



**Teacher Professional and
Career Development Project**



**MACEDONIAN
CIVIC
EDUCATION
CENTER**

QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015

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
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EU	European Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
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 #10

Cooperative Agreement No:	RFA-165-A-13-00001
Progress Report No:	10
Reporting Period:	April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015

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 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 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 the final year, 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

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.

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:

- Donor coordination meeting initiated and support provided to MoES to organize the meeting;
- Annual Work Plan for the extension period developed with contribution from all relevant stakeholders and submitted for approval;
- Contacts established with European Training Foundation's (ETF) Continuing Development Project for exchange of information on activities similar to TPCD, and input provided in the mapping study for the teacher professional development in Macedonia;
- Separate meetings held with organizations that implement education projects to discuss activities in order to avoid overlap of efforts in the area of teacher professional development;
- Regular TPCD monthly reports prepared and shared with key stakeholders.

Component One, Comprehensive Legal System:

- Book of Rules for Teacher Core Professional Competencies approved by the Minister of Education and Science;
- Book of Rules for the form and content of the individual/personal development plan revised based on the recommendation provided by MoES and submitted for approval to the Minister of Education and Science;
- Book of Rules for the form and content of the teacher professional portfolio revised based on the recommendation provided by MoES and submitted for approval to the Minister of Education and Science.

Component Two, Enhance Financial Schemes:

- Solutions for funding the career advancement discussed with the MoES Head of Finance Unit and one possible model identified;

Component Three, Standards for Teacher Competencies:

- A round table discussion and an on-line public debate organized for obtaining feedback on the draft professional competencies for school directors;
- 23 primary and secondary schools participated in the process of piloting the Guideline for teacher career advancement and tested the proposed procedures and instruments;

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

- Focus group discussions held with the teachers involved in the process of piloting in order to gather feedback and opinion related to the career advancement process;
- Guideline for professional development of education staff finalized based on the received feedback from teachers;
- The development of the SEI's Guideline for assessment of student support services commenced;
- Professional competencies for school librarian including standards for advancing in mentor and advisor positions drafted.

3. PROJECT UPDATE

3.1 Key Project Personnel Position

In May 2015, TPCD project received 12 month extension to complete the project activities. In the new staffing plan developed to meet the needs of the planned project activities (approved by USAID in May 2015), there is a change in the employment status of the Program/ Communications Manager. Starting from June 2015 this position will only be needed as part-time, since the workload of activities in the following year under Component 2 is decreased.

4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Crosscutting Activities

Cooperation with BDE and other relevant institutions

TPCD project continues to maintain professional relationship with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and the other relevant education intuitions. Meetings were held with BDE management staff to discuss organization of the piloting process of the career advancement processes and procedures. The number of schools to pilot the career advancement process was extended with two additional primary schools in Skopje. During this reporting period, the cooperation also focused on developing the by-laws that regulate the teacher professional and career advancement.

As a result of receiving information that other projects implemented in partnership with MoES might overlap with the TPCD activates, the project raised this issue and organized meetings with MoES representatives. During these discussions, the project pointed out the need of organizing donor coordination meeting which was accepted by MoES. In the process of preparation for the donor coordination meeting, the project supported MoES in designing a template for gathering the information about the different projects and sharing it with the donors in order to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts, but instead fostering cooperation. On June 15, the donor coordination meeting was organized, and the discussion mainly focused on the topics related to ensuring better coordination among different donors and ensuring donor support for development of a new Strategy for Education, because the current one is expiring this year.

The cooperation with the National Examination Center (NEC) continued mainly focusing on the development of the Professional Competencies for School Directors. After successful finalization of the first draft of the competencies, an online public debate was organized to gather the opinion from all primary and secondary directors (for more details please refer activity 4.4.2: *Development of Professional Competencies for School Directors*). The intensity of cooperation with State Education Inspectorate (SEI) decreased in this period due to the very busy schedule of the inspectors. There were many factors which enabled the project team to continue working with SEI inspectors on the Guideline for individual assessment of teachers and student support services staff, as part of the School Integral Evaluation. There was constant e-mail correspondence with the SEI Director, and also there were number of

attempts to schedule the working meetings, but unfortunately the inspectors could not commit themselves because they were overburden with field work.

