of Education and Sports, the universities and the VET schools in building up the required institutional capacity. Furthermore, there is a need for support to acquire the know-how to run the programme as well as consultancy assistance in the development of teaching material and me-

thods required by a modern pedagogical mentor training education. The project should have the following steps:

- Develop a "standard" for the mentor category
- Develop a programme (curriculum)
- Train teacher educators to carry out the programme
- Carry out a pilot project under supervision
- Start ordinary programme to be offered by universities

It is important that the development work and the training is done through a participatory approach and that the responsible actors are the universities and selected VET school teachers. The wall between university and VET school must be broken down to increase responsibility. This development strategy will probably create feelings of shared ownership and help to fit the new programme into the existing VET TT pre-service structure.

2. Establish training programme for school directors

With radical decentralisation and a modern curriculum system VET schools will change, and this change is recently on the "cards" everywhere. The roles, responsibilities and performance requirements of school directors will change from following rules and regulations to acting with considerably freedom within a governance system close to a principle of 'management by objectives and frames'. A training programme should be offered covering fields such as:

- Management of business
- Management of people
- Management market and customer relations
- Defining product "mix"
- Pedagogy, processes and pedagogical innovation work
- Sales promotion and public relations.

3. Renewal of in-service teacher training

Today continuing training of VET teachers is offered through a 'Catalogue' the content of which is based on the top-down assessments made by selected subject specialists in the Institute of Educational Development. The dominant model for continuing teacher training is supply-based. Universities, faculties and educational development institutes offer training courses to VET schools either free of charge or on market terms. This should be modernised and continuing teacher training be brought closer to the "homes" of vocational teachers:

- Develop methodology for training needs analysis (TNA) in Institute for Educational Development
- Develop some capacity for participatory management of staff training needs in VET schools

- Test through pilot courses
- Experiment with delivering training services in-house in VET schools
- Create quality assurance systems to ensure the relevance and effect of continuing vocational training (CVT) by monitoring training offers before, during and after the courses.

4. Develop a Change Agent Team (CAT) strategy as a tool in continuing teacher training

Change Agent Teams are a new way to ensure effective continuing training of teachers, in particular as a strategic measure in preparing and training all teachers in a VET school for reform. Sending selected teachers to courses out of school is not optimal as it creates encapsulated or 'dis-embodied' knowledge that is hard to relate to the realities of the workplace in the school classroom or workshop. Therefore, organisational learning and local competence development projects have become a new focus in CVT and also in continuing training of teachers. Each school is different and has an individual school culture. The best way to enhance the collective capacity of a school and minimise barriers to change is often to train well qualified and respected teachers to undertake training of their colleagues. With a VET reform in the pipeline, Croatia could prepare for the effective dissemination of and training for reform by now organising a CAT-based reform implementation. The trained CATs can be used for other purposes as well, for instance bridge-building to universities and the Institute for Educational Development.

A programme would embrace the following steps:

- Train selected teachers from each VET school (2-3) all over the country to become responsible for reform implementation and to carry out training and other competence-development activities for colleagues in their own schools.
- They should be involved in all steps of the VET reform process from the start.
- Establish eventual Master/PhD programmes for this group to launch academic/ scientific involvement in VET.
- Make this a central component in establishing a transparent career structure for VET teachers.

5. Establish central VET institution?

In Croatia there are many teacher/trainer training institutions but no specialised centres of excellence. Vocational teacher education tends either to be integrated into general teacher education or to be a sub-speciality in other university programmes. At the same time, there are (too) many institutions delivering vocational teacher training, even under different ministries. This has a negative effect on the building-up of VET expertise and on vocational education and training research and innovation. There is also a lack of didactical thinking on vocational subjects that need 'institutional homes' and can best be developed in centres of expertise. Some institutional concentration would, therefore, be advisable.

There is an unresolved question around VET subject matter and VET didactics. The problem is related to "*pedagogical subject matter*" - what is actually taught by the teachers in the class-rooms and

workshops - which is markedly different from (vocational) subjects taught at universities and also clearly different from what is taught in pedagogic studies. This is much more than a simple addition of subject matter and pedagogical method. It must be developed! To develop this study field would require to set up, or to develop existing institutions into, a specialised institution for VET development.

Sources

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10. Developing new 'quality practice' in VET schools (Croatia)

Where and who? - Initiators, supporters, implementers.

The Technical School in Slavonski Brod is in a city of 80 000 inhabitants 200 km from Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo, located in the eastern Croatia named Slavonia. Of the 21 counties in Croatia our county is the second according to socio-economic problems, after the county of Vukovar. The main difficulties are slow economic grow, unemployment, illiterate people, refugees and former members of the armed forces who suffer from post-traumatic stress. So we live in a very poor county in which industry was almost completely destroyed. Before the war, our town was prosperous, with metal industry that employed about 17000 employees, wood industry and textile industry, among others. It's not so easy to bring about change. Our town authorities, as well as the county government consist of very bureaucratic people without vision or power to change. Therefore the need for our school to contribute to a flexible modern labour force is particularly valuable.

Why? – The need or problem solved

Our school consists of 5 different educational specialisms: mechanical, electro-technical, civil construction, road traffic and postal communications. Every year we enrol 210-240 students. There are 900 students in 4 grades. We have a few outstanding highly motivated students but most are average. The majority will succeed or fail depending on teachers' skills and school organisation. We need to learn and improve our teachers' skills. A third of the 60 teachers are engineers and we are eager to learn .We also work in teams and help each other with new methods and experiences. We are discovering that students as workers for 21st century have to develop almost completely different skills than we had to. In recent years, especially because of the war, most schools have lost connection with the economy, with production and industry and sometimes we have the feeling that we teach students for nothing, as if the school existed just for itself. We want them to become effective and useful for the labour market, so we have to change our way of teaching.

