

Live&Learn

NEWS, VIEWS AND INITIATIVES FROM ACROSS THE ETF COMMUNITY

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EP chairwoman: Education is fundamental for gender equality



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Letter from the editor

SHARING THE BENEFITS OF CHANGE

Inequality in labour conditions, career opportunities and pay between men and women still persists in many of the countries that the ETF works with.

Gender inequality is often approached from social, political, and anthropological angles, but there is a raising awareness that the costs of inequality are also borne at economic levels.

Low female labour market participation leads to productive capacity being under used and, consequently, to limited economic growth.

A pressing issue in many of the ETF partner countries is female youth unemployment, particularly the transition from school to work of women and girls, which results in many of them being

discouraged and dropping out of the labour force.

For the ETF, this means that the participation of women in education and employment will continue to be a priority in line with our mission of supporting human capital development through the lifelong development of each individual's skills and competencies. In the context of

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THE ETF HELPS TRANSITION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF THEIR HUMAN RESOURCES THROUGH THE REFORM OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LABOUR MARKET SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EU'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS POLICY.

www.etf.europa.eu

Cover Photo:
Member of the European Parliament
for Slovakia, Anna Záborská



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our partner countries this means assisting with the improvement of vocational education and training systems and promoting knowledge and analysis of skill needs in national and local labour markets.

Beginning in 2009 and continuing over 2010, the ETF will strengthen its research and analyses in the experience of women in its

partner countries by giving a specific focus to developments in the MEDA region of the Neighbourhood. The ETF will work with stakeholders and policy makers in Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan to assess gender policies and barriers to the transition of women from education to work.

The research aims to make more visible the lessons from these

policies and to provide knowledge on what works that can be shared more broadly across ETF partner countries and with the European Commission and other European institutions. It is very important that we build on the strong partnerships so that the benefits reform can be shared with all.

Muriel Dunbar, ETF Director



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//THE ETF CAN PROVIDE ADDED VALUE//

PUTTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT THE HEART OF THE EU

MEP Anna Záborská on women in politics

"There are many texts advocating equality between men and women, but what is lacking is the will to put them into practice. There is only one solution - women must get more involved in politics." Anna Záborská, a 59-year old doctor, is a good example of this involvement. A Slovak member of the European Parliament and a member of the EPP-ED group (European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats), she has headed the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality since 2004. This profile could make her an excellent candidate to be vice-president of the parliament, in charge of equality, after the next elections.

While pleased to see that the new Spanish government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has a majority of women (9 ministerial posts out of 17), she points out that in her country, Slovakia, there are only two women ministers. "In any case, the state-of-play of equal opportunities in Europe is very mixed" she explains "and the extent of progress within the twenty-seven members varies considerably depending on which criteria you choose". In Slovakia for example, women became free to open a bank account without their husband's permission much earlier than in France. In some neighbouring countries

of the EU, Anna Záborská is concerned at the "worsening of women's conditions" and believes that respect for different religions or cultures should never mean acceptance of gender discrimination.

In this respect, the committee she heads aims to act as a laboratory for ideas and initiatives. For two years now, it has forged links with twenty other parliamentary committees to ensure concern for equal opportunities are taken onboard in all fields. "It must be done with care though, because we must avoid too much positive discrimination. Women should be promoted only if they have the same qualities as men and not just to satisfy quotas," she says.

The remit of the committee covers many fields including poverty, education, health, immigration, advertising and prostitution. The most media-friendly idea was the "red card against sexual exploitation and forced prostitution" launched during the 2006 World Cup. This idea will be used again during the European Cup, but it has certainly not been the only one. The committee was also associated with the launch of the Charter for equality between women and men in domestic life in May 2006 in Innsbruck. This document promotes "balanced

representation and participation in all kinds of decision making" (Article 3).

More recently the committee has been working on ensuring the informal work of women within family businesses is recognised. This initiative is due to take shape within the next few months as a modification of a directive by the European Commission. The women's rights committee also deals with female poverty and solidarity between generations, "this subject is partially linked to countries of Eastern Europe joining the EU where the family still has a more important place in society," according to Anna Záborská. She declares herself unconvinced that "immigration is the only way" of solving Europe's demographic problems. And with typical determination, she intends to submit proposals so that "the work of mothers who stay at home to care for their children is remunerated". But the main obstacles to be overcome, she insists, are psychological. Believing that excessive regulation or too literal an interpretation of the word "equality" can sometimes be counterproductive, she cites the example of some Nordic countries where "although men and women do an equal share of domestic work, they have one of the highest divorce rates."

Anna Záborská; working to improve women's conditions in Europe



Photo: ETF/EUP Images

Training and the feminisation of poverty are two issues close to Anna Záborská's heart. She is about to present a new report on the second issue, following her report "Women and poverty in the European Union in 2005". "This research reveals that one-third of economic activity undertaken by women is still largely invisible", she points out. She calls for new more suitable indicators to be used that would also include women's role in intergenerational networks of solidarity. To her mind it is clear that "the poorest and most marginalised women must become privileged partners in designing, implementing and assessing equal opportunities policy." In this respect, Anna Záborská believes the European Training Foundation has a very important role to play. "I hope that the Foundation of Turin will continue its excellent work in the different fields of training. In the future, it could provide

real added value by offering its expertise to those women and men who are in most need, people who may not be able to read and write with ease or use modern communication tools. The European Training Foundation can contribute with its expertise to the common good, something which depends on how European institutions and agencies take into account the needs of the most vulnerable of its citizens."