Steering Committee Activities

In this reporting period there were no activities which required attention by the Steering Committee members.

Meetings, debates and roundtable discussions

During this reporting period, the TPCD project team and the USAID AOR Natasha Buleska met with the Head of Sector for Primary Education to report on the progress and share information about future activities. Main focus during the meeting was placed on the need for conducting the analysis of the administrative burden on teachers and sensing the willingness and readiness of MoES to implement recommendations which will require taking out responsibilities that are outdated and do not provide additional value to the teacher quality.

In order to ensure broad input from the key education stakeholders in drafting the Annual Work Plan for the extension period, the project organized a working meeting on June 25. Representatives from USAID, MCEC and education institutions (MoES, BDE, SEI, NEC, VET Center), including schools were invited to give their contribution in identifying activities which will encircle the process of upgrading the professional development and establishing the career advancement system. During the meeting, an overview of the implemented activities was presented and future activities were discussed. Overall, several constructive ideas came out of the meeting, among them being the development of software for electronic submissions of the applications for career advancement and establishing an e-platform for on-line trainings for education staff.

Meetings were held with the different working groups and their frequency depended on the availability of the participants and their involvement in the activities related to the end of the school year, external testing, Matura, teacher trainings for the new curricula from Cambridge etc. One round table discussion and an on-line public debate was organized for obtaining feedback on the draft professional competencies for school directors.

Public relations

In order to keep the stakeholders informed about the project, as of May 2015 the project started preparing monthly updates in form of short reports with the most significant activities implemented and results achieved. Throughout the project duration, the TPCD team has openly shared information with all who showed interested about the project. During this quarter, the project established relationship with the ETF project on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Conference calls were organized with person responsible for managing the project, and a meeting was held with the ETF National Expert. In addition, the project provided input in the mapping study on CPD in Macedonia and met with the ETF Deputy Director and the Macedonian Country Representative. Furthermore, meetings were held with representatives from British Council, UNDP, EU Delegation and the National Agency for European Education Programs and Mobility. The project also, met with the founders of the recently established NGO Koreni, who were interested to find out more about the TPCD project and the reforms in the system for teacher professional development.

4.2 COMPONENT 1: COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL SYSTEM

Activity 4.2.1: Draft amendments in relevant laws and develop by-laws for regulating career advancement of teachers and student support services staff

On April 26, the Minister of Education and Science approved the usage of the Rule Book for Teacher Core Professional Competencies. The document is posted on the BDE website and can be accessed through the following link <http://bro.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/202>. The Rule Book *for Attaining Professional Standards for Teacher-Mentor or Teacher-Advisor* is still pending approval by the Minister of Education and Science. In the next reporting period, based on the outcomes from the review of the teacher portfolios and the work of the assessment committees, a Book of Rules for assessment procedures, submission of applications and documentation of teachers interested to apply and attain teacher-mentor or teacher-advisor position, including scoring, ranking and working of the assessment committee will to be developed.

Activity 4.2.2: Draft amendments in relevant laws and develop by-laws for regulating the professional development for teachers and school support staff

At the end of March, two rule books which regulate the professional development of teachers were submitted to the Minister of Education and Science for approval. In June, the Minister requested slight changes in the legislation documents. Therefore, the project organized meetings with MoES, BDE and VET Center to discuss the requested changes and to incorporate them in the documents. The changes mainly related to incorporating the responsibilities of the VET Center in the text together with BDE, and changes in the articles related to the language in which the teacher portfolio is going to be filled out.

4.3 COMPONENT 2: ENHANCE FINANCIAL SCHEMES

Activity 4.3.1: Developing financial scenario for teacher professional development

No activities during this reporting period.