What? – Description of the practice

After a few training sessions relating to 'quality schools' we have got many different ideas about better teaching in contrast to the traditional methods. I have changed a number of things and now get better results with less effort. First of all I try to connect everything we learn, with real life. I try to guide students to use all available sources of knowledge. I let them work in teams and present new things. Usually we practise problems with figures and prepare in teams for school tests. After practising, students present their joint results. Instead of individual answers on the board, students prepare presentations about particular themes by using computer, CD presentation and LCD projector. When students write individual tests they can use books and notebooks. They get new problems involving new ways of practising, homework and developing new conclusions. Because of the lack of places for work experience in the town, we offer students work as laboratory assistants, to help school caretaker, to make school CD presentations or to help in servicing of school computer equipment. In that way they are creative, independent and innovative. Many times they have new ideas and they take a part in different sorts of competitions. I also encourage my students to work in teams on some school project, or even to propose new projects.

How? - Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties.

A number of difficulties face us in trying to implement these new methods of teaching. They include:

- the school schedule and limited time for lessons.
- a lengthy, inflexible official plan for each subject.
- the lack of pre-knowledge on the part of the students
- having to prepare each lesson has to be prepared for a particular class.

At the beginning of school year students pass initial tests. They also get information about team work, evaluation criteria and ways of testing. I insist on basic knowledge and independent attitudes, and emphasise skills such as logical thinking, self-evaluation and making conclusion for any new problem or situation. The best way to motivate students to learn and improve their specialised knowledge and life skills is to communicate with students and make agreements about dates and themes. During their project work I offer them help and support and I show them that I believe in them. In that way their self-confidence develops, they are relaxed and their success is much improved.

As teachers we also try to do some things in team and to communicate as much as possible. We encourage our students to work in projects and in additional activities, which are available in our school. We have many projects available for our students, for example, 'Democracy project', 'Spring Day in Europe', 'Prevention and protection from a variety of drugs' and 'Europe Electro-technical Net'. Also we have school radio station which broadcasts 24 hours a day, a school newspaper in the Croatian and German languages, an informatics and internet group, a sports group and an electro-technical innovators' group. We need good equipment and technical support for all of these additional activities. In school we have the possibility for additional education for adults. In that way school gets some extra money, which we use mostly to buy equipment and to modernise school. We do not wait for others to give us all that we need. We work as much as possible to do what we can do, but we hope that the system will gradually be improved and reformed. This will happen faster and better if support for additional teacher training and networking can be further developed.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations.

For exceptionally creative work our school received a Minister's Acknowledgment on October 2000 as the only school in our county and as the one of 13 other schools in the state. This acknowledgement is most certainly the highest acknowledgement any school can get. It incorporates our work from the day our school became independent in 1990. Besides the Minister's Acknowledgment we also received the Acknowledgment of our town in the year 1998, and the Charter for our work from the County Assembly. Some of the most important results in my school are first places on state level competitions in electronic engineering, traffic, literature, German language, Croatian language, radio programme, film, and five medals on international fairs for innovators. Our school became first school from transition countries, as a member of European Electro-technic School Net. Five teachers from school have been promoted to become teacher mentors and two as teacher advisors. We would like this school to be a school of this time as well as the school of the future. Therefore in 1999 we organised a

council of students and council of parents. Our students move on to and finish many different faculties, i.e. electro-technical, mechanical engineering, economics, traffic and law in higher education.

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11. School-based dissemination of Reading and Writing for Creative Thinking Programme (Croatia)

What? – Description of the practice

After attending a presentation of the RWTC (Reading and Writing for Creative Thinking) seminar organised by the Open Society – Croatia, we realised that RWTC could be a good school-based TT topic to encourage new teaching methods and strategies. Since the number of teachers allowed to attend the course from each school was limited, we chose two communicative, co-operative teachers interested in change, who had good reputation and communication skills and were teaching vocational subjects. The third member was the school principal. During the next two years four more teachers completed the same training consisting of four 2-day sessions (72 hours).

The teaching method divides units of learning into four stages:

1. Evocation,
2. Understanding of the meaning,
3. Reflection,
4. Implementation of the knowledge acquired.

Teaching techniques involve intensified reading, debate and different pair and group work techniques. After each session of the external course, participants had to implement the new methods in their classes, describe the problems and good experience. They were also encouraged to sit in each other's classes provide constructive feedback. In this way teachers became learners. After completing the seminar they acquired a diploma of RWTC. They shared their experience and knowledge with others and disseminated the new ideas.

Why? – the need or problem

Situation and needs:

- VET teaching methods are still not student-centred
- they are often concentrated on information and not problem-based learning
- need to shift the focus from academic knowledge to professional skills and autonomous problem-solving abilities of students, essential for future nurses
- lack of VET-TT organised at the provider level so we decided to initiate changes at the school level.

Goals – we started the project in order to:

- overcome lack of VET TT organised by the school authorities
- provide tools for process-centred, not information-centred teaching techniques
- encourage deep learning and other modern pedagogical We wanted to start solving the problem of bored students and frustrated teachers.

- raise teaching competencies of teachers
- raise team work capacities of teachers and students
- create an active, learning atmosphere

Who? - Initiators, supporters, implementers

Initiator of the project was the principal, who decided to attend the external course in order to learn how to implement it and support further changes. Once it started the project was supported by a growing number of teachers and pupils. The changes initiated by a couple of teachers were soon recognised and partly implemented by other teachers who also decided to take part in the project increasing the number of implementers.

