



Network of Education Policy Centers

COORDINATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

ETF Evaluation Synthesis Report

January – December 2017

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## PROJECTS FRAME

From the analyses of the projects premises, development, and monthly reports and from the final evaluations, it emerges that the demonstration projects that were implemented from January to December 2017 could be ascribed to two main categories.

Three projects were more oriented to affect the policy level or to the reflection/experimentation about the education policies. The other four were organized following the structure of a more standard teacher training programmes on “new” topics, cascading method and on-line engagement of teachers in hope of reaching as many teachers as possible and promoting peer learning among teachers.

The first category includes the projects *Model for establishing the system of accreditation programs for continuing professional development of VET teachers* (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**), *VET teachers as learners in industry sector 2017 - VETtLIS 2017* (**Montenegro**) and *Supporting VET teachers' Continuous Professional Development through ePortfolio* (**Serbia**).

The second category includes the projects *Knowledge Management & Implementation during the Teaching Process for Vocational School Teachers* (**Albania**), *Continuing Professional Development for VET – CAPACITY BUILDING VET TEACHER THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS* (**Kosovo**), *Professional Development of Teachers and Trainers in VET in the SEET Region* (**Macedonia**), and *Training of VET Teachers for Blended Learning and LMS (VET-LMS)* (**Turkey**).

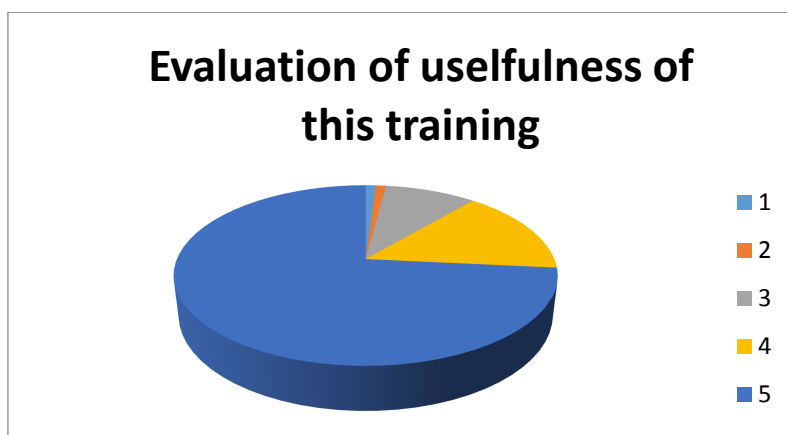
## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The project ***Model for establishing the system of accreditation programs for continuing professional development of VET teachers*** (B&H) aimed at developing guidelines and accreditation standards and procedures for CPD of VET teachers.

The Agency for Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education involved in the project four partner institutions: Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Una-Sana Canton and of Tuzla Canton, the Pedagogical Institute of Tuzla Canton, and the Pedagogical Institute of Una-Sana Canton (2 representative from each institution). For one of the consultation workshops, the ministries of Tuzla Canton and Una-Sana Canton nominated ten vocational schools. Out of the designated ten schools, eight schools responded positively and their representatives participated in defining of the priority areas for CPD of VET teachers thus fostering a participatory and inclusive approach in the project. In a country characterized by the lack of national policies this could be seen as a positive practice that opens such possibilities for future policy development. Moreover, using the same approach the developed documents were available for public consultation and in order to have a higher chance of them being accepted by all cantons a meeting for all Ministries was organized to present the documents.

Apart from high rating of participants in the project workshops (the first workshop was rated by all elements with average grade of 4.8 (on a scale 1 to 5). The second and the third workshops were rated with 5. Teachers of vocational schools assessed the workshop with an average rate of 4.6 (on a scale 1 to 5). One of the learnings that can be taken from this project lies in setting a realistic goal for the project (given the time and resources available) based on a clear need at policy level for such intervention and in the design that allowed for concrete outputs. The most valuable results of the project lie in the fact that the project succeeded in developing good quality accreditation guidelines, standards and procedures as well as in the planned follow up, which include piloting the accreditation in two cantons Posavina and Tuzla.

The **VET teachers as learners in industry sector 2017 - VETtLIS 2017** (Montenegro) project aimed to encourage stronger co-operation and exchange of knowledge between teachers in vocational schools and employers in order to support the professional development of teachers through teacher placements. The goal of placing 72 teachers during the project was overachieved and in three placement cycles 98 teachers were placed. Overall the teachers were extremely satisfied. The teachers evaluated the usefulness of placement from 1 to 5, and the result of the overall analysis is presented in the following graph.