Activity 4.3.2: Developing financial scenario for teacher career advancement

During this reporting period the project tried to uncover the necessary steps for ensuring funding of teachers who will advance in career. For this purpose, the project met with the MoES Head of Finance Unit. The main problem regarding ensuring financial compensation, comes from the fact that the education in Macedonia is financed based on a formula which mainly takes into consideration the number of students per municipality. The number of students per teacher varies between 1 and 4 students in different municipalities. Approximately, 70 to 90% of the overall amount of the block dotation goes for teacher salaries. Provided that the increase of the salary for teachers who advance in career comes from same block dotation, it will affect the budget of the municipalities and will decrease the funds necessary to cover other school expenses such as electricity, heating, teaching materials etc. Therefore, the MoES Head of Unit suggested that the best solution will be to calculate a fixed amount for career advancement that will come from the overall education budget. As stipulated in the Law, MoES will calculate each year the maximum number of teacher who can be promoted in career on a municipality level. This number will be multiplied with the fixed amount of funds for teachers-mentors or teacher-advisors, which will give the amount of additional funds that need to be secured by MoES each year. The project is planning to continue discussion on this topic with relevant people in MoES including representatives from the Unit for Decentralization, Unit for Primary Education and Unit for Secondary Education.

4.4 COMPONENT 3: STANDARDS FOR TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Activity 4.4.1: Expert Group

Within this reporting period, the TPCD project established the working group for developing professional competencies and standards for school librarians. In addition, the existing working groups established under Component 3 continued working on implementing the activities in accordance with the Annual Work Plan.

Activity 4.4.2: Develop Professional Competencies for School Directors

Following the development of the draft Professional Competencies for School Directors, the project team in coordination with National Examination Center made all the necessary preparations to organize a round table discussion with primary and secondary school directors. During the round table discussion held on April 15, the participants worked in five groups, each group focusing on a particular area of the competencies. Hence, each group provided concrete feedback on the document and gave suggestions for qualitative improvement of the competencies. On the subsequent meeting of the working group, the received feedback from the round table discussion was reviewed and incorporated, and the document was prepared for a public online debate.

Initially, the public online debate was planned to commence on May 25 and last for a period of ten working days, however, due to a busy period that included the organization of external testing of students in the schools and a number of activities linked to the end of school year, the debate was extended until June 26. Thus, a second reminder was issued to schools, followed by TPCD project team contacting all primary and secondary schools by phone to inform them that the public online debate is prolonged and reminding them to send their feedback. As a result, 55 primary and secondary school directors participated in the online public debate by sending their comments and suggestions related to the document.

During the upcoming period, the working group will review the received feedback and forward the final version of the Professional Competencies for School Director to the NEC Director for adoption.

Activity 4.4.3: Develop procedures, tools and instruments for teacher career advancement

23 primary and secondary schools in the country participated in the process of piloting the Guideline for teacher career advancement and testing the proposed procedures and instruments. Following the informative meetings with teachers organized by BDE and VET Centre advisors and SEI Inspectors responsible for the pilot phase, the selected schools started testing the career advancement process. Hence, in the period between June 2 and 26, the responsible BDE, VET Centre advisors and SEI inspectors organized focus group discussions with the teachers involved in the process of piloting, in order to gather their feedback and opinion related to the developed process and instruments. Furthermore, participating teachers completed the e-questionnaire and gave their feedback and suggestions for upgrading the system.

During the upcoming quarter, the working group for developing the process and instruments for career advancement of teachers will review the received feedback and suggestions, in order to upgrade and qualitatively improve the Guideline and the processes for implementation of career development of teachers.

Activity 4.4.4: Piloting the Guideline for the Professional Development of Education Staff

Upon completing the process of piloting the professional development of teachers in all 14 selected schools and gathering feedback from focus group discussions and the e-questionnaires, the project team organized several meetings and made the initial review of the given comments and suggestions (for more information about the feedback received from the focus groups please see **Annex 1: Report on the focus groups with the participants in the piloting of**

the solutions for professional development). Following, on May 27, a meeting of the working group for developing the process and instruments for professional development was called and the Guideline for professional development of teachers and student support services staff in schools was revised based on the received feedback. Thus, the final draft of the document was developed and in the upcoming period, the introduced changes will be reflected in the Albanian version.