This vision is not just limited to the EU. The committee has regular contact with women from other parts of the world, such as the Balkans and North Africa. As well as serving to exchange experiences and best practices, for Anna Záborská, these talks only go to confirm the fundamental role of education and training. "It is basic. Even in situations of poverty, people who are educated are more able to adapt to new situations and

deal with the challenges facing them," she argues. They are also more capable of taking on political responsibilities that let their voices be heard. "The issue of equal opportunities depends on us all. Everybody must be mobilised", she insists referring to the elections that will, at the end of spring 2009, renew the European Parliament. ■

FIND OUT MORE:
www.epp-ed.eu
www.europarl.europa.eu

by Armand Chauvel, ICE

//THE PROJECT AIMS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC REFORM IN SYRIA//

TEACHING THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE TO SYRIAN ENTREPRENEURS

Skills to help Syria's transformation to a market economy



Photo: ETF/Munzer Bachour



Graduates of the skills programme receive their certificates at the Four Seasons Hotel, Damascus, May 26 2008

Teaching European know-how to the next generation of Syrian entrepreneurs: this is the main target of a joint ETF project together with the Syrian NGO Enterprise and Business Centre (EBC). ETF expert Ulrike Damyanovic, tells Live and Learn about the particularities of this challenging adventure: the Skills Programme.

What is the main purpose of the project?

The objective of this pilot project is to create enough capacity building for entrepreneurship development of young people aged between 18 and 25 years old. The final target is to make them feel they are better prepared to enter the Syrian labour market with real management skills. In this context, our contribution is to bring the “*European touch*” We have, as an EU agency; a well consolidated image and they value highly our experience with transition economies.

Is one year enough to educate the next generation of entrepreneurs?

The course itself is divided in two parts: six months theory and six months internship in a local company. One year is quite enough to get the fundamentals of it, to teach the basics, but of course the biggest challenge lies ahead. The project has long term objectives. For instance, to support the economic reforms in the country, to boost entrepreneurship development and provide young graduates with better opportunities when they enter the labour market. On the other hand, thanks to this programme we also provide entrepreneurs -in the long run - with better skilled people in the sector of Business Administration (BA), English and Computer skills.

And the specific contribution of the ETF?

They really value our experience and our expertise with transition economies. We contributed to education and training reforms for the labour market in several partner countries before they joined the European Union (EU). Our experience with education and training in the EU is also highly appreciated by our Syrian colleagues.

What will the next step be?

After the theoretical part, the students will get a training session in a Syrian company and then, maybe a possible contract. The course itself was very interactive and the students were very interested in Europe and the range of opportunities the EU is offering to follow courses here. The image of the EU is highly valued.

Will the ETF continue this training project in the near future?

We hope so. The feed-back we got from participants and the enthusiastic intervention of the vice prime minister showed that the Skills programme has been highly appreciated and valued as an initiative that can help Syria to support its transformation process into a market economy. ■



Photo: ITCLIO/M. Montesano

▲
Ulrike Damyanovic presents the interactive skills programme

by Fernando Heller Quinterio,
ETF

//SOCIAL DIALOGUE MAY EXIST ON PAPER BUT NOT IN PRACTICE//

THE STATE OF HEALTH OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN PRE-ACCESSION COUNTRIES

Improving industrial relations in rapidly changing countries

Facilitating a real dialogue between employers and trade unionists in candidate countries is a top priority for the European Union. In the fields of education, training and employment, this partnership, known in the jargon as social dialogue, is seen as one of the best ways of improving industrial relations and helping build welfare and social security systems in countries immersed in a process of rapid change. For all of these reasons, the EU has made the strength of social partnership one of its key criteria for accession.



Photo: ETF/Mara Amó

A new ETF report, entitled *Social partner participation in education, training and labour market development*, analyses the current state-of-play of social partnership in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey as they continue preparing for accession. It builds on specific country reports prepared as part of the ETF project on IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession) networking and measures progress on a series of criteria such as social partner involvement in education or employment policy, degree of internationalisation or how training needs are identified.

The report, by external expert Niels Haderup Kristensen, presents some general observations, conclusions and recommendations on how to strengthen the social partnership. Many countries of Central and Eastern Europe tend to base their approach to

social partnership on tripartite rather than bipartite relations, with governments still taking a leading role in all aspects of planning and designing VET and labour market reforms. This is often due to the lack of tradition of direct, structured dialogue between employers and trade unions or the weakness of the social partners themselves in the aftermath of rapid economic restructuring. However, over the last decade, there has been a trend for governments to start establishing institutional structures and legal frameworks which allow for a more participatory approach.

Social partners

In terms of the overall health of the social partnership, the author found three different states of readiness in the different IPA countries. In Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, social partners only tend to participate in



Niels Kristensen worked as a project consultant to the ETF



Photo: ILO/J. Maillard

projects on a voluntary basis. Countries such as Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro have institutionalised the social dialogue but are still having problems making it work. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the frontrunners, have already introduced most of the EU structures and practices and meet most of the accession criteria in this respect.