*Scale of measurements: 1-lowest rating that refers to evaluation of usefulness of training (not satisfied, not helpful); 5-Highest grade of evaluation of usefulness of training (training was very useful)*

From 98 teachers who attended the training, 72 teachers evaluated their satisfaction within as regards as the activities with the highest rating. Following the placements the teachers and employers were also asked for recommendations to improve the programme. The analysis found that the following should be done:

- **prolong the duration of teachers' placements**

Most teachers believe that a one-week period is not enough to get familiar with all the segments of that job, and it is proposed to extend training for at least two working weeks.

- **relieve teachers of other duties during placements**

All teachers should be relieved of classes during training because training represents a workload of 8 hours per day. Some schools have succeeded in getting teachers out of the classroom for a week, while in most schools, teachers spent the five working days both at school and at the placement.

- **engaging training with an employer in other developed cities**

in cases when the offer of employer is not available in the same town where the school is, it is essential for these teachers to be offered placements with employers in the other towns/regions. .

- **improve co-operation between schools and employers**

in order to improve the usefulness of placements employers and schools should have direct cooperation as the Coordinators at the Ministry are not always best placed to match the level of teachers experience to the employer.

Main conclusion of piloting the initiative in 2016 and 2017 is that it should be mainstreamed. Follow up activities described in next chapter point to ways this could be done.

The ***Supporting VET teachers' Continuous Professional Development through ePortfolio*** (Serbia) project had three specific objectives: raising policy makers' awareness of the ePortfolio's potential to foster teachers' continuous professional development; implementing a whole school approach to the ePortfolio use for CPD by strengthening school-management capacities; building capacities of VET teachers to use ePortfolio as a method for enhancing self-learning and self-reflection skills.

Initially, a group of 20 teachers from 7 schools undertook a training (in-vivo and on-line), this was followed by attendees sharing their acquired knowledge via Moodle platform and attracting other teachers to the platform thus increasing the number of teachers to 58. This allowed for groups of teachers to use peer to peer support and learning using modern ICTs.

Project results showed that teachers handled the technicalities of creating an e-portfolio more easily than they could reflect on their own competences and contents-Indeed, the project team suggested that further assistance after the training completion should be provided. The project also succeeded in bringing policy makers to the events it organised and thus raising awareness of policy makers on the importance and usefulness of ePortfolios for improving teacher practices both at individual level through reflection and self-learning but also through peer learning and building teacher networks.

***Knowledge Management & Implementation during the Teaching Process for Vocational School Teachers*** (Albania) consisted of a series of teacher trainings about knowledge management, soft skills, IT and engineering knowledge related topics.

One of the most sensitive issues of the project was separating teachers from the habit and routine of applying old methods of teaching, encouraging and proving that focusing on new efficient methods directly affects minimizing fatigue and high performance at work, operating on teachers' self-reflection. Moreover, the project offered a variety of different training programmes tailored on a group of teachers in each school. The mutual exchange between the training provider and the teachers resulted in high quality training programmes.

242 teachers from 5 vocational schools participated in the project and 58 activities were carried out. Teachers produced 138 materials that were published on the on-line portal. Participating teachers described the project as "productive, valuable, interesting, useful and effective".

The *Continuing Professional Development for VET - Capacity Building of VET Teachers through New Technological Applications* (Kosovo) delivered an AutoCAD 2D software training (with a peer learning cascading structure).

Initially, 17 participants/ teachers from 12 schools VET Schools in Kosovo attended a 30 hours training program (with assessment test) leading towards certification in Auto Desk in AutoCAD 2D. By the cascading system, these teachers become “trainers” for other teachers in their school, providing a training program of 15 hours per group. Overall, 94 teachers 12 VET Schools took part in the program. The implementation of the cascading training required a lot of coordination in the schools and was hindered by a certain lack of support from the school directors; however, support from the National VET agency, the project partner, ensured that the cascade sessions took place in schools under its responsibility. However, training of teachers and use by teachers of AutoCad with their students is hindered by a lack of adequate infrastructure (old or missing computers).

