



**Teacher Professional and
Career Development Project**



**MACEDONIAN
CIVIC
EDUCATION
CENTER**

QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

July 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014

Agreement No. RFA-165-A-13-00001

Submitted by:

Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

BDE	Bureau for Development of Education
EU	European Union
MCEC	Macedonian Civic Education Center
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NEC	National Examination Center
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SbS	Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives Step by Step Macedonia
SEI	State Education Inspectorate
TCD	Teacher Career Development
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TPCD	Teacher Professional and Career Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET Center	Vocational Education Training Center
WB	World Bank
YES Network	Youth Employability Skills Network
ZELS	Association of the Units of Local-Self Government of the Republic of Macedonia

MACEDONIAN CIVIC EDUCATION CENTER (MCEC)

USAID TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TPCD)

QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT #5

Cooperative Agreement No:	RFA-165-A-13-00001
Progress Report No:	7
Reporting Period:	July 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014

1. BACKGROUND

On December 7, 2012 the Macedonian Civic Education Center (MCEC) signed the Cooperative Agreement with USAID to implement USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project (TPCD). The Project is a 30-month initiative which contributes to the design, development and establishment of a teacher professional and career development system in the Republic of Macedonia by identifying necessary interventions that support existing national policies and practices.

The TPCD project aims to create a comprehensive, transparent, feasible and cost-effective system that will improve student achievement and strengthen teacher performance and credibility. MCEC, in partnership with relevant institutions, will achieve a set group of goals through an integrated approach and activities that focus on lessons learned from past projects for teachers' professional development, current initiatives and regional/international best practices.

The TPCD project goal is to accomplish the following three, mutually dependent and inter-related results¹:

- *Result 1: Comprehensive Legal System Improved*

Review of legislation related to professional and career development of educators in pre-school, primary and secondary education to determine capacities of institutions to effectively perform assigned roles and responsibilities, and thereby strengthen the TPCD system.

- *Result 2: Enhanced Financial Schemes*

Review different schemes to finance the professional and career development of teachers and proposing funding scenarios that are realistic and viable in the Macedonian context.

- *Result 3: Standards for Teacher Competencies Developed*

Develop standards for teacher competencies and professional development opportunities, along with tools for evaluating performance and advancement in the teaching profession.

During Year 1, the Project focused on establishing project structures, defining collaboration with relevant stakeholders, conducting a comprehensive review of TPCD in the country and a

¹ In the text below all activities that are related to fulfillment of the three project expected results are grouped under the following three components: Component1 - Comprehensive Legal System, Component 2 - Enhanced Financial Schemes, Component 3 – Standards for Teacher Competencies.

comparative analysis of countries with well-established TPCD systems. In addition, the Project worked on identifying and cataloguing teacher core competences and commenced the process of developing teacher standards. During Year 2, the Project will finalize the teacher standards, and will start development of Catalogue of Core Professional Competencies and Standards for student support services. The established working groups will work on improving the mentoring process of novice teachers in schools, establishing an internal school performance assessment of teachers, drafting the procedures and developing instruments for teacher career advancement. Along this, the Project will work on legal regulation of the developed products in the adequate laws.

The TPCD system will be based on clear standards of quality teaching, multiple measures, accurate teacher evaluation², targeted professional development and continued support to teachers. To achieve this, the project will use a participatory approach, which will enable strong coordination with, and contribution from, the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and other educational institutions.

2. PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES

During the reporting period the following was accomplished:

Crosscutting Activities:

- TPCD system presented to the Minister of Education and Science;
- Draft guidelines and process for professional development and career advancement sent to Steering Committee members for review before official approval;
- On-line public debate organized to receive feedback on the draft competencies and standards for students support services;
- In cooperation with the USAID Youth and Employability Skills Network, the Catalogue for Teacher Core Professional Competencies, enriched with competencies that teachers need to acquire in order to guide and support students in the process of deciding about the future education and professional career;
- Regional meetings with the representatives of Associations of pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists, social workers and special educators working in the schools conducted;
- Audit of TPCD project expenditures and finances for the period January to December 2013 conducted and final report received;

Component One, Comprehensive Legal System:

- Participation of the team in drafting the new Law on Teachers, including providing feedback and suggestions for the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the Law on the Academia for Teachers;
- Graphical presentation of the new Laws prepared and inconsistencies and discrepancies identified in the new Laws;
- Meeting with the Advisor of the Prime Minister, Mr. Viktor Novakovski regarding the reform of initial teacher education.