There is also a danger that social dialogue may exist on paper but not in practice in any meaningful way, a situation which is true to an extent in many of the countries concerned. But Mr Haderup Kristensen detects signs that the prospect of joining the EU and the participative processes this entails are improving the situation. "It is acting as a change agent through

projects, technical assistance and generally through contact with new ways of doing things," he says. A second issue is the poor representation of employers and trade unionists at the regional and local level.

The report makes a series of recommendations for strengthening the social partnership including a peer learning process to benefit the weaker organisations. "They could have a chance to visit or work with more experienced partner organisations in other countries," says Mr Haderup Kristensen. Other ideas include helping partner organisations gain international experience by setting up new bodies such as a Balkan employers' organisation or organising study visits or job exchanges for their staff. ■

▲
Governments still play a lead role in VET reform in IPA countries

Download the report from
www.etf.eu.int

by Rebecca Warden, ICE

//THE TEMPUS PROGRAMME STOOD OUT FROM OTHER EU PROGRAMMES//

THIRTEEN YEARS ON, THE ETF AND TEMPUS PART WAYS

Tempus moves back to Brussels

The transfer of the Tempus programme back to Brussels marks the end of more than 13 years of European Training Foundation support to cooperation between universities in the European Union and the countries surrounding it. The ETF and the European university cooperation programme that moved in with it when the agency opened in Turin in 1995 were often considered inextricably tied together. No longer so. When the fourth phase of this unusually long-lived programme starts on 1 July, the curtain will fall for the department in Turin. Its work will be taken over by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels.

Over the years, a host of exceedingly complicated charts and models illustrating the Tempus Programme's management structure have made their appearance in various Tempus reports.

At the outset Tempus was managed by the former Task Force for Human Resources, which later became DG XXII and is known today as the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. Between 1990 and 1994, the day-to-day running of the programme was in the hands of the EC Tempus Office in Brussels. In 1995, this unit ceased to exist and a Tempus Department was created at the ETF.

Shared history

But in fact, the shared history of the ETF and Tempus goes even further than the day the agency opened for business in Turin.

In 1989 French President François Mitterrand was the first to coin the idea of a European Training Foundation. However at the time there was no clear idea of its scope and mandate.

The Task Force for Human Resources was given the job of designing the instruments of support. David O'Sullivan, who went on to become the European Commission Secretary-General and is now the Director General for Trade, was one of its members.

Recalling the rush to support countries that had been thrown into political turmoil, he said: "We burnt the midnight oil to devise two instruments: Tempus and the Training Foundation. Both were set to be launched right after the Council adopted our proposals, but at the very last minute the Foundation was entangled in a political argument about the seats of institutions. There was absolutely nothing

we could do. We launched Tempus and behind the scenes we did what we could to get the Foundation off that political battlefield, but in vain."

"We had conceived Tempus and the European Training Foundation as part of a two-pronged strategy. [...] The delay in setting up the ETF meant that this integrated process never really got started."

Move to Turin

While the ETF has done much for Tempus in the 13 years since 1995, Tempus has also done much for the ETF. Most of the preparations for the move from Brussels to Turin were made by the EC Tempus Office, which was fully functioning and had staff available to oversee the logistics. Its IT staff helped set up the ETF's first network and its technical services staff

worked closely with the local authorities to convert the crumpled 'arms and fists' of the Villa Gualino into the modern office space it is today.

In the early years in Turin, the Tempus Department worked tirelessly on publicity for the then rather beleaguered programme. Tempus had been a huge success in the early 1990s, but in their zeal, the programme managers had forgotten to tell the world what a great job they were doing.

When things suddenly got worse and the European Commission threatened to pull the plug after the second phase, the Tempus Output Promotion (TOP) project was launched under then Head of Department Olivier Ramsayer (now Head of Administration at the ETF). It was coordinated by Peter Greenwood (now Head of Operations).

TOP culminated in a series of thematic impact studies, country leaflets and

handbooks that produced the desired effect. The campaigns converted the programme's achievements into the staying power that has kept the show on the road ever since, first through an extension of its second phase as Tempus II bis, subsequently as Tempus III and now as Tempus IV which will run from 2007 until 2013.

Online tools

One of the ETF's achievements that made the Tempus programme administration stand out from other EU programmes was the early experimentation and, later on, the full introduction of online application, monitoring and assessment tools.

While dedicated software had been developed for different aspects of the programme since its move to Turin in 1995, the online application tools represented a major improvement on standard practice.

When a direct, online application procedure for Individual Mobility Grants was introduced, this immediately made the programme much more accessible. In the first rounds after the system went live, almost a thousand applications were received for the 200-odd grants available. The paperwork and its tight procedures had clearly put many less experienced candidates off applying for grants. Online application procedures were also introduced for Structural and Complementary Measures.

Eventually, innovations in information collection would allow for much better feedback to project coordinators to the extent that today unsuccessful applicants can be given written feedback and the traditionally very heavy reporting structures and requirements have been greatly simplified. ■

FIND OUT MORE:
ec.europa.eu/tempus

by Ard Jongsma, ICE



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

BUILDING NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS IN CENTRAL ASIA

ETF project expands in its third year



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

An ETF project is driving the development of National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This project has already made significant headway in neighbouring Russia and Ukraine, so much so that in this, the project's third year, Russian facilitators have been asked to share with Central Asian countries the benefit of their experience of developing occupational standards and building a NQF. This decision was largely conditioned by a common background inherited by all CIS countries.