Results? – Achievements, problems, sustainability, recommendations

Throughout the process we were confronted with following difficulties:

- problem of time – organisation of 45-minute lessons not appropriate
- problem of following the teaching plan – different pace
- large classes – not enough room for individual, pair and group work
- students not ready to take responsibility for their learning –passive attitude
- lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials
- teachers needed a lot of time to prepare each lesson
- lack of modern tools for measuring results. (You cannot change one part of the teaching – learning process without adjusting other parts. What are we measuring and how?)
- fear of change by both teachers and students

Nevertheless the following achievements can be listed:

a) Students:

- became active during the classes
- not so bored as before / relaxed atmosphere
- acquired deeper knowledge
- forget less
- got used to team work and democratic behaviour
- improved skills of communication
- started to use their heads and hands at the same time
- individual needs of students met
- shared responsibility for learning
- frustrations diminished and fewer students cut classes

b) *Teachers:*

- implemented holistic approach to teaching/learning
- started to work together with each other and with the students
- motivated by the process and by feedback
- assumed responsibility and became less dependent

After three years 7 teachers (out of 30) who have completed the training, two of whom already underwent supervision by RWCT teacher trainers and are now training other teachers (at the city level). Two further are in the process of acquiring the licence. Workshops are organised at school level and more than half of the teachers started to implement some techniques. Most of them changed their old ways of thinking and are looking for their own way of avoiding teacher-centred, talk and chalk lessons.

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12. Production School Practice and Pedagogy (Kosovo)

What? – Description of the practice

This initiative illustrates an interesting, innovative approach to VET teacher training. The approach integrates the establishment of a new type of school with a new pedagogical approach and a training of teachers through “shadowing”. The focus is on changing the framework conditions and carrying out teacher training in a genuinely functional way.

Since August 2000 the National Association of Danish Production Schools has been building a Production School in Mitrovica (Zabare) in Kosovo. It has been a strategy of the Danish assistance to the reconstruction of Kosovo that it should concentrate:

- on the front line area around Mitrovica, where there are both ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serbian settlements,
- on parallelism so that both ethnic groups get their share of the effort.

The production school project was planned so that first a school in the Albanian-dominated area of Mitrovica South (Zabare) was established, and then another school in the Serbian-dominated area of Mitrovica North (Zvecan) from January 2002.

The production school in Zabare in Mitrovica gives priority to students from the ethnic Albanian enclave of Chabra in the Serbian-dominated Zubin Potok Municipality (a quota arrangement). It was started in October 2000 in rented facilities when the first students were admitted to the school. The first local staff members were hired, and they were taught to be production school teachers by two Danish staff-members from Danish production schools. Meanwhile the new school was built not far from the rented facilities. Local companies have carried out most of the building, while students and teachers carried out most of the interior fittings of the workshops themselves. Students and teachers moved into the new premises in February 2001. Now the school is well under way, and 50 students are working and learning in the different workshops.

The target group of the project is youths of both sexes, primarily within the age group of about 16-25. The focus is mainly on improving the living conditions of groups of youths threatened by marginalisation. They will be youths without any useful education or job experience, estimated to need professional training and/or personal development in order to manage as an active citizen. An equal distribution of men and women is sought, through the composition of the workshop programmes offered.

Why? – The need or problem

The purpose of the production school is to give unemployed and job-seeking young people professional qualifications as well as prospects of finding employment and participating actively as citizens in building their society. This is done through a combination of production and theoretical instruction in a range of various workshops.

The production school model is considered innovative and experimental, not least in relation to existing conditions on the ground in Kosovo. There is no tradition for this type of school in Kosovo. The

production school is based on the idea of creating training programmes that combine production, theoretical instruction, personal guidance, and the development of personal life skills. The main element of pedagogy is practical work with production. The student learns by working, acting and gaining experience in a social working community together with other youths, building on this experience and gradually extending his/her radius of action, both professionally and as a person. The heart of this instruction is the establishment of a range of various types of workshop units with small groups of students participating in real production tasks. The products are used in the school or are intended for sale. The possibility of professional development springs from the idea that work tasks and the integrated theory must be of different degrees of difficulty, so there will be tasks for each student which contain challenges and at the same time may be performed almost independently. In this way the students get a chance to obtain basic as well as specialised qualifications in the various workshop programmes. Personal and social development results when work tasks are carried out in an active, social working community together with other youths. Apart from the informal guidance and counselling taking place between student and teacher in workshops, a number of different educational activities are arranged. These include discussions on important topics of society, involvement in the management of the school and excursions into the world outside.

Thus the task of a production school is to create and develop a school with considerable flexibility, which means that:

- The students are continuously coming and leaving, which implies that the training may be mixed into the student's own educational development when he or she wants it and needs it. The school must admit youths from day to day all year round, and there is no limit set in advance as to how long the stay at the school may last.
- The schools are not diploma-oriented. Consequently no student will participate in totally mapped-out educational programmes. The individual programme is flexible.
- The students try out one or more of the various workshops at the schools.
- The schools work with a low teacher-student ratio – an average of 6-8 students per workshop teacher.
- Student guidance is integrated into the training. The guidance takes place daily during the learning processes at the workshops, and the responsibility is basically placed with all teachers at the school.
- The production school teachers are all hired under the same working and salary conditions and work according to the same set of rules no matter their different educational backgrounds.