² Teacher evaluation refers to all forms of evaluation such as: School Self-evaluation, Integral Evaluation, teacher rewarding based on the External Student Assessment.

Component Two, Enhance Financial Schemes:

- Scenario for teacher professional development prepared;
- Simulation and budget implications taking into consideration the number of compulsory number of hours for professional development per teacher for a period of three (3) years developed.
- Simulation for teacher career advancement into the title teacher-mentor and teacher-advisor including financial implications for a period of five (5) years developed.

Component Three, Standards for Teacher Competencies:

- Feedback gathered from the on-line debate incorporated in the competencies and standards for students support services staff;
- On-going development of the processes, procedures and instruments for career advancement of teachers;
- Draft guidelines for improving the mentoring process of novice teachers developed;
- Draft guidelines for planning the professional development of teachers developed;

3. PROJECT UPDATE

3.1 Key Project Personnel Positions

There are no changes in the key project personnel positions.

3.2 Other Project Staff

There are no changes in the other project staff.

4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Crosscutting Activities

Cooperation with BDE and other relevant institutions

During this reporting period, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Science announced the reform of the initial teacher education and the establishment of the Academia for teachers. Having in mind that the initial teacher education is directly linked to the professional development of teachers, the Project team reviewed all press announcements and met with different education stakeholders in order to identify areas that might impact the project solutions. The gathered data was presented to USAID in a brief report outlining the announced changes and possible implications on the project activities (**see Annex 1**). Beginning of September, the project team was invited to participate in two meetings organized by the Ministry of Education and Science during which the concept for the reform of initial teacher education was introduced. At these meetings, the project team presented the proposed design of the TPCD system and highlighted the importance of taking into consideration the already developed solutions for teacher professional development and career advancement in the process of reforming the initial teacher education.

The attempts to continue the discussions with the National Examination Center (NEC) that started in April 2014 concerning the development of the professional competencies for school directors did not yield results in this reporting period. This issue was raised during the meeting held with the State Secretary at MoES, and she offered her support in encouraging the NEC Director to begin the development of competencies in cooperation with the Project.

Steering Committee Activities

At the beginning of September, the project sent the to all Steering Committee members: 1) the draft guideline for induction of novice teachers; 2) the draft guideline for planning the professional development of teachers; and 3) the mapped processes for induction, professional development and career advancement of teachers. The initial plan was to gather the Steering Committee members to adopt the TPCD design and the developed guidelines before they are handed over to the Minister of Education and Science for adoption. However, due to the busy agenda of MoES and BDE with the reform of the initial teacher education, and Teacher Union with the organization of strike, this meeting was postponed.

The Teacher Union failed to organize a strike of all teachers in the primary and secondary education. Some of the reasons for organizing the strake were: the low salary of teachers, using the results of external testing of students to penalize teachers and the administrative burden. However, due to amendments in the Law on Strike, which obligates the school directors to temporarily replace the teachers who are on strike with unemployed teachers, using the pretext that the education process cannot be stopped, this strike did happen. The media reported that by undertaking such a step the Government is in direct violation of the ratified conventions on freedom of association and protection of the rights to organize.

Meetings, debates and roundtable discussions

An online public debate on the developed student support services competencies and standards was conducted in the period between mid-August and end of September. The initial closing date was planned for September 15, but on the request made by the Association of student support services during the regional round table discussions (organized within the last project quarter), the public debate was extended until September 30. During this period the student support services in the schools had an opportunity to review the competencies and standards, and send their feedback. The schools were reminded to send comments and suggestions twice by e-mail and once by phone. At the end of the closing date 41 responses of associations/ individuals were received.

Furthermore, during this reporting period, the project team conducted number of working meetings with the expert groups for 1) developing the guideline for mentoring novice teachers, 2) guideline for planning the professional development, and 3) the expert group for developing procedures and instruments for career advancement of teachers.