In 2008 three workshops were held in the Almaty, Bishkek and Dushanbe in April and a regional workshop was held in Issyk-kul (Kyrgyzstan) in June.

Relevant stakeholders

The debate centred on achievements so far and planning for the future. The two central issues under consideration were the NQF draft strategy papers and progress on developing occupational profiles for the tourism industry.

In all three countries, the teams working on the NQF and occupational profiles are made up of leading figures from industry and the sphere of education and training. Together they represent all of the relevant stakeholders and the enthusiasm and commitment they have shown so far is an important ingredient in the project's success. Working together and in close consultation with employers, they have produced profiles for several occupations of the tourism and hospitality sector. But as things stand today, the profiles are still generic and will need to be made

more specific, with a special emphasis on the content of functions underlying units of occupational standards.

The project participants are keen that any occupational standards produced should be compatible with the European Qualification Framework, the common reference framework currently being developed by EU Member States. This is particularly important when dealing with levels of qualifications. To this end, the above parameters or descriptors of knowledge, skills and wider competences interpreted as level of responsibility, autonomy and ability to be effective in non-routine situations, must be included in the description of units of occupational standards.

Further support

The next step in this process will be translating the new occupational standards into clear, measurable requirements of performance for students. However, all this takes time and will require further support from

the ETF and intense cooperation between the CIS participants if it is to succeed. When it comes to adopting the new standards, the outdated structure of occupations left over from Soviet times could cause problems. To give just one example, there are currently separate categories for workers' occupations and employees' job titles so that plumbing is classified as an occupation but teaching is a job title. Decision makers will need to be persuaded of the need to make changes in the old classifications in order to have a more effective work.

With the draft NQF strategy papers nearing completion, the participants are now working on streamlining the terminology used and plan to develop a glossary of NQF terms in Russian in order to have a common language. Ensuring the NQF can be implemented by enacting appropriate legislation is a further step. ■

by Olga Oleynikova, IVETA

KOSOVO SPECIAL

//WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS A JOINED UP
EDUCATION SYSTEM//

KOSOVO NEEDS A ROAD MAP FOR REFORM

Peer exercises tackle VET financing and school management

Kosovo urgently needs to start putting its plans for education reform into practice. The drop-out rate has doubled in just three years, teaching materials and equipment are either woefully out of date or altogether lacking and curricula still prioritise coverage over mastery. But implementing reforms is much easier said than done.

Indeed, an ETF dissemination seminar in Prishtina on the 2006 and 2007 regional policy learning peer exercises made clear that there is still some way to go from theory to practice in the newly independent Balkan country.

Carried out by groups of colleagues from Turkey, Albania and Kosovo, these policy learning peer activities tackled the issues of VET financing and school management. They pitched a lot of good ideas but a real strategy to implement these ideas was still lacking in Kosovo.

The seminar in Prishtina brought together all heads of VET schools in Kosovo, bar ten who were on a study trip in Albania during that week in late March. They were presented with the results of the study *The challenge of policy implementation in Albania, Kosovo and Turkey* and discussed how the lessons learned can help in the current critical phase of the reform process in Kosovo.

"The ETF has been a crucial partner in shaping policy and I am seeing the results of its support on a daily basis," said education minister Enver Hoxhaj, "but we need to move beyond policy design now. We need a road map, detailing exactly what needs to be done, when, how, and with whose support."

Decentralisation

New decentralisation mechanisms introduced as part of the plan drawn up by Martti Ahtisaari, the former UN Special Envoy at the Kosovo status process negotiations, have taken the regional link out of the communication chain between the central authorities and the municipalities.

In his welcome speech, Enver Hoxhaj said that this brought the school principals closer to the authorities and that their increased autonomy has helped put them in charge. He encouraged them to make good use of



Photo: Hannah Stirling



Photo: A. Jongsma

KOSOVO SPECIAL

these new powers by participating actively in the debate on how the reforms will be implemented.

But increased autonomy is placing new demands on the heads of schools. In order to be effective mediators between the reform agents – the teachers – and the authorities, they must add leadership skills to their existing management skills. The ETF's Lida Kita therefore urged them to demand the necessary capacity development from the authorities.

"If the minister wants to put you in charge, you should ask the minister for the necessary competence training," she said.

Legal puzzle

While all pieces of the legal puzzle of educational reform are there, they have not yet been made to fit. And to some extent the same applies to the various policies for the different sectors of the education system. Linking up the entire system is now one of the five priority areas for the Kosovo authorities.

The good news is that the government is very committed. "Education is no longer seen as solely the domain of the education ministry," said Fehmi Ismaili, permanent secretary at the education ministry. "There is now much better interdepartmental cooperation. Education is also recognised as a priority by the other ministries," he added.

Education minister Enver Hoxhaj confirmed this; "As a matter of fact we discuss education at three-quarters of all our interdepartmental meetings. The will to change through education is strong."

There is also a thorough understanding that education is not an isolated element in the chain of development.

"We are working towards a more joined-up education and training system," the minister said, "we are looking closely at how each level of degree and diploma relates to the needs of the country."

"Our priority now is to develop primary and secondary education so that it is inclusive, addressing the needs of the entire population. The drop-out rate needs particular attention. It has doubled in just three years and that is a sure sign that parents do not believe education offers their children the right prospects."