The production school model of course has to be adjusted to the social and cultural norms of the local community. It requires a high degree of flexibility by management and staff, as each educational programme must allow for individual choice based on needs and potentials of each student. The school must be able to integrate persons who, for many different reasons, are socially exposed. The model needs teachers with good professional qualifications, pedagogic attitudes and knowledge of the

production school concept as well as personal commitment, building on equal co-operation between student and teacher.

How? – strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The educational offers in the production school consist of:

- *Learning from workshop training*, including practical job solutions and production.
- *Integrated learning* connecting practical work instruction with appropriate theory
- Learning that strengthens the student's *basic skills*.
- Learning that helps to *strengthen the personal development* of the students.

Training in the workshop must start from practical work and job solutions in preparation for actual production and sale of goods and services. Training in the workshop and the integrated learning must promote vocational learning, personal and social development and be the basis of guidance and supervision. The training must be organised in a way that ensures a continuous learning process that as far as possible takes place in a binding working community. The integrated learning must connect vocational work and job solutions with matching theory. Through organisation and completion of the training the students meet situations promoting theoretical knowledge of the subject area in question. As far as possible the teaching of basic skills ought to be connected with the vocational training in the workshop.

Work experience of shorter duration for the students outside the school can be arranged in private or in other firms with a view to testing skills and abilities. Furthermore the production school can offer excursions partly containing a professional purpose and partly having a wider aim, which contributes to *strengthening the student's personal, cultural and social competences*.

The production school takes in and lets out students continuously, based on the need of the individual person. Guidance and supervision consists of daily counselling and guidance integrated into the workshop in the form of dialogues, and formally organised guidance and supervision to make sure that an assessment takes place of the progress of every single student. The school must ensure a necessary guidance of the students' stay in the production school, including periods of vocational training outside the school. To make sure that this happens, an interview between student and staff will take place at least every 3 months.

The school in Zabare has the following permanent workshops:

- Metal
- Carpentry
- Construction/bricklaying
- Textile
- Kitchen/canteen

All workshops work independently as well as on joint projects with other workshops. All training is organised individually, and every student is a member of a certain workshop. All jobs are seen in

connection with the training. Order forms are worked out on all jobs which contain calculations of amount of materials, use of working hours etc. The training component is implemented using specific pedagogical tools. For example, when a student starts in a workshop, he or she gets a personal folder containing a description of the aim and purpose of the workshop and the jobs in the workshop. This folder also contains a plan for training and personal development and descriptions of jobs and productions in which the student has participated. This can be drawings, photos or other forms of evidence (the portfolio method).

Other activities include:

- computer courses to introduce Word 1, Word 2 and Excel
- English courses for beginners; for the time being students must choose between computer and English lessons
- Monthly field trip to places of interest;
- a monthly common meeting with teachers and discussions with students and staff;
- participation every two weeks in sport activities by all students
- work experience outside the school arranged at the end of the individual school period with a view to it becoming a permanent job. For the time being no youngster who has left the ordinary school system can join the system again. Therefore the school does not allow students to leave the school until they have a job. Finding jobs takes place in close co-operation with the employment office of the region.
- counselling those students who want to establish their own enterprises as well as helping to find funding or lending tools and machines for a shorter period. The support is given in co-operation with the local authorities responsible for support to entrepreneurs who wish to start small workshops

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

The project was started as an initiative taken by a number of production schools in Denmark. In the summer of 1999, as a response to the state of war and the refugee situation in Kosovo, students and teachers from 30 member schools of The National Association of Production Schools (ASDP) organised a collection of machines and other equipment. They did this to establish a production school for youngsters in Kosovo. The ASDP is in charge of the project, which is mainly financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Students and staff of the participating production schools contribute to the collection, including the picking up of machines and equipment, service and renovation and packing for shipment, etc. At the end of 2001 the Danish production schools had supplied the production school in Zabare with collected machines and equipment worth approximately EURO 75,000. The Danish production schools have continued their collection to ensure the establishment of yet another production school in Mitrovica North (Zvecan). The ADPS and the participating production schools contribute moreover with a great number of information activities, including local meetings, exhibition activities, brochures and the maintenance of a web-site for the project.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

2002 was the last period with proper operation support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the production schools. Activities will therefore be concentrated on further development of the schools to consolidate the activities and create the best possibilities for sustainability after 2002. Experienced board representatives of Danish production schools offer training for the coming members of the school board. As part of the training to take over the management function the co-heads of the schools are vested with extended powers. In 2002 the schools will continue the development of certificates.

The training of teachers is based on experiences obtained from the project so far. Two weeks of training for the teachers at production schools in Denmark is arranged. From 2002 there will only be one Danish production school teacher in Kosovo being mainly in charge of the local teacher training. In connection with the planning of the future training programme for the school staff, the ADSP examines the possibilities of offering similar training programmes for the staff of other vocational training centres in Kosovo. The teacher standards will be adjusted to a level considered realistic in relation to framework conditions and training offers available, and to the financial situation. A goal has been set for the schools' generation of own income, as part of the consolidation of the future. The co-operation with Danish production schools will continue according to agreement and needs.

Source, www.produktionsskoleikosovo.dk

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13. Continuous Teacher Training: a key factor for successful reform in VET (FyR Macedonia)

What?

The process of transition in our country, the Republic of Macedonia, continues to stimulate systematic change in the economy. Former big and complex companies have been transformed into smaller ones. This has led to new labour market demand for a highly qualified, skilled but flexible labour force. At the same time, with our country's strategy for integration into the EU, we need our qualifications to be recognised and as well as mobility for the labour force across the continent. The VET education that we used to have could not meet these needs. This is why reform had to be undertaken. But to meet the labour market demands does not simply mean modernising the curricula or providing the schools with up-dated and sophisticated equipment. It also means developing a system of life long learning through systematic adaptation of VET. The key for successful realisation of goal is to consider the teachers as a leading force in the reform process and due to this to provide permanent teacher training.