Public relations

In order to keep all relevant stakeholders informed about the latest project developments, the TPCD team regularly updates the MCEC sub-webpage with the most recent TPCD documents. During this quarter, the project posted information about the on-line public debate and for this purpose, the student support services competencies and standards were uploaded with the instructions and templates in which the feedback by the schools will be obtained.

In addition the partner organization SbS in their monthly electronic newsletter wrote an article about the on-going activities as part of the TPCD project.

Collaboration of TPCD with international agencies and USAID projects

On August 27, TPCD team met with representatives from the USAID Youth and Employability Skills Network (YES Network) to incorporate in the Catalogue competencies that teachers need to acquire, in order to guide and support students in the process of deciding about the future education and professional career.

The reform of the initial teacher education raised many questions and concerns by the projects and donors that work in the field of education. All were trying to find out more about the reform and to see how it will affect their current and future work. As a result, TPCD project met with OSCE because one of their education programs directly supports the pedagogical faculties in improving the practical training of future teachers in schools. During this meeting, it became obvious that MoES is withholding information related to the reform and that the teacher training faculties or any other actors from the professional community are neither consulted nor involved.

Other

As per the USAID requirements, the auditing house Grant & Thornton was selected to conduct an audit of TPCD project expenditures and finances for the period January to December 2013. Based on the auditing house's final report, the Teacher Professional and Career Development project is working in accordance with the Macedonian Laws and in compliance with the USAID requirements.

4.2 COMPONENT 1: COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL SYSTEM

Activity 4.2.1: Draft amendments in the laws to regulate the teacher competencies and standards

As part of the reform of initial teacher education, the Minister of Education and Science requested three new laws to be developed: 1) Law for Higher Education Institutions; 2) Law for Academia for Teachers, and 3) Law for Teachers. The initial versions of the first two were developed by the Sector for Higher Education and the Legal Sector at MoES, whereas BDE was assigned to develop the Law on Teachers. On the request of BDE, the Project team was invited to take part in drafting this law. This served as an excellent opportunity to regulate the solutions for professional development and career advancement of teachers in this Law. Teacher Core Professional Competencies and Standards, the number of hours for compulsory professional development, the procedures for advancing in career, the process for professional development are some of the solutions which were designed by the project and embedded in the new Law for Teachers.

In order to check the alignment of the three laws, the team prepared a graphical presentation of the regulated processes in the laws. This exercise proved to be very useful, as it brought to surface inconsistencies in the laws and discrepancies between the laws. Project team attended several meetings with MoES and BDE representatives to discuss the interventions and the content of the proposed laws, whereas project recommendations' were handed over to BDE for further consideration by the working group in the MoES responsible for finalizing the laws.

In addition, on the initiative of the USAID AOR representative, Natasha Buleska, the project met with the Advisor of the Prime Minister, Mr. Viktor Novakovski. During this meeting the project presented the new laws and raised concerns about the very tight timeframe given by the Minister of Education and Science to reform the teacher training faculties and develop an appropriate regulation. It was requested from the Advisor to lobby at the Government level to allow more time for reforming the initial teacher education, and in this process to consult and take into consideration the opinion of all relevant stakeholders.

4.3 COMPONENT 2: ENHANCE FINANCIAL SCHEMES

Activity 4.3.1: Developing financial scenario for teacher professional development

A draft financial scenario for teacher professional development was prepared based on the number of hours dedicated to professional development activities. In accordance with the findings from the *Survey on the financial capacities and the role of municipalities in ensuring quality of education*, the team created a scenario that assumes funds from the state and municipality budgets.

The scenario was upgraded with a scoring system for assessing the professional development, which teachers can obtain in the course of one year. In order to simplify the scoring system, the team decided to allocate one point to one hour of participation in an accredited training program. This simulation also provides valorization of other activities that a teacher can undertake such as applying the gained knowledge and dissemination of the training to other colleagues. In this way, the number of hours and points per teacher can increase several times without a need for additional funds. Nevertheless, there is a difference in the number of points assigned to teachers attending an accredited training program and when receiving training through dissemination on a school level. Additional points will be given to teachers in cases when the accredited training program provides certification for application of gained knowledge. This model is in accordance with the recent trends for lifelong learning of teachers that provides greater opportunities for networking of teachers on the school and municipality level.