Activity 4.4.5: Improvement of guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school integral evaluation

Due to the overburdened agenda of the SEI Inspectors who are part of the working group and the numerous activities implemented by them, during this quarter, the project had limited opportunities to organize working sessions to work on the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school Integral Evaluation. Only one three day working meeting was organized from April 20 to 22. During this meeting the working group commenced the development of the Guideline for assessment of student support services.

Activity 4.4.6: Professional Competencies for School Librarians

During this reporting period, the working group for developing competencies for school librarians was established and all necessary preparations for initiating the development of the planned documents were made. Hence, on May 14, the first meeting of the working group consisted of representatives from the Institute of librarians at the Pedagogical Faculty “St. Kliment Ohridski” and school librarians from public schools and the international school NOVA, was organized, during which international best practices and documents were considered.

In the course of this quarter, the working group worked on identifying core professional competencies and standards for the position of librarian mentor and advisor. As a result of the hard work and commitment of the working group, the draft documents were finalized during the last meeting of the expert group organized on June 11. Furthermore, during this meeting the members of the expert group also deliberated that the faculty programs need to be reexamined and better aligned with the newly developed competencies.

Finally, the project will maintain the already established pattern of sharing information and receiving feedback, thus, the developed competencies and standards will be opened for a public debate to all schools at the beginning of the upcoming school year.

LESSONS LEARNT

The piloting of the Guideline for career advancement of students commenced second half of August and lasted until the end of the school year. During this period teachers were overburdened with tasks related to the external testing, school Matura, trainings and end of the school year. In number of secondary schools, students went on strike which lasted almost a month. This caused difficulties to teachers who accepted to pilot the career advancement process, because after the end of the strike, they had to complete the curricula plans and assessment of students in a very short timeframe. This triggered many teachers to withdraw from piloting process and some of them to submit incomplete documentation. These difficulties will be taken into considered in order to propose in the by-laws the most appropriate time of the year for teachers to complete and submit their portfolios to the assessment committees.

5. ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

5.1 Crosscutting Activities

- Organize meetings with MoES Heads of Unit for Primary and for Secondary Education;
- Prepare and share TPCD Project updates with stakeholders;
- Prepare the third edition of the TPCD Newsletter;
- Organize focus group discussions on competencies and standards for school librarians.

5.2 Component One: Comprehensive Legal System

- Commence the development of Rule Book for assessment of teachers' applications and documentation, applying to attain teacher-mentor position;
- Commence the activities for conducting a small scale analysis on the teacher administrative burden.

5.3 Component Two: Enhanced Financial Schemes

- Meeting with other representatives from MoES to discuss the solution for funding the career advancement of teachers.

5.4 Component Three: Standards for Teacher Competencies

- Review the feedback on career advancement received from the focus group discussion held in the pilot schools and incorporate feedback in the Guideline for teacher career advancement;
- Establish an assessment committee and commence the process of reviewing the received electronic portfolios;
- Complete the drafting process and pilot the Guideline for individual assessment of teachers and student support services staff during the Integral Evaluation that will take place second half of September;
- Organize a round table discussion with group of school librarians in order to finalize the professional competencies and standards for school librarian;
- In cooperation with the VET Center and school practitioners draft professional competencies for laboratory technicians who work in schools as student support services staff;
- Complete the instruments and pilot the procedures, instruments for career advancement of student support services;
- Write terms of reference for feasibility study for designing an e-platform for online courses for the education staff and hire a firm to conduct the study.

6. INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION

During this reporting period the Teacher Professional and Career Development (TPCD) Project worked on identifying professional competencies and standards for advancing in career of school librarians. In the development process, the project paid attention to include professional competencies that school librarians need to acquire to create and maintain an inclusive library which supports the need of all students including students with disabilities. In this regard, the school librarians will be required to: understand the students individual needs and to link them with the adequate learning resources; suggest appropriate resources to students with disabilities; support teachers to select adequate learning materials for

development of students' individual education plans; organize the library to provide easy access to the resources and services for all users, including the ones with disabilities, etc. The document is still in its draft form, and in the upcoming period a round table will be organized with representatives from school libraries in order to obtain their feedback on the competencies. The project will use this opportunity to strengthen the document with additional competencies which school librarians have to develop to provide good support to students with disabilities.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1 Report on the focus groups with the participants in the piloting of the solutions for professional development

Annex 1 Report on the focus groups with the participants in the piloting of the solutions for professional development

REPORT ON THE FOCUS GROUPS HELD WITH THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PILOTING OF THE SOLUTIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to gather feedback that would contribute for improvement of the Guideline for following the work and planning the professional development of education staff, the Guideline was piloted in total of 14 schools, 4 primary and 10 secondary. Upon completion of the piloting process, the responsible advisors held focus groups with the participants. At the focus groups there were total of 177 participants. The number of participants by schools is given in Table 1. The focus groups were held in the period between 16th of March and 29th of April 2015.

Table 1. Number of participants in each focus group by school.

School	Number of participants	School	Number of participants
Perparimi - Cegrane	24	Baskimi-Edinstvo-Birlik	12
Zef Ljus Marku	19	Boro Petrusevski	10
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk	17	R.J. Korcagin	8
Sando Masev	16	Liria – Vrutok	8
Jonce Smugreski – Obrshani	15	Sv. Kiril I Metodij – Dabilje	7
Marsal Tito - Strumica	14	Marsal Tito - Murtino	7
Mancu Matak	14	Mihajlo Pupin	6

In the reports on the focus groups held with the advisors a satisfaction from the fact that the personal professional development plan is connected to the professional competencies is expressed. Also, the participants find pleasing the fact that the given forms are not required but only suggested.

The notes and commentaries of the participants can be grouped in two general categories: commentaries that refer to the Guideline and the piloting process and comments that refer to problems encountered during the education work.

Regarding the first group of comments, the following can be mentioned:

- The personal plan for professional development should be private and only for the teachers. The logic behind this request is that the plan is *personal*, and the teachers equate this to *private*.
- Particular terminology such as “project activities” should be clarified.
- It is difficult for the members of the faculty to meet and review the professional development plans because of the work load or different shifts.
- Regarding Appendix 9, it is suggested that the column that refers to **strategies/activities** is left out.
- Regarding the *adjustment* of the personal plans for professional development at faculty level, it is suggested that the term *adjust* should be replaced with the term *review*.
- It is good that the personal professional development plan is connected to the professional competencies for teachers.
- It is good that in the Guideline there are offered forms and that the majority of them are not required and the schools can adjust them.

- There are some comments that the forms are too extensive.
- There are some concrete ideas offered about how to improve the forms.
- A comment that the teacher should not focus only on the weak side in their personal professional development plan, but also on the strong sides that they wish to strengthen.
- The term “performance” (приредби) is not appropriate for high schools and should be replaced with the term “presentations” (презентации).

Regarding the second group of comments, the following can be mentioned:

- The teachers work in different shifts and it is difficult to organize joint meetings.
- No training is offered for development of teacher competencies, including training for assessment and inclusive work.
- The schools should have separate budget for professional development, that is spent only for training.
- In the schools there are no cabinets, so it is difficult to create “safe and stimulating learning environment”.
- During the internal trainings in schools, the teachers do not receive certificates and as a result they are less motivated to participate in these forms for professional development.
- It is difficult in the rural schools to cooperate with the parents.
- The teachers are overloaded with administrative work.
- ICT in teaching could not be successfully implemented because of inappropriate conditions.

After receiving the reports on the focus groups by the BDE advisors, the Project team met to review the comments and suggestions in it, and those comments that were sound and relevant were incorporated into the Guideline. Afterwards, the updated Guideline was sent to the members of the work group. Afterwards, a meeting was held during which the changes were reviewed and the Guideline was finalized.