



**Teacher Professional and  
Career Development Project**



**MACEDONIAN  
CIVIC  
EDUCATION  
CENTER**

## **QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015**

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

**Submitted by:**

**Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC)**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1. BACKGROUND .....4
- 2. PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES .....5
- 3. Project UPDATE .....6
  - 3.1 Key Project Personnel Position .....6
  - 3.2 Other Project Staff.....6
- 4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES .....6
  - 4.1 Crosscutting Activities .....6
  - 4.2 COMPONENT 1: COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL SYSTEM.....8
  - 4.3 COMPONENT 2: ENHANCE FINANCIAL SCHEMES .....8
  - 4.4 COMPONENT 3: STANDARDS FOR TEACHER COMPETENCIES.....9
- 5. LESSONS LEARNT .....9
- 6. Activities for the next reporting period ..... 11
- 7. Inclusiveness of education ..... 12

## **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 #11

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<b>Cooperative Agreement No:</b>	<b>RFA-165-A-13-00001</b>
<b>Progress Report No:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	<b>July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015</b>

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## 1. BACKGROUND

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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 results<sup>1</sup>:

- *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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 evaluation<sup>2</sup>, 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**

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During the reporting period the following was accomplished:

### Crosscutting Activities:

- TPCD Annual Work Plan developed in cooperation with the Bureau for Development of Education and approved by USAID;
- Input provided in the working session organized by European Training Foundation regarding National Qualification Framework;
- TPCD project presented and areas of cooperation explored with the newly appointed VET Specialist and Desk Officer of ETF for Macedonia;
- Teacher core professional competencies and standards presented on an event organized by British Council and representatives of all faculties for English language teachers compared the teacher core professional competencies with the existing competencies in the faculty syllabus;
- Contract of the partner organization Step by Step renewed;
- The annual audit of TPCD project commenced in August;
- Regular TPCD monthly reports prepared and shared with key stakeholders.

### Component One, Comprehensive Legal System:

- Book of Rules for the form and content of the individual/personal development plan pending approval by Minister of Education and Science;
- Book of Rules for the form and content of the teacher professional pending approval by the Minister of Education and Science.

### Component Two, Enhance Financial Schemes:

- In the Scope of Work for conducting feasibility study for online professional development, cost analysis (to compare the costs for different types of online training courses versus face-to-face/direct trainings) included;

### Component Three, Standards for Teacher Competencies:

- Feedback obtained through round table discussions and the on-line public debate, embedded in the final version of the professional competencies for school directors;
- Committee for assessing the teacher e-portfolios established in line with the requirements stipulated in the Law for Teachers;
- The instrument for self-evaluation of school librarians incorporated in the Guideline for professional development of education staff in schools;

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

- SEI Guideline for individual assessment of education staff aligned with the novelties introduced in the system for professional and career development;
- Core professional competencies and standards finalized during a round table discussion organized in September;
- Scope of work for conducting a feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line professional development developed and published in two daily newspapers;
- A pre-bidders meeting organized with companies interested in conducting a feasibility study organized.

### **3. PROJECT UPDATE**

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#### **3.1 Key Project Personnel Position**

There no changes during this reporting period

### **4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

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#### **4.1 Crosscutting Activities**

##### **Cooperation with BDE and other relevant institutions**

In this reporting period TPCD project closely cooperated with the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) related to planning activities to be implemented during the extension of the project. Among other activities which were agreed, one specific activity for which BDE requested support from the project, it was establishing an online platform for professional development (PD) of teachers. BDE considered that by establishing a platform for PD will be able to meet the requirements stipulated in the Law on Teachers, i.e. to ensure 50 hours of continuing professional development for all teachers over a period of three years. For this particular request, the project agreed to support BDE by funding a feasibility study which will enable BDE to make sound decision of the type of the platform for online PD that is most suitable to be established considering the practices, conditions, and interest of the teachers.

The cooperation with other education institutions continued in the areas that directly concern their involvement in the teacher professional and career development system. Specifically, with the State Education Inspectorate (SEI), the project worked on developing new instruments for individual assessment of education staff, with the National Examination Center (NEC) on finalizing the competencies for school directors, and with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Center on drafting competencies for student support services responsible for practical trainings in VET Schools.

##### **Steering Committee Activities**

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

##### **Meetings, debates and roundtable discussions**

In order to finalize the competencies of the school librarians developed by an expert group, a roundtable discussion with primary and secondary school librarians was organized in September. The received feedback was incorporated into the document and competencies and standards for school librarians were finalized.

The project commenced with the preparations for organizing focus group discussion on the administrative burthen on teachers. The protocol for conducting three focus group discussions was developed and list of participants for the first focus group with low elementary teachers was finalized.

A meeting with BDE management was held during which the scope of the feasibility study for developing a platform for on-line courses was discussed. Following the USAID recommendation, TPCD placed an advertisement in two daily newspapers to gather bids from interested companies to conduct the feasibility study. On September 23, 2015 a pre-bidder meeting was organized during which the project presented the Scope of Work and clarified questions from the interested companies. The deadline for submission of bids for conducting feasibility study is on October 5, 2015.

Other meetings of the working groups were held regarding: developing instruments for individual assessment of education staff with SEI; assessment of the teachers' portfolios; finalizing the Guideline for professional development of education staff in schools and the Guideline for teacher career advancement.

### **Public relations**

Members of the team participated in the working session organized by European Training Foundation (ETF) and provided input in defining the National Qualification Framework. In addition, the team met with the newly appointed VET Specialist and Desk Officer of ETF for Macedonia, Mr. Shawn Mendes. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize Mr. Mendes with the TPCD project and to explore activities for mutual cooperation and to avoid overlap of activities with similar ETF initiatives.