School management

For schools, the combination of increased responsibilities through decentralised management, broader social responsibilities and far-reaching reforms in methodologies and curricula present a tough challenge. Such a challenge, in fact, that the principals in Prishtina were not certain they could handle these tasks without considerable support.

Interestingly however, it was not just money they called for but also skills. Their traditional profile did not specify the managerial and administrative capacities they will need in the coming years and this problem needs to be addressed if the whole reform process is to succeed.

VET school director Zenel Kasumaj, who had been part of the three



Photo: ILO/P. Deloche



"Education laws?" he said, "yes, there are many good laws now, but it would be much better to have just one and harmonise the system. We need to work on the entire system now. We have seen lots of piloting in recent years but it hasn't helped anyone. Stop piloting unless there is a clear strategy to implement the results afterwards. We need to work country-wide now."

To this, one of the participants quipped; "It's true, we have been piloting for seven years, but we still cannot land because of the fog."

So in what is an important year for Kosovo, the moment of truth is fast approaching. The Kosovo authorities will not be alone in the challenges they face. In the framework of their 2008 Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education, the authorities recently asked the ETF to help them prepare a VET sector progress review report that will help define IPA support from 2009 to 2011. The key issues are expected to be career guidance, teachers and trainers, curriculum development, a national qualification framework and lifelong learning. ■

countries' peer team, linked the results of the peer exercises on financing and school management to current needs in Kosovo. One of the points he stressed related to cooperation with enterprises, which is underdeveloped at present.

"Such cooperation is essential for relevant vocational education and training," he said. "And yet today it is still largely based on goodwill on the part of employers. If they get involved in education at all, it tends to be because they can see a short-term benefit. It is very difficult to engage them in long-term planning of education on a voluntary basis. This should be regulated."

He praised the Kosovo principals for their positive attitudes and dedication – compliments that were repeated throughout the conference and deservedly so, judging by the zeal and professionalism with which the future of VET in the country was discussed.

He did ask the authorities to involve the heads more directly in policy-making though. Indirectly, this constituted a call

for training too because they may not yet be fully prepared for this. Therefore capacity building among this group should be a priority in the years ahead.

Finally, he addressed the urgent need for developing an adult education system. "Our adult education system is underdeveloped," he said, "judging by the current drop-out rates, we will need an adult education system on the rails very soon."

System-wide

Much remains to be done in Kosovo and it needs to be done soon, or, in the words of Erich Gutmann; "the entire labour market of Kosovo will soon be in the EU."

Erich Gutmann is deputy team leader of KOSVET III, the programme of the European Agency for Reconstruction which provides support to vocational education and training in Kosovo. Addressing the authorities as much as the gathered principals, he left little doubt about how strongly he felt that action was needed.

FIND OUT MORE:
www.pem-consult.de/kosvet/

KOSOVO SPECIAL

LIDA KITA: THE ETF'S EXPERT ON KOSOVO



Photo: ETF/A. Ramella

A former employee of the Albanian Ministry of Education and stringer for major international broadcasters, Lida Kita is the ETF's country manager for Kosovo, where networking and strengthening stakeholders in education remains one of the most urgent tasks for the ETF.

Lida Kita grew up under communist rule and experienced first hand the dramatic changes of the transition period. After her university studies in Tirana, she worked at the Ministry of Education, then taught at the university and later at a foreign language college, where she ran in-service teacher training courses and co-authored text books.

Her work for media companies such as the BBC, ABC and CNN gave her a good insight in the real issues of post-communist Albania. "Living in the camps of wandering Roma, travelling in the remote areas and mixing with the forgotten groups of Albanian society, I learned more about Albania than I could have done any other way," she says.

In the transition period the teaching profession in the Western Balkans has suffered a marked decline in status and rewards. But Lida Kita believes that the key to education reform in general and teaching in particular lies not just in

school infrastructure, curriculum development or managing the system well but rather in the passion of teachers for their work.

"My work has given me the satisfaction of shaping new generations of teachers," she says, "all my previous jobs have given me great professional rewards, but for me the biggest of all is meeting former students who have become politicians, academics, and entrepreneurs in Albania and all over the world."

"I have always wanted to work in the field of development and in the educational and social sectors. This has led me not only to work in post-conflict countries but it has also encouraged me to pursue post graduate studies in management and development".

In 1991 Lida Kita started working for international agencies in Tirana – first in EU Technical Assistance and later in 1993 she became staff of the World

Bank Office in Tirana, where she held the position of education and social sector project manager until she came to Turin in 2001.

Her career at the ETF began in 2002 as project assistant for the Western Balkans. In 2007 she became country manager for Kosovo, a country she knew well from her time at the World Bank. Her broad experience has enabled her to raise the profile of the ETF not only among Kosovar stakeholders but also among the many donors active in the country. ■

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



KOSOVO, AN ETF PRIORITY

ETF activity in Kosovo commenced in 1999 and really took off in 2000 when the agency sent Anthony Gribben to work for a year on a secondment in Prishtina under the Ministry of Labour of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, UNMIK, which officially administered Kosovo between 1999 and independence 2008.

His enthusiasm and expertise built a solid foundation for future EU intervention in human resources development in Kosovo. He thoroughly updated the existing information base but perhaps more importantly, he managed to create strong partnerships and networks among local stakeholders in the country.