Why?

The new labour force should have:

- general skills in order to secure flexibility
- broad social skills and ability to learn and react in new situations
- personal initiative but be team oriented too
- excellent organisational and strong communication skills

In order to face the labour market demands it is an imperative to introduce and practice active and innovative teaching and training approaches. These approaches promote student-oriented teaching and a training process where the teacher motivates, encourages and gives the students instruments for learning. The teacher is considered as a classroom manager who creates an environment for better learning.

How and Who?

Creating a positive climate and environment for accepting the on-going changes was one of the basic issues when planning the implementation of the VET reform process in Macedonia. The main questions were:

- how to involve the teachers in the process?
- how to make them feel the necessity and the benefit of the changes?
- how to make them willing to accept the changes?

A step-by-step strategy for integrating the reform activities into everyday teaching practice was considered. To achieve genuine change in schools the reform strategy built on the strategy of empowering selected, local teachers to become school reform co-ordinators to ensure ownership, fit

into context and sustainability. New training for teachers was disseminated by school co-ordinators who were considered to be agents of change. They were trained in methods for changing the school environment and transforming teachers' profiles. With the support of the school management and the involvement of the most inventive teachers, the co-ordinators had to find a way, specific to their school, to create a climate for successful realisation of the reform activities. Depending on the school, these goals have been approached and realised in many different ways. By establishing a strong network among the school co-ordinators, experiences have been shared between the pilot schools and good practices were implemented in all of them

Results

Even though it was not easy to start the process and to implement it in the school, with the effort of the school management, school co-ordinator and all open-minded teachers eager to learn and willing to accept changes, we managed to make it everyday practice. Actually, each training that school co-ordinator attended has been disseminated in the school through workshops organised in the school after classes or during the weekends. Most of them aimed to introduce active teaching and learning methods that promote and strengthen students' skills and abilities such as:

Collaboration;

- Communication
- Research
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving and decision making
- Self assessment
- Leadership, etc.

In order to prepare them for the new labour market needs. But, also a lot of the teacher training workshops have strengthened the teachers' own skills and abilities enabling them to transform themselves from traditional practice into being teachers with a new view and spirit.

At the same time, external trainers also trained a certain number of teachers and school pedagogues. The role of the school co-ordinator was to establish a tradition for disseminating the new methods to the other teachers in the school. In such an environment everyone could find himself in the role of "learner" or in the role of "mentor". Also, when a new methodology was practised, open lessons were organised, so that colleagues who were interested to see the new methods being practised in actual classroom could come and observe the new practice. One of the most practised new teaching methods was the project-based learning. At the very beginning of the programme, the teachers were motivated to implement this method by a special fund that supported the planned projects. Quickly, project-based learning has become an everyday practice for implementing the curricula. Planning and realising cross-curricula projects have been implemented too along with successful projects in co-operation with other pilot schools. In the pilot schools we have built up an in-service and in-house continuing training function.

Last but not least, the knowledge and experience gained by the first school co-ordinators has been disseminated to the “new” ones from the pilot schools that have entered the programme in the second phase. Our school, which has been promoted as one of the eight Regional Centres in Macedonia in this phase, has accepted the role of a mentor school for two of the new pilot schools. We have had a task to disseminate our experience and good practice to the teachers from these schools. This has been realised through the activities of the so-called “Project for the Development of a Regional Centre” which gave us a chance to promote the teachers from our school as trainers.

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14. Strategy for Development of Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training System (Romania)

What? – Description of the practice

The *Strategy for development of pre-service and in-service teacher training system* in pre-university education in Romania was elaborated by General Directorate for Continuing Education and Teacher Training in the Ministry of Education and Research and adopted in late 2001.

The main objectives of this strategy are:

- Professionalisation of teaching careers in Romania.
- Reaching a balance between the theoretical and the practical parts of the curriculum by extending initial training after graduation; teacher diploma will be awarded after passing a theoretical and practical exam (*definitivat*) after 2-3 years of practice.
- Development of an educational market of in-service teacher training programs, based on competition between diverse in-service training providers.
- Promotion of a dynamic teaching career based on career ladder steps based on specified educational standards and use of transferable credits.
- Development and consolidation of modern institutional structures in support of in-service training of teachers

The strategy is now implemented and is already showing its first results. There is still a long way to go and much more commitment is needed, especially in allocating the resources and in cooperation with Universities.

Why? – The need or problem solved

After the end of the Project for Pre-university Education Reform, financed by the Romanian Government and World Bank (2002) the problem of sustainability of the results achieved became critical. Evaluation feedback identified teachers as a top priority on the agenda. In practice, all the benefits and positive results of the previous efforts (especially in curriculum, evaluation, textbooks and management) depend on the capacity of teachers to assimilate and perform their new roles and responsibilities required by reform.

New and important transformations are under way and they also need personal and institutional capacity building, both at the in-service and pre-service levels of teacher training. Delay and inconsistency in the teacher training component, compared with the other sectors of the reform, was a good reason to start developing a new and comprehensive strategy for development.

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The strategy proposed by Ministry of Education and Research is a legislative and methodological framework on which the stated objectives are to be based, through concrete actions of all responsible stakeholders.