On the request of BDE, the Project calculated the amount of funds needed for teacher professional development that will be covered only by the state budget, including a projection

for the upcoming three years. Two simulations in excel, a comprehensive and a simplified version were developed.

Activity 4.3.2: Developing financial scenario for teacher career advancement

A draft scenario for career advancement of teachers on a municipality level was developed. The working group for career advancement proposed the process of promoting teachers into teacher-mentor to be conducted on a municipality level. Therefore, this simulation presents the financial implications on the state budget for advancement into teacher-mentor and teacher advisor in the period of five (5) years.

The project has developed a comprehensive database with different characteristics of primary and secondary schools [urban/rural, small/large, permanent/temporary contracts of teachers, achievements on international assessments (PISA, PIRLS), GDP per capita on a regional level, municipality budget v.s. expenditures in education, state matura etc.) which can be used for conducting further cost benefit analysis in the field of education.

4.4 COMPONENT 3: STANDARDS FOR TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Activity 4.4.1: Expert Group

During this reporting period, all TPCD project working groups under Component 3 had regular meetings and managed to achieve the set targets for this quarter. As a result of their work and commitment, the following activities were accomplished: 1) the on-line debate for student support services competencies and standards completed; 2) guideline for assessing the achievement of teacher competencies and standards drafted; 3) the guideline for mentoring program and the process of conducting mentorship prepared, and 4) number of procedures and instruments for career advancement drafted.

TPCD team started the preparations for piloting the procedures and instruments and testing the TPCD system setup. This included developing criteria for selecting pilot schools and municipalities, incentives for the selected schools and training of all parties involved in testing of the system. The feedback from the pilot phase will be used to improve, adjust and finalize the instruments and processes, before they are implemented on a national level.

Activity 4.4.2: Develop Teacher Standards

The working group for developing teacher standards reviewed the received feedback and incorporated all relevant comments into the final version of the document. Hence the teacher professional competencies and standards together with the Catalogue for Core Teacher Professional Competencies are ready to be sent for approval to the Steering Committee members.

Activity 4.4.3: Develop Competencies and Standards for Student Support Services

Following the completion of the regional meetings with the Associations of student support services, the expert group incorporated the feedback received on the competencies and standards into the documents and prepared them for an on-line public debate. The initial plan was to conduct the public debate during the summer, from end of June until the mid-August. However, based on the recommendations made by the Associations of student support services, the online public debate was postponed and launched on August 20, and lasted until September 30, 2014. All schools and education institutions were invited to review the competencies and standards and to provide their opinion. The invitation letter to schools was prepared by BDE and signed by the BDE Director. The project emailed the invitation letter,

including the direct links to the electronic version of the draft competencies and standards and the developed forms for providing feedback. In order to receive greater feedback, the project sent two e-mails and placed a telephone call reminding schools to send their opinion and comments. Please refer to **Annex 2** for a detail report that includes compiled feedback from the online public debate.

Activity 4.4.4: Develop procedures, tools and instruments for teacher career advancement

Following the initial meeting in June, the expert group for developing procedures, tools and instruments for teacher career advancement held another meeting on July 8, 2014. During this meeting, the comments received by the international expert Frank Crawford and also the draft version of the instruments were reviewed. Furthermore, the members of the working group discussed specific topics, as, whether the instruments for school assessment should be in the form of a checklist or in a form of a more general description, what type of data should be regarded as evidence of good performance, etc.

Additionally, during this period, the process of assessing the achievement of competencies and the career advancement of student support services was discussed with the BDE representatives. Furthermore, all education stakeholders agreed that the system setup for career advancement of student support services should be separate from teachers and should be based on the national level.

Due to the summer holidays in July and August, and the start of the school year in September the work of the expert group was conducted on-line. Members were assigned tasks to develop specific instruments and procedures, and deadlines were set for sharing the documents with the group. During this time the group developed draft ranking scale for professional development activities and draft assessment rubrics for assessing teacher competencies and standards.