Under his supervision an extremely broad variety of activities were launched, spanning issues from entrepreneurship development to social partnership and the development of a national qualification framework. Work on social partnership continued into 2007 when the new country manager, Lida Kita took over.

In the years since, she has worked hard on topics such as social inclusion and on the Kosovo sections of the peer learning exercises of 2006 (financing) and 2007 (school development and management) and

the dissemination of their results (see separate article in this issue of *Live & Learn*).

With the EU taking over a large number of UNMIK's tasks in the years ahead, there is now the opportunity to comprehensively develop Kosovo's education and employment sectors. This will adopt a coordinated sector-wide approach based on a Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) -funded feasibility study and with considerable support from the European Commission.

This has implications for the ETF, for whom Kosovo has become a priority country. Together with policy makers and stakeholders, the ETF will now identify the core problems that need to be addressed and define how they should be tackled. It will help to specify the roles of various actors, bring them together and develop their capacity for policy involvement.

FIND OUT MORE:
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by Ard Jongsma, ICE

//THE ETF IS WORKING WITH ALL NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNTRIES//

A BIG CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AROUND THE EU

What the Neighbourhood means to the ETF

Almost 2000 years after the Romans created the concept of Mare Nostrum, a huge union around the Mediterranean Sea, the EU has substantially strengthened its relations with its neighbours, supporting their democratic and economic reforms through the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Eva Jimeno Sicilia, Deputy Head of Operations and regional coordinator for the ENPI in the ETF, tells “Live and Learn” about the possible implications of this EU external relations tool for the Turin based agency.

Can the ETF offer an added value in the context of the ENPI?

“Obviously we offer the background that we have in terms of the experience, knowledge and relations that we have already established with 16 of the 17 countries that are under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (all of them but Libya). The ETF has worked with all these countries in the context of the former External Relations Policies and programmes of the EU, so we have huge experience in that area.

What are the positive elements of the new ENP?

A positive element of the new ENP is, first of all, that education and employment, key areas of the ETF’s actions, are mentioned as one of the targets. The ENP clearly puts a lot of attention on human mobility, migration

and qualifications. Our agency has acquired a lot of experience in the field of recognition of qualifications and this, I believe, is going to be at the core of the future European policy.

According to Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, the EU wants to create “a big circle of friends around

us”. Is that a good definition for the ENP?

The European Neighbourhood Policy was launched in 2004 with a clear differentiated bilateral character and a policy focus. The Commission was putting emphasis on the relations with a single country. In the last couple of years



Photo: ETF/EUP Images

Because ENP countries are close to us they are important

the EC has as well emphasised that the regional dimension, not only with a single country but with a coherent group of countries, is something to foster and this is certainly an area in which the ETF has a lot of experience to offer. We should not forget that the ENP has been criticised a lot by those who did not understand how the EC could put all these different countries - from Ukraine to Morocco - in the same pot. What Ferrero-Waldner said is that by putting all these countries together, the EC launches a clear political message: because they are close to us they are of crucial importance to us. So, yes, a prosperous and stable circle of friends is a good definition of the ENP.

What will the role of the ETF be in this new political framework?

In addition to our technical expertise, we have already been a key player in fostering regional cooperation, in bringing countries together, exchanging experience and learning from each other. Just to give an example: the implementation of the Meda Education and Training for Employment (ETE) project in the Mediterranean countries, working with the 10 partner countries at the same time. As a technical player, we proved our ability to put together several countries, animate the discussion and facilitate the dialogue: this is an important added value particularly in regions where conflict exists.

Are there some key areas in the new ENP?

In the first place, we should clarify that there is no new ENP. What has changed compared with 2004, when the policy was created, is that the