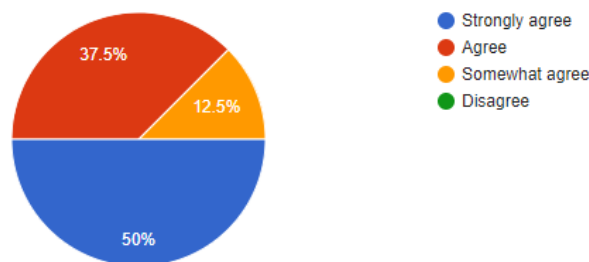
The 17 teachers who participated in the certified training took part in the evaluation process. In terms of the quality of the training contents, materials and delivery, usefulness and relevance of the topic, the over-all rating was very good. An interest for similar trainings with a strong practical component in other subject areas was expressed. The competence of the trainer was rated high and the general rating in overall for all trainings is ranked under VERY GOOD. However, so far none of the teachers has obtained professional certification because the test requires high competence in English and is relatively expensive.

For future initiatives it is strongly recommended to ensure that the teachers can use in their schools what they are trained on and that if adequate equipment is not available another approach to teachers’ professional development should be used. Although professional certification may be attractive to teachers and therefore they sign up for the course, number one priority should always be improvement of teaching practice.

The *Improvement of the professional competencies of teachers and achievements of students in VET schools by establishing a new concept for digital learning and teaching (E-school concept)* (Macedonia) project aimed at improving the professional competencies of teachers and achievements of students in VET schools by establishing a new concept for digital learning and teaching (E-school concept), with a cascading structure. The project originally trained 16 teachers from 8 schools who were then disseminating and training other teachers. Upon completion of the first phase of the project, trainees were asked to give feedback by filling in the questionnaire about the training. In answer to the question of whether they feel confident to train other teachers, 37.5% agreed, and another 50% strongly agreed.

### 11. I feel confident to train other teachers.

16 responses



Dissemination took place in eight participating schools; there were 145 participants in total. Sixteen teacher trainers who were trained during the first phase of the project subsequently delivered the training to their colleagues. The trainees were given instruction materials and in the course of two days, they learnt about using the Moodle based platform at digitalschool.mk allowing them to upload and create learning materials, create programmed lessons, quizzes, forums etc. In addition, teachers learnt how to use Moodle based webinars, screen-recording software, and how to create, edit and upload a video to YouTube.

Additionally teachers were uploading materials etc. on the web platform digitalschool.mk. In December 2017 there were 2897 active users (teachers and students, out of 5119 registered), 702 courses, 13205 assignments and 10564 quiz questions on digitalschool.mk platform. Approximately 40% of the trained teachers are actively using the platform. In the section of the survey about the particular topics and sessions, most useful topic for the teachers will be Moodle quizzes with 98,5% responses (very useful – 61,1% and useful – 37,4%).

The ***Training of VET Teachers for Blended Learning and LMS (VET-LMS)*** project (Turkey) aimed at raising the teacher capacity supporting the use of the Sakai Manuals (that has been translated, published, sent to school and uploaded on line) and by teacher trainings related to the publications.

The project showed the need of further support for teachers after the training completion in order to make it effective and generate a change, regardless the blending of learning, e-learning or the creation of digital materials.

150 teachers from 61 schools have been trained on using LMS on their classes and they acquired experience on creating online learning materials. 71% of the trainees strongly agree, 33% agree and 6% somewhat agree that this training will improve their teaching/professional development. 68% of the trainees strongly agree, 29% agree and 2% somewhat agree that this training has motivated them to use online materials and LMS's in their classes.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

The following table shows a compendium of follow-up activities per country/project.

COUNTRY/ PROJECT	Follow up in process	POSSIBLE FOLLOW UP
<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <p>Model for establishing the system of accreditation programs for CPD of VET teacher</p>		<p>Piloting accreditation process in Posavina and Tuzla Canton</p> <p>Fundraising to Support piloting</p> <p>Development of the adequate legislation</p> <p>Application of the accreditation system</p>
<p>Montenegro</p> <p>VET teachers as learners in industry sector 2017</p>	<p>Cooperation between schools and employers</p> <p>Possible procurement of teacher and employer training by the schools</p> <p>Application by the Chamber of Commerce of the program accreditation to the VET Centre Authority (teacher credits)</p>	
<p>Serbia</p> <p>Supporting VET teachers' CPD through ePortfolio</p>	<p>The training will be offered to teachers and school in Serbia</p>	<p>The training maybe offered in other countries in the region</p>
<p>Albania</p> <p>Knowledge Management &amp; Implementation during the Teaching Process for VET Teachers</p>	<p>Marketing campaigns</p> <p>Motivating the teachers to continue the sharing of information (via platform)</p> <p>Providing of infrastructural facilities for teacher training</p> <p>Free testing of their professional skills</p> <p>Advocacy for fundraising</p> <p>Technical and professional improvement of the portal</p>	