Activity 4.4.5: Draft guidelines for assessing the achievement of teacher competencies and standards

The working group for developing the process and the guideline for planning the professional development worked exhaustively in preparing the planned documents. During this period, the working group members reached a decision to develop a common document for teachers and student support services. Furthermore, they agreed about the layout of the document that will contain a schematic presentation of the system for professional development, followed by a description of the processes, roles and responsibilities of each element of the system and finishing with a recommended set of tools and instrument that could be used to successfully complete the process.

The designed process for preparing a professional development plan on a school level is a bottom up activity and starts by educational staff preparing personal/individual plans for professional development and incorporating them into the overall school plan for professional development. It is also a top down process and includes the school and state priorities into the teacher's and student support services personal/individual plans for professional development.

The guidelines described in the document will help to standardize the process of professional development on the national level, and to support the work of the school management and the State Education Inspectorate in monitoring and evaluating teacher professional development.

Activity 4.4.6: Draft guidelines for mentoring program and the process of conducting mentorship

The guideline for the process of mentoring novice teachers was finalized. The purpose of the guideline is to standardize the induction process and improve the mentoring of novice

teachers in the schools through provision of clearly defined processes, procedures, examples and templates. These will enable schools to provide appropriate support to novice teachers, who in turn can acquire the key professional competencies.

However, the ongoing reform of teacher pre-service education will affect the way the induction process of novice teachers is going to be implemented in schools. Specifically, the induction process is planned to be organized by the Teachers' Academy. Therefore, the project worked with the BDE on the draft new Law for Teachers, in order to ensure sustainability of the solutions proposed by the project and outlined in the guideline.

5. LESSONS LEARNT

Reform of initial teacher education

The Ministry of Education and Science announced the reform in July, and at the beginning of September, the development of new laws to regulate the initial teacher education began. Nevertheless, this process was behind closed doors and only representatives of MoES and BDE were involved. Having in mind that the initial teacher education is closely connected to the TPCD system, the project took a very proactive role to find out more about the reform and to get involved. As a result, and with support of the USAID AOR, Natasha Buleska, the project met with people directly involved in drafting the new laws. In addition, the US Ambassador and the USAID Mission Director, during the meeting with the Minister of Education and Science, emphasized the importance of establishing closer cooperation with the project in the process of reforming the initial teacher education. On the request of BDE, the project was invited to present to MoES working group the results achieved and processes established. Furthermore, BDE involved the project in drafting the Law for Teachers in which new solutions for improving the TPCD system were embedded. Due to the good cooperation with BDE, the persistence of the project staff and the support by USAID, sustainability of designed TPCD approaches will be achieved.

6. ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

6.1 Crosscutting Activities

- Organize a Steering Committee meeting to adopt the TPCD approaches, including the Catalogue of teacher and student support services Core Professional Competencies and Standards;
- Organize introductory meetings with the selected schools and municipalities about their role and responsibility in the piloting phase;
- Sign memorandums of understanding with pilot schools and municipalities;
- Organize working meetings to clarify procedures for piloting the TPCD system;

6.2 Component One: Comprehensive Legal System

- Continue to provide feedback on the draft Laws developed under the reform for initial teacher education;
- Offer support to MoES in organizing a public debate on the new Law for Teachers;
- Follow up with the NEC director on the *Law on Training and Examination of Primary and Secondary School Directors* and provide regulative basis for competencies for school directors.

6.3 Component Two: Enhanced Financial Schemes

- Share and discuss the developed scenarios for TPD and TCD with MoES and BDE;
- Prepare a document that will outline the strengths and weaknesses on the proposed models for professional development and career advancement.

6.4 Component Three: Standards for Teacher Competencies

- Finalize the development of procedures, tools and instruments for teacher career advancement;
- Pilot the guidelines for planning the school professional development;
- Provide support to piloting schools and solicit feedback from teachers on elements that need to be improved;
- Establish a working group and commence the development of professional competencies for school directors.

7. INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION

In the Catalogue of Core Professional Competencies for student support services the main focus is on possessing competencies to provide adequate support for intellectual and socio-emotional development of all students. One of the key professional values outlined in the document is *Equity, inclusion and social justice*. Students support services staff is expected to work towards creating a school environment in which the differences are accepted and respected. Furthermore, the Catalogue provides specific competencies for inclusive education that need to be possessed by the different professional profiles: pedagogues, psychologist, sociologist, social worker and special educator. For example: the psychologists are expected to recognize, identify and work with students with emotional difficulties, behavioral problems and with talented and gifted children; the special educators are expected to possess competencies to identify and work with students with special educational needs, whereas the sociologists have to acquire competencies to organize activities with students that lead to improving the relationship between students from different ethnicities, marginalized groups and to strengthen the tolerance and cooperation among students. In addition to the direct work with students, the student support services have to possess competencies to support teachers in working with students who have different learning needs, to support parents to guide the development of their children, and to draft policies for making the school more inclusive.

During this reporting period, the project provided contribution in drafting and reviewing laws related to initial teacher education. In this process the Project highly recommended taking out parts that are discriminatory to candidates and relate to the physical disabilities, because one of the qualifying criteria was physical fitness of new candidates for teachers.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1 Report on the implication of the reform of the initial teacher education
- Annex 2 Report on the feedback received from the on-line debate on the competencies and standards for student support services

Annex1

Report on the implication of the reform of the initial teacher education

To: Natasha Buleska, AOR, USAID Macedonia
From: Vera Kondik Mitkovska, TPCD Chief of Party, MCEC
Subject: Reform of the Pedagogical Faculties, implication on Project activities
Date: July 18, 2014

The Prime Minister Gruevski and the Minister of Education and Science Ademi have announced the upcoming reform on the Pedagogical Faculties. The reform is aimed at incasing the quality of teacher education, in order to improve the primary and secondary education in the Republic of Macedonia. Below is a summary of statements made by the Prime Minister and Minister of Education which were published in the media on July 10, 2014.

The reform covers several segments:

1. Strengthening the enrolment criteria for entering the Pedagogical Faculties by:
 - introducing an entering exam for the candidates after passing the state matura;
 - selecting students who have completed their secondary education with at least average mark 4.
2. Stimulating the best students to enroll by:
 - providing monthly scholarships of 10.000 MKD to all enrolled students during the 4-year studies at the Pedagogical faculties;
 - guarantied employment immediately after completion of the studies;
 - continuous raise of teacher income.

TPDC:

- 1) *It is unclear whether the teacher salaries will be increased based on certain criteria or it will apply to all teachers. We are currently working on financial scenarios, including percentages and criteria regarding raising salaries for teachers who will advance in teacher-mentor and teacher-advisor.*
- 2) *In terms of guaranteed employment of teachers who have finished one year academia, the Ministry must consider situations when for a teaching post apply both, a new teacher and an experienced teacher with a title teacher-mentor and teacher-advisor. In such case, the experienced teacher needs to be given priority.*

3. Changing the curricula and the teaching process on the Pedagogical Faculties by:
 - introducing new contemporary teaching programs used by top 10 ranked faculties in the world, by getting the programs and introducing them into our educational system;
 - introducing electronic examination. There will be a pull of an excessive number of questions which will be known in advance (similar to the student's external testing). The examination will be under video surveillance, and all students will have different questions by which favoring/privileging of individuals will be prevented.

TPCD:

- 1) the Core professional competencies and standards need to be considered in the process of changing the curricula on the pedagogical faculties and the academia. This way we will ensure that the future teachers have attained the core professional competencies during their studies, and at the same time using the competencies to professionally developed the already employed teachers;*
- 2) the teaching profession requires attainment of skills and abilities for conducting the teaching process. Thus, apart from assessing the gained knowledge through electronic examination, the Ministry must consider ways of evaluating their competencies for conducting practical work.*

4. Establishing an Academia for teachers. After completing the Pedagogical Faculty, the graduated teachers will be requested to enroll and study at the Academy of teachers for one year. Apart from gaining the theoretical knowledge, the students will receive practical training from employed teachers who have the highest marks on the external testing. Those teachers, to some extent, will be lectures for the theoretical part, and will also take care about the practical training of students who are studying at the academia. The lecturers on the academia will be the best teachers from the country and abroad. The students who will enroll at the academia will gain status of employed teachers and will receive a salary.