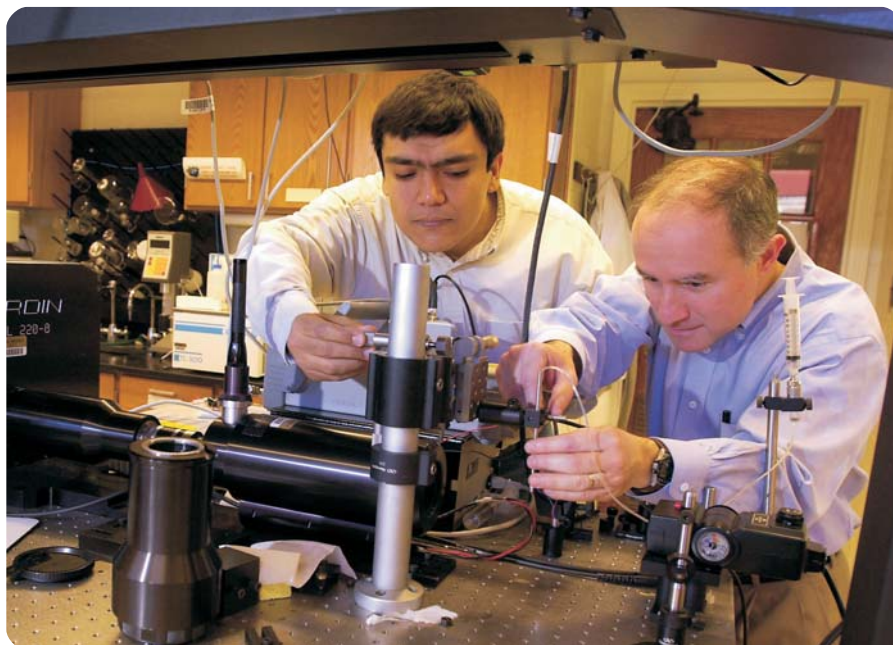


Photo: Purdue

European Commission has launched what they have called “a strong ENP”, together with other communications on the Black Sea cooperation. Brussels realised indeed that some areas needed more emphasis. They proposed improvements in promoting measures for further economic integration, mobility - including visa facilitation, resolution of regional conflicts and sectoral reform -for example on energy - but also education and human capital and employment. The issue of regional cooperation has also been picked up with a new communication on the Black Sea Synergy and the new Barcelona process: Union for the Mediterranean.

Why do you think the EU is focusing more and more on the human factor when talking about External Relations?

It is clear that the migration issue is one of the big challenges for the EU. I am convinced that migration is going to be at the core of many future EU policies, internal and external.

We are also convinced that the human factor is vital for the development of democratic societies and prosperous economies so it is not surprising that it undoubtedly has a key place in any external cooperation policy, call it development, assistance or partnership. The human factor in education and training will be fundamental for the next generations and the ETF is ready to play its part.

FIND OUT MORE:
ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm

by Fernando Heller Quinterio,
 ETF



INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Communicating in a multicultural environment

‘Intercultural dialogue’, ‘diversity’, ‘intercultural competence’: we see these terms everywhere at the moment. At the ETF, as in other multi-cultural institutions, where multilingual communication is daily practice, the cultural side of communication is often downplayed or seen as abstract. However, talking to ETF colleagues about the interactions with individuals and institutions from partner countries, the cultural factor is highlighted. When working styles or conflict management methods differ, the cultural factor can turn out to be just as important as the professional one.

For example, despite or maybe because we communicate in the lingua franca, English, the key terms relevant to a particular area of expertise or educational context can easily evoke different associations. For instance, there are different educational and institutional traditions behind *training*, *(Aus)bildung* and *formation* and notions of these categories can be understood differently. In such cases, communicative and intercultural sensibility and a good knowledge of the local socio-cultural traditions are required.

While evaluating the impact and sustainability of Tempus projects, we look at the “local ownership of results”. This can only be achieved if the project partnership has managed to establish intercultural dialogue among the consortium partners with regards to knowledge transfer, understanding the respective roles of the programme partners and, above all, efficient communication despite language barriers and different cultural traditions.

Outlining a teacher training curriculum in intercultural awareness

The Comenius programme was set up in 1995 as part of Socrates to enhance the quality and reinforce the European dimension of school education by encouraging trans-national cooperation

between schools, contributing to the professional development of staff, and promoting learning languages and intercultural awareness. Since May 2007 Comenius has become a major strand of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) along with Erasmus.

The “CC-Wise: Cross-Culture Walk through the streets of Europe” project involving Bulgaria, Austria, Spain, Turkey, Poland and Romania resulted in the in-service teacher training course. Project meeting discussions that related to the curriculum in intercultural awareness included the following major components:

- Education and multicultural society today, including coexistence of different value systems in Europe, “multiculturality” and “diversity” anchored in European history, cultural heritage, cultural exchange, pluralism in post-communist countries and citizenship education.
- Intercultural awareness, including understanding one’s own ‘cultural grammar’ - way of life, socio-cultural practices, system of beliefs, shared history, set of common experience and ‘the notion of otherness’.
- Challenges of education for diversity, including migration, social inclusion, ethnic minorities, languages, religions.

The in-service training responded to the need of educational professionals to raise awareness of the issues and to develop practicable methods to integrate intercultural dimension into the teaching practice.

Intercultural dimension in ETF interventions

The ETF supports national policy makers in their efforts to apply EU knowledge and experience by themselves, thus strengthening local ownership. Better management of cultural sensibilities could therefore contribute further to promoting ‘policy learning’ rather than a ‘policy copying’ approach, improving the receptiveness of inputs from ETF.

In this respect, in-service training programmes offering intercultural skills development for educators from different countries participating in international exchange and training programmes could be developed. Thus the intercultural dimension of ETF interventions in partner countries could be contextualized and made practicable. ■

by Halina Klimkiewicz, ETF

Photo: ETF/A. Ramella



HELPING COUNTRIES LEARN TO LEARN

A new learning concept

Until recently it was assumed that an individual's ability to learn is fixed. Schooling reinforced that perception in the way that some people are gifted and some are not. But current research showed that this assumption may be wrong. Learning may be a skill, not a hard-wired trait and people can improve their capacity to learn at any age, in order to compete in a globalised society.

ETF expert Evelyn Viertel tells Live and Learn about this new concept of learning which competes directly with the "old fashioned" way.

What is lifelong learning about?

As the name suggests, it refers to learning through one's entire life. Lifelong learning starts when children are born, from early childhood until almost the end of your life. In our partner countries it is often interpreted as a synonym for adult learning, which is actually not really correct. We stress very much that the foundations for lifelong learning are laid early on in life; with early childhood education.

When should we start?