Kosovo/ Capacity Building of VET Teachers Through New Technological Applications	Trainers/teachers will provide additional training at their school for other teachers in 2018	Certified (17) participants are willing to enter the exam at the AutoDesk for AutoCAD More training Interest to follow training in AutoCAD 3D expressed by all teachers
Macedonia/ Improvement of the professional competencies of teachers and achievements of students in VET schools by establishing a new concept for digital learning and teaching (E-school concept)	Use of the platform digitalschool.mk can be possible throughout 2018 if teachers choose to keep using it Addition of the sharing module on the platform Attempt to extend the project (training, recruiting of new teacher trainers, production of new materials for the platform)	
Turkey / Training of VET Teachers for Blended Learning and LMS (VET-LMS)	Lead school have been recognized as the technically advanced schools	Organization and implementation of other trainings Attempt to insert this training as an in-service training in Izmir Province for VET teachers



## COMMON TRENDS, LESSONS LEARNT AND CONCLUSIONS

From the analyses of the evaluation reports, some common trends and relevant issues emerge.

The first feature that often reoccurs is the digitalisation and its implication. Five out of seven projects tried to encompass (as a core activity or as support) the use of ICT to foster learning possibilities/procedures. From the projects analyses, it is clear that the new technologies are a useful tool however several issues should be considered in using new technologies, primarily many schools in the region are not yet equipped with technological tools needed to implement such projects, it could be the issues of hardware, software but also internet access and speed that is necessary for full implementation. Bringing such projects to schools that do not have necessary means could increase the frustration of the teachers and back fire on the concept of CPD. Secondly projects also show that when there is necessary technology is available and quality training is provided most teachers quickly acquire the technical knowledge however all the issues generally faced in CPD such as teachers' self-reflection and the embracement of new paradigms need to be tackled in order for the programmes to be fruitful and effective.

The second trend is related to the peer learning (cascading) structure. In the project countries, it seems that is not yet seen as the preferential way of acquiring new skills by teachers. Although the projects increased sharing among teachers there are issues both on the giving and receiving end. On one hand teachers are reluctant to share their lesson plans and hard work while on the other peer teachers are not seen as experts who should have authority. For peer learning to work some conditions are necessary: supportive school leadership/ management that believes professional development is important; the cohesion of the school teaching body; teachers need to be partially relieved from their usual teaching tasks while undertaking the course(s) and finally further focuses on teacher networking and peer learning should be enhanced in the Region.

Furthermore, some structural issues are distinguishable. Some of them are of a technical nature, such as the lack of space, time and proper infrastructure, while others are more of a managerial/cultural kind, such as the lack of support from the school principals, especially when the trainings involve the whole teaching staff. The extra workload required by the educational process is often relegated to the teachers' free time and the school institutions still do not recognize the professional improvement as part of the job responsibilities of a teacher. Therefore, in some cases, it was not easy to get the school cooperation and the teachers were left without an adequate support from their supervisors/administrative institutions (either in terms of extra working hours required or in the "allowed" length of the training, either in terms of organizational backup). Any further initiatives should consider careful planning and involvement of the school leadership as well as the founders of schools in the planning stages of the projects to ensure adequate infrastructure as well as dedicating time to teachers for CPD.

All projects also confirmed that professional development is a process and providing additional and follow up support to teachers, after the trainings are completed, is unanimously seen as a fundamental step to make sustainable changes in teachers' practices.

Many of the projects also had challenges with motivation of teachers, especially in situations when school management did not support them, when teachers were internally motivated they found ways to overcome different administrative and financial obstacles however this should not be a policy solution. Policy makers must also find ways to reward the motivated teacher that can lead the processes in their schools as well as provide clear certification and accreditation policies that will encourage other teachers to join such initiatives.

The projects showed the importance of reward and professional recognition as an innovation and change catalyser for practitioners. These kinds of national and international frames can trigger improvements in teaching more widely.

Finally, it is important to note that some of the projects used participative methods in order to produce change into their CPD for VET teachers, either by cooperating with local municipalities, ministries and VET agency or by involving teachers in piloting activities and producing change at school level. As participative policy making is the only method that ensures teachers' "buy in" for policy reforms it is strongly recommended to try to include the component of participation in any future initiatives.