TPCD:

- 1) if the graduated teachers are required to enroll at the Academia for one year, would there be a need of an additional year of induction period? This question needs to be discussed with the Minister, because the project is currently preparing a Guideline to improve the induction process of novice teachers.*
- 2) instead of engaging teachers with the highest marks on the external assessment, it is more appropriate to be teachers who have gained title teacher-mentor and teacher-advisor. These teachers have fulfilled demanding criteria, attained core competencies and standards and have gone through rigorous assessment of their competencies by experts in and out of the school, including professionals from Bureau for Development of Education, State Education Inspectorate, etc.*

5. Professional Development. The teachers who have completed pedagogical faculty will be given a legally defined timeframe to complete the one-year studies at the academia. They will be given a scholarship and leave of absence to complete the studies (their working place will be kept and will be obligated to remain in the teaching position for at least 5 years after completing the studies). This will not affect teachers who have over 10 years of working experience.

TPCD: the continues professional development is an important element that concerns not only the novice teachers who will graduate from the academia, but is equally relevant to the entire community of teachers. Therefore, the project is working on financial scenarios for ensuring funding for continues professional development of all teachers.

Note: in all the media releases, it is stated that this reform concerns the Pedagogical Faculties aiming to improve the primary and secondary education. However, many of the teaching profiles, especially related to subjects taught in higher elementary, secondary gymnasium and vocational education are not educated at the pedagogical faculties.

Annex 2

Report on the feedback received from the on-line debate on the competencies and standards for student support services

**Teacher Professional and
Career Development Project**

REPORT

On the public debate regarding the professional competencies and standards for student support services organized in the period August 20th – September 30th

After the Catalogue of Professional Competencies of Student Support Services and the Standards for Student Support Services – Advisor and Mentor were prepared, and with a goal the opinions of the stakeholders – the student support services to be taken into consideration in the final version, in the period between August 20th and September 30th there was a public debate organized. An invitation for participating in the public debate, along with a letter from the Bureau for Development of Education Director was sent to all primary and secondary schools via e-mail and via post. The student support services were asked to enter any comments in a separate forms. On September 23rd, an e-mail was sent again to all schools with a remainder about the dead-line for the public debate.

There were 41 e-mail messages received in total, 11 from individuals that express their personal opinions and 30 from the student support services school team. Regarding the response from primary vs. secondary schools, the situation was like the following: 6 from secondary schools (5 from team, 1 individual), 29 from primary schools (25 from team, 4 from individuals) and six individual messages for which it cannot be identified whether they belong to the primary or secondary group. For the Catalogue of Core Professional Competencies of Student Support Services there were 39 comments (32 filled in forms and 7 comments not entered into the form), whereas for the professional standards for student support services advisor there were 11 filled in forms and 5 comments that have not been entered into a form, and for the student support services advisor there were also 11 forms and 5 comments that have not been entered into a form.

1. Feedback regarding the Catalogue of Core Professional Competencies for Student Support Services

In nine messages it is stated that there are not any comments or remarks and that the Catalogue is acceptable as is. Positive comments that refer to the core professional competencies are found in 13 forms. In them it is congratulated for the hard work, the competencies are praised and pleasure is expressed regarding the development of the competencies. The praise refer to the Catalogue being of high quality, comprehensive, thorough, well-structured by areas.

Regarding the general comments, there are such that refer to the competencies, but also such that do not refer directly to the competencies but are related with the work of the student support services. As a direct remark it is expressed concern that the Catalogue is quite extensive with complex tasks (2)¹, especially in a terms of high administrative load (2). Also, it is expressed a concern that there is myriad of tasks and obligations for which it is not very probable that can be conducted completely (1), as well as great number of common activities, which allows diffusion of responsibility (1). Related with this is the suggestion that the part for possible activities and evidence

¹ The number in parentheses refer to the frequency with which a given opinion/comment/suggestion is present

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be more precise, because many of the activities are not visible. Also, it is proposed that it should be stressed that the student support services have the right to choose what they are going to work within one year, so that not everything stated in the Catalogue is expected from them (1). Besides these, there was a note that the competencies of the Catalogue do not correspond with the competencies acquired during the undergraduate studies (2), as well as that for particular areas the student support services themselves are not competent enough and they are expected to be support for the teachers (1).