We need to start as early as possible because the concept of lifelong learning means a big change in the focus of learning. In the ETF we want

to include more key competences in education, apart from reading or writing. That is why we stress very much the concept of "*learning to learn*" abilities. This means that young people should acquire the ability to steer their own learning and learn how to find information, how to digest it, how to connect to what they already know using sources other than the traditional ones, other than text books, for example. These new key competences include, among other things, the ability to digest information from different sources.

Is it possible to teach how to learn?

I think so. Some key competences are focused towards a specific subject while key competences such as learning to learn or entrepreneurship are horizontal topics which are active types of teaching and learning. Learning to learn means that teachers should no

longer stand in front of a class trying to disseminate all the knowledge they have in their hands.

This means a completely new role for the teachers.

What is required nowadays is that teachers play a more active role in the classroom and outside the classroom. Their role changes from being like a bibliographic source of knowledge to becoming a facilitator of learning in a peer learning process of individual students or teams of students.

It is like a big bang in Education?

We should assume that teachers do not have all the answers. It should be a two way discussion that needs to be guided by a facilitator. Lifelong learning is about more investment in human resources at all levels in the education systems, in all forms of education: formal and informal learning.



Is there a huge difference between formal and informal learning?

We know now that a lot of new skills and competences are indeed acquired through informal learning which takes place outside the formal settings. It means that you can learn watching television in your family, with your friends, with your computer...outside any formal institution.

But with informal learning you don't get a certificate at the end of your studies...

The fact of getting a certificate should be decoupled from the way you have acquired the skills. No matter how, if you feel competent in a certain field it should be possible to have your knowledge recognized without being obliged to go through a training course. Informal learning is about recognizing learning independently of how you have acquired the skills.

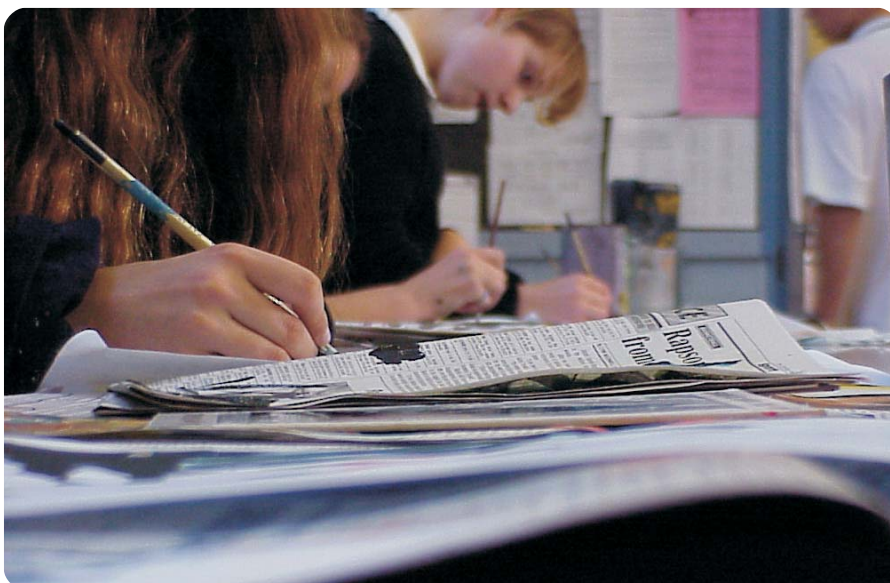
Is my grandfather still able to learn?

In principle there is no limit to lifelong learning, but - of course - in a society which also has to take control of its own resources, the key emphasis is on young people and on people active in the labour market. But we know, for instance, that the "3rd age university", which is not restricted to young people, is working very well.

What can the ETF offer in this context?

The adult learning area has been very much neglected in our partner countries. That is why our primary efforts are focused on explaining what lifelong learning means and then on putting more emphasis on key competences and on providing and facilitating a good environment to develop it and also helping to define appropriate concepts for adult learning so as to revitalize their learning systems. ■

**by Fernando Heller Quinterio,
ETF**



"Managing change is not easy but we need to embrace it as a source of dynamism in our lives and not a threat"

***Jose Manuel Barroso,
EU Commission
President.***

PUBLICATIONS

EVENTS



Helping countries develop through learning

Brand new, short presentation of ETF activities and areas of action. This leaflet is available now in all EU languages plus the languages of the Pre-Accession countries, and Russian and Arabic.



ETF Yearbook 2008: Policy learning in action

Focusing on policy learning, this year's Yearbook features contributions on impact analysis, peer learning, leadership and development aid amongst other topics. Electronic and paper versions will be available in autumn in English.



Work-based learning programmes for young people in the Mediterranean region

This report examines programmes for youth that combine learning in classrooms with participation in work in ten Mediterranean countries: Algeria; Egypt; Israel; Jordan; Lebanon; Morocco; Syria; Tunisia; Turkey; and West Bank and Gaza. It will be available electronically in English and French from autumn 2008.



July 14-16 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia
NQF regional workshop for the Caucasus countries.

July 24-25 2008, Helsinki, Finland
ETF Editorial Board meeting.

September 03-05 2008, Turin, Italy
Continuing VET and adult education reform in the EU context.

NEW FACES



Stefano Queirolos Palmas, ETF Governing Board member for Italy



Dr Manuela Prina, ETF expert in education and training policy and system reform



Marie Dorleans, ETF expert in education and training policy and system reform

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