The envisaged changes in this strategy will address some common features, for pre-service and in-service teacher training, such as:

- Development and setting of standards
- Curriculum development frameworks
- Institutional development and capacity building
- Certification
- Financing

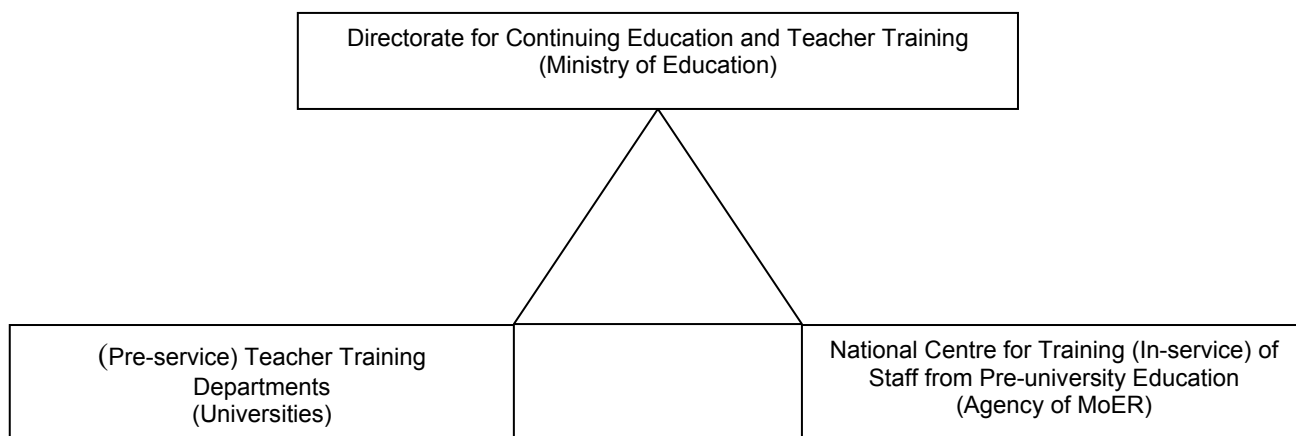
There will also be specific targets. Changes in the in-service training system will initiate support measures in the fields of mentoring after graduation and establishment of a permanent network of application schools and kindergartens for practical training of students during their university studies. On the other side, the in-service training of teachers will be based on a new system of promotion through career steps and an established system for accreditation and regulation of the supply of in-service training.

The strategy is designed, as policy document, for years 2001-2004, but it is obvious that to complete the implementation process much more time will be needed. The main difficulties in the implementation process are to find and mobilise all the resources needed for putting in practice all these complex measures.

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

Initiated by the Directorate for Continuing Education and Teacher Training in the Ministry of Education, this strategy was subject to consultation and debate with the involved stakeholders and finally, promoted as official document.

A triad of institutions and their capacity and willingness to cooperate will play a key role in the implementation process:



The success of the implementation depends in a large extent to important factors:

- cooperation of schools and teachers in implementing effective mentoring programs;
- agreement and support from in-service training providers, which already expressed their concern related to the methodology for accreditation of in-service training programs for teachers and managers;
- capacity and willingness of the Universities to take more seriously their role in teacher education and to contribute to a smooth and coherent link between pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

The main achievements that could be noticed in the short time after start of implementation are:

- Consolidation of the role of Centre for Training of Staff from Pre-university Education.
- Establishment of a common framework for curriculum development for in-service training of teachers, which will be used in all teacher training departments.
- Progress in developing national standards for teaching profession and for managers in education.

Keeping the teacher education issue at the top of the agenda is one of the first conditions for realising this strategy. A second factor, critical because of the general under-financing of educational sector in Romania, is the capacity (especially at central level) to mobilise and to direct the needed resources to support the innovation.

The implementation of the transferable credits system, both in pre-service and in-service training of teachers will contribute significantly to bridging the gap between pre-university education needs and university “autonomy”, between the two major steps in teachers’ careers.

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15. TTT in Tourism and Economic VET High Schools (Romania)

What? – Description of the practice

This case describes two similar projects in the field of teachers and trainers training in VET involving the National Centre for Development of Vocational and Technical Education from Romania and KulturKontakt Austria, under the activities of the Stability Pact.

The first project, called **TOURNET**, is for technological schools in the field of services, specialisation *tourism and catering* and aims at:

- Training future graduates for setting up and managing their own business in tourism and catering, through small and medium enterprises.
- Harmonisation of training in tourism and catering in Romania and Austria with a view of mutual recognition of qualifications in the future.

The project was focused on following objectives:

- Development of a new curriculum and support materials for tourism and catering high schools, based on the Austrian model
- Training of trainers and then training of teachers from the pilot schools
- Introduction of new teaching methods, focused on cooperative and problem-based learning
- Endowment of pilot schools in order to become school-agencies in tourism and for activities related to catering.

The second project is called **ECONET** focusing on economic high schools. The main goal of this project was to establish a network of training (simulated) firms in economic high schools in South-East Europe.

Why? – The need or problem

The objectives in Romania are:

- Creation of a functional network of training firms in Romania, able to join in exchanges and operations the SEE network
- Training teachers for curriculum development and practical activities in the simulated firm network.
- Development of curriculum for practical training in training firms
- Setting up a coordination centre of training firms
- Endowment of pilot schools in order to participate in virtual changes and operations of the network

The underdevelopment of the services sector is one of the overall structural problems of the Romanian economy. This project addressed a very clear and urgent need: improvement of qualification for further technological high schools graduates in the fields of tourism and economy through training of teachers.

To go beyond the obsolescence of training provided by teachers in tourism and economic technological high schools is one of the pre-conditions for further development of these sectors. Capacity building is central to efforts and training of teachers for teaching in an enterprising, problem-based way. They need to use new information and communication technologies, created in the pilot schools of these projects and to disseminate models of successful experiences.

How? – Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

The TOURNET project provided a series of training sessions for trainers recruited from the pilot schools. Four pilot schools in tourism and catering are involved from Romania. Teams of 3-5 teachers were selected and prepared, during 9 training sessions in Romania and 2 in Austria, in applying the new contents developed, using active, interdisciplinary and participatory learning methodologies. They acted as trainers/multipliers at local and regional level, organising progressive dissemination workshops: first in their own schools, then in their cities, counties and, finally inviting similar high schools from neighbouring counties.

Investment in equipment destined to the four pilot schools amounted to 46758 EUR. In addition, production of two textbooks and support learning materials was financed, as well as study visits and workshops for trainers in Austria and training sessions organised in Romania.

The project had two steps:

- a. 1999-2001, with the bilateral co-operation between Romania and Austria
- b. 2002-2003, when Bulgaria and Albania joined the project.

There is declared interest to generalise the use of curriculum materials produced in all tourism and catering schools in Romania and to continue the training workshops through the pilot schools, using a “cascade” system supported by Ministry of Education and Research.

ECONET had a similar strategy: national and regional training workshops were organised, focused on the following topics:

- Information technologies
- Management and leadership
- Economy

25 teachers from the three pilot schools were trained, in a total number of 1925 hours of training.

34 firms were established in the three pilot schools and their number is increasing, both in the pilot schools and in other schools in which the project was disseminated.

The dissemination and extension process of the practice of training firms in other schools was supported by the Ministry of Education, through the decision to implement the curriculum for practical training developed in this project in all schools specialising in economics.

ECONET has also two stages:

- a) 2001 – 2002, with the participation of Romania, Bulgaria and Albania
- b) 2002 – 2003, with extension of the project in two Western Balkans countries

The critical point in the success of this project is the capacity of participating schools to accomplish progressively, step by step, the three levels in establishing a training firm:

- learning office (classroom level)
- junior firm (school level exchanges and operations)
- training firm (exchanges and operations with the global virtual market).

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

Both projects were initiated under the Stability Pact and developed in partnership with KulturKontakt Austria. Started as pilot projects, they became successful experiences and the Ministry of Education decided to invest in the generalisation of results.

The four pilot schools in the TOURNET project and the three pilot schools in ECONET are expected to play a key role in this dissemination process, together with the methodological support offered by the National Centre for Development of Vocational and Technical Education

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

Important achievements of these two projects include:

- Developed curriculum for practical training of students
- Modern teaching and learning materials developed to support the training process
- New and modern working methodology based on principles of entrepreneurship and the market economy.
- Co-operation between technological high schools in SEE countries, participating in virtual networks.

Sustainability is not a problem in the pilot schools where they already have the trained staff and the needed equipment. The working methodology of the projects has become a daily practice in these pilot schools. The sustainability becomes an issue in the extension and dissemination to other schools. The support of the Ministry of Education and Research and its local representatives will be crucial for making use of the expertise gained by all pilot schools participating in these projects.

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16. The Innovation Fund – a tool for building teachers’ capacity in VET reforms (Serbia)

What? - Description of the practice

The development of the building blocks of a flexible, innovative and sustainable VET system based on the principles of Lifelong Learning is expected as the overall result of the two year Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme in Serbia which started in August 2003. It aims to support capacity building among national and local VET actors in different key areas: teacher training, curriculum development, adult training, assessment and quality assurance. A second part of the Programme is support to policy development, drafting of strategies and implementation of new curricula relevant for the economy and the population. The Programme also assists the development of the infrastructure through rehabilitation of schools and provision of equipment and teaching aids.

An Innovation Fund of 1.68 million euros offers opportunities to a broad range of actors (VET schools, Private Sector Training Institution providing VET, Universities, Employers’ Organisation, Trade Union, Non-Governmental Organisation, Research Bodies, etc.). They can design and practice different activities to support innovation in a local context. If these succeed, then they can contribute to innovation in the national VET system. Some examples include:

- locally adjusted VET syllabi,
- VET provision applying new and more effective and efficient methods,
- stakeholder co-operation and involvement of socio-economic partners in VET development.

Why? - The need or problem

The education system in Serbia does not stimulate innovative teaching. It is ineffective and inefficient and does not meet the needs of the economy and the population.

Formerly there was limited training of teachers (pre- and in-service) and training provided was not relevant to the participants nor did it stimulate innovation. The system did not encourage change. Innovations were initiated centrally with only limited support and participation from the direct operators – the schools and the enterprises who had the responsibility of implementing them.

By using the Innovation Fund to supplement Programme activities, local VET professionals have an opportunity to participate independently and use their own creativity in the national VET development. At the same time, they can also support and secure their own further qualification. The Innovation Fund can provide direct support for implementing local innovative activities in the 50 Demonstration VET Schools and 5 Regional Adult Education Centres, selected to participate in the VET Reform Programme. Other parties involved in the reform process of secondary and adult VET in Serbia are also eligible.

The Fund has established two main priorities:

1. Innovations for increasing the quality of secondary and adult VET programme content, presentation and methodology as well as assessment, research, and student counselling.
2. Innovations for improving the involvement of, and co-operation between, relevant stakeholders in the development and provision of secondary and adult VET programmes.

The open and participatory approach of the Innovation Fund enables VET teachers and all other stakeholders to work jointly on identification of local needs and priorities, to properly address them and present results. This “synergy” among them produces practices and policies that are coherent, suitable and relevant for all of the actors involved. In this way the Innovation Fund reduces the gap between decision- makers and grass-roots levels and allows schools to influence on the development and implementation of strategies. This model also ensures capacity building of education system actors for innovation, development, and adaptation to the changing demands.