Other competencies related with this, and that do not refer directly to the competencies is the requirement clearly to be defined the tasks of the student support services in secondary schools so that the work hours and tasks are not misused (1). Also, there was a request for the student support services team to be complete in the schools with all profiles of student support services (1).

Most of the remarks (15) that do not refer directly to the competencies but are related with the work of the student support services, are those in which it is stated that there is lack of tests and they need to be purchased.

Regarding the general remarks there is doubt that all student support services are equally prepared to do the work of the other profiles, and this is why it is recommended separate catalogues for each profile to be prepared, as well as catalogue for inappropriate professional profile (for example when due to lack of pedagogy, the psychologist needs to work as a pedagogue) (1).

In regard to the advancement, it is suggested that the advancement in titles should not be in the power of the principal, but should be taken at a higher level (1).

There was also an opinion and question from a student support service that works in two schools, about what he needs to work in each school and how that will be evaluated (1).

Other comments that refer to the work of the student support services in general in the low status of the profession. The student support services stress that they are the ones taking care for the whole school work, and are not appreciated enough and valued accordingly, thus they appeal their status to be changed (2).

Regarding the **first area – Work with Students** there were no remarks that refer to the Catalogue itself, but there were such that referred to the work of the student support services in general. The following comments could be mentioned: sometimes the special educator asks for help in preparation of the individualized education plan; the student support services do not have sufficient knowledge of the concepts for inclusive education; the student support services have not had sufficient training for counseling techniques; the student support services are not trained well enough for identifying talented students. In regard to this area it is requested that various workshops and trainings are organized and an idea is given that the teaching staff should be better prepared to work with children with SEN through taking various exams in collaboration with the Institute for Defectology. Regarding the **second area – Work with Teachers** it is suggested that it needs to be stressed that the pedagogue is the one that holds training for the teaching staff for innovations and projects in education, and all the innovations should be implemented through the pedagogues. There was also a suggestion to add a separate subarea that will refer mainly to the pedagogues and will be called “Advancement of the education work”. This subarea would include coordination, promotion and support of projects and innovations in teaching in front of the teaching

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staff, the managerial structures and the wider community as well as monitoring and evaluating the implementation of innovations. According to the **third area – Work with Parents** it is stressed that the cooperation with the parents is at a very low level, similarly to the fourth area – **Cooperation with the Local Community** where it is asked that there is greater flexibility and openness from the local community. A suggestion is given the local community to provide one employee whose task will be communication with the secondary schools. In regard to the fifth area – **Professional Development and Professional Cooperation** it is suggested that MOES/the city/the school provides finances for the training. For the seventh area – **School Structure, Organization and Climate** the school support services ask for a greater participation of the teaching staff for improvement of the school organization and climate.

2. Feedback for the Standards for school support service – mentor

Out of 16 arrived e-mails, in 9 it is said that there are not any suggestions or comments. In the remaining seven messages there is a question asked concerning who will evaluate the work of the student support services (1), it is suggested that there are specific standards for primary and secondary school (1) and specific training for mentor is asked for (1). The remaining comments refer to specific re-formulation of the standards.

Regarding the **Area 2: Work with Students, subarea Professional and Career Orientation of Students** it is suggested that visits of the center for professional orientation are organized and its help obtained due to the high number of students and low number of student support services (1).

Regarding the **Area 3 – Work with Parents, subarea Inclusion of parents in the life and work of the school** there was a comment that the parents need to be more interested for the school.

3. Feedback for the Standards for student support service – advisor

Out of 16 arrived messages, in 10 it is said that the set criteria are hard to accomplish, and that is so because the indicators depend less on knowledge, competency, the gained skills, and more on the opportunities created by the responsible in the local community, the state education institutions or the international education institutions.

The rest of the comments are specific suggestions for reformulation and these are entered directly into the Draft Standards