How? - Strategy, time scale, resources, difficulties

Initially, the VET Programme selected 50 Demonstration VET Schools and 5 Regional Adult Education Centres to participate in its implementation and each of the schools have appointed two teachers to act as Internal and External Change Agents (CATs) on behalf of their schools.

In order to start preparing teachers for the new role of local initiators, 110 CATs from 55 demonstration schools received a range of training on different topics.

- how to conduct research,
- how to prioritize,
- how to establish contacts with local enterprises and other stakeholders,
- what the innovations are, why they are needed and how to introduce them.
- how to identify project ideas and develop these in practice.

Much effort was invested in preparing school teachers for their new role. Throughout all the sessions one line was followed – that this group of CATs has to:

- initiate the changes and find the way to fit those changes in their work;
- test new ways of working; contents and methodologies;
- be the main actors for building linkages between what was set out and what is realistic;
- implement established policies in spite of a rigid system
- identify gaps and weaknesses in practice and propose improvements.

The Programme aims to provide various examples of good practice, for example, where teachers become local initiators not only for their schools but for their communities, fundraising for schools and on their future development and advancement.

Initially weaknesses and threats came to the surface but motivation was maintained by saying – “This is the learning process”. The training is just the first step in discovering the challenges of 21st Century schools and how thorny the path is to developing them.

It took months to identify the bravest CATs who recognised the need for changing their passive role into an active one. Those who felt ready to face challenges responded to the launch of the Innovation Fund and its promotional activities. Those interested teachers expressed the first signs of local initiative. They wanted to have the chance to identify, develop, practice and disseminate. They decided to grab the opportunity, worked on identification of local needs, involved stakeholders and decided to address those needs. All Programme efforts now focus on maintaining this interest and providing opportunity for these CATs to receive, apart from a manual on project development, real coaching and advice, case examples and examples of “lessons learned” during development of their ideas.

Uncertainty and insecurity in this new role, for this small group of teachers, is still apparent but understandable. They are the ones to break the ice and struggle with other teachers trying to prove them that it’s worthwhile. They are the ones to have the responsibility as role models. To what extent they will manage to do that and at the same time maintain their involvement we will see in future months.

Who? – Initiators, supporters, implementers

The initiative to include Innovation Fund in the VET Reform Programme in Serbia came from the VET Programme designers. The Programme is funded by EU through the European Agency for Reconstruction and implemented by Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Education and Sports and European Profiles.

Results? – Achievements, sustainability, recommendations

The Innovation Fund is a direct tool for measuring and monitoring response to the reform processes and its impact at institutional level. If that is to be measured then 55 applications submitted for the first deadline of the Innovation Fund provide answer on questions like - are the schools ready, do they recognise and understand, do they have skills, are they capable... Out of 55 applications, 30 applications were submitted by 23 VET programme pilot schools and 8 applications from 7 other VET schools. In almost all other applications VET pilot schools were included as partners due to their valuable knowledge and experience.

The project applications submitted address different areas and needs with different stakeholders involved. Openness for sharing of acquired knowledge through process of dissemination “crowns” almost each of the project ideas. Areas which project applications address are mainly related to teacher training, new teaching methods, development of teaching material and modification of curricula.

Although only half of the pilot schools submitted project applications, it still shows a high level of awareness of the fact that introduction of changes in the VET system is inevitable as well as the commitment and willingness to participate in introduction of change. Also, the quality of project applications varies. It is obvious that filling out a complex EU application form requires more training and coaching. Nevertheless, if we take this as the first steps, which as with a baby, are as a rule small and precocious, then we can continue to support them and ask ourselves how stable the steps will be when the baby grows up. On the other hand, when the project implementation phase starts, we will see whether this was just a lesson learned or whether their commitment is real.

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CONCLUSION

It will take years to upgrade VET TTT and to develop coherent policy, provision and practice for classroom improvement that is the final test of all good practice in TTT. The partner countries and those of the EU have to 'start from where they are at' by:

- building on existing policies structures and personnel;
- developing a coherent approach that encompasses the three levels of policy, provision and practice
- targeting on the teacher educators and vocational trainers;
- embedding the changes within the schools through partnerships between policymakers, providers and practitioners
- shifting from donor support to self-sustaining activity;
- recognising TTT as a pivotal point of improvement when it impacts on classroom and workshop practice

Many barriers to effective improvement of VET TTT still exist, not least the problems of remuneration and infrastructure in offering attractive career prospects to teachers and trainers. But the examples provided in this compendium of good practice can stimulate an analysis of possibilities and show that there are a variety of steps that can be successfully taken. We invite the reader to ask two questions:

- *What among the above accounts might be feasible and relevant in my own situation?*
- *What would it take to move from good intention to good practice?*

As answers to these questions emerge and experience grows, we would remind you of our invitation in the Introduction to this compendium to draft and send similar case reports to ETF to be added to this collection.

FURTHER REFERENCES

This compendium is one of a sequence of European Training Foundation (ETF) publications on VET TTT to which the reader may wish to refer:

ETF, *Reshaping the focus of vocational teacher and trainer training, A Cross Country Review of needs, achievements and obstacles in Central and Eastern Europe*. 1999

ETF, *Innovative Practice in Teacher and Trainer Training in Vocational Education and Training*, Advisory Forum Report, 1999

ETF, *The Teaching Profession in VET Reform – from Neglect to Participation*, ETF Focus Group Report, September 2003

ETF, *Focus on Innovative Practices in Teacher and Trainer Training in the Mashrek Region*, ETF 2003