In September, the project representatives were invited to present TPCD project and the teacher professional competencies and standards during an event organized by British Council (BC). The event was part of the BC's Project for strengthening the system of continuing professional development for English language teachers, and it was attended by representatives from all faculties which educate future English teachers. Prior to the event the faculty members were asked to compare the teacher core professional competencies developed by TPCD project with the existing competencies in the university syllabus. From the presentations held by the different faculties it was evident that there competencies that are missing and need to be incorporated, for example competencies related to the social and educational inclusion.

Articles for the third edition of the TPCD Newsletter were developed by participants who piloted the system and were part of the expert groups in the system. The articles were reviewed, finalized and sent for translation in Albanian and English language. In the upcoming quarter, the newsletter will be published and sent to all stakeholders.

### **OTHER**

Following the USAID approval of the Annual Work Plan end of July, the contract with the partner organization Step by Step (SbS) was renewed at the beginning of August. The SbS Project Coordinator assigned to TPCD project will continue to provide support in implementation of activities related to Component 3, Standards to Teacher Competencies.

The annual audit of USAID funded projects implemented by Macedonian Civic Education Center began with an entrance conference attended by MCEC and USAID staff on 25 August 2015. Through a competitive process the audit house Grant Thornton was selected to conduct the audit of TPCD and Interethnic Integration in Education Project. The draft version of the audit report is expected at the beginning of October.

## **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**

The Rule Book for *Attaining Professional Standards for Teacher-Mentor or Teacher-Advisor* is still pending approval by the Minister of Education and Science. During this reporting period, the Assessment committee started reviewing the teacher portfolios recording the positive examples and difficulties. This information will be used in the process of developing the Guideline for career advancement and in the rulebook for regulating the assessment procedures.

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

The Rulebook for the form and content of the individual/personal development plan and the Rulebook for the form and content of the teacher professional portfolio that were submitted to the Minister of Education and Science in March are still pending approval. On the request of BDE Director, the first working session for revising the rulebook for accreditation of training providers was held with BDE working group on September 28 and 29, 2015. The working group started the revising process of the rulebook including appendixes that regulate the accreditation process of training providers. In this process the team made sure that the changes made in the TPCD system are reflected in the rulebook.

## **4.2 COMPONENT 2: ENHANCE FINANCIAL SCHEMES**

### **Activity 4.3.1: Developing financial scenario for teacher professional development**

The mandatory hours of professional development were set in the Law for Teachers which became effective at the start of the school year in September 2015. According to the law, teachers are entitled to minimum of 40 hours of professional development in the period of three years until the end of 2017. The number of hours from the beginning of 2018 will increase to 60, out of which 50 hours should be funded by BDE. Based on the calculations in order to meet this requirement, BDE will have to ensure approximately five times higher budget than the existing one. Currently such a significant increase is not possible, and thus, BDE has received instructions from the Government to work on establishing a platform for online professional development. As part of the feasibility study that will be conducted by TPCD project, a cost analysis will be carried out in order to compare the costs for different types of online training courses versus face-to-face/direct trainings. The analysis will provide evidence whether the online courses will lower current costs needed for continuing professional development of teachers and enable BDE to cover costs for continuing professional development with the available budget.

### **Activity 4.3.2: Developing financial scenario for teacher career advancement**

No activities during this reporting period.

## **COMPONENT 3: STANDARDS FOR TEACHER COMPETENCIES**

### **Activity 4.4.1: Expert Group**

Within this reporting period, TPCD project established a Committee for assessment of teacher e-portfolios and a working group for developing core professional competencies for student support services staff responsible for practical lessons in VET schools. Furthermore, the existing working groups established under Component 3 carried on the working on implementing the planned activities.

### **Activity 4.4.2: Develop Professional Competencies for School Directors**

Following the public debate on the professional competencies for school directors organized during the previous reporting period, the project team developed a summary report from the received feedback. In addition, the suggestions for improvement were incorporated into the Professional Competencies for School Directors and the document was shared with the working group for review. The received suggestions and feedback were considered and relevant comments embedded in the document during the working group meeting held on September 17. Thus, the document was finalized and submitted to the National Examination Centre (NEC) for approval.

Upon receiving the approval from the NEC Director, the project team will work on developing a graphic layout for the Professional Competencies for School Directors and will publish the document on the official websites of NEC and MCEC.

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

During this quarter, the project team reviewed the received feedback and suggestions from the focus group discussions and the e-questioners, developed a summary report and incorporated the changes in the Guideline for implementation of career advancement of teachers, in order to upgrade and qualitatively improve the document.

Subsequently, the project team established a pilot Commission for assessing the received e-portfolios. As stipulated in the Law for teachers, the Commission is consisted of seven members: two from the relevant faculties, and one from MoES, BDE, SEI, VET Center and SONK. On the meeting held on August 17, the Commission commenced reviewing the procedures for applying for career advancement that consequently, will be regulated in a Rulebook. The members of the Commission tested the process of assessing the portfolios, including the reliability of the instruments and presented their results during the working group meeting organized on September 19.

Based on the result from assessing the e-portfolios, the Commission identified few pending issues that are essential for establishing a functional system for career advancement and need to be addressed to the responsible education institutions. Hence, a report was developed outlining the detected matters that relate to the necessity for: securing additional information and collecting parents and teachers feedback; developing a software for receiving applications and e-portfolios from applying teachers; establishing the Committee routine in conducting the assessment and the budget implications related to this process; and modification of the appeal process.

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

The Guideline for professional development of education staff in school was finalized based on the comments received from teachers that piloted the procedures and instruments. Furthermore, the instrument for self-evaluation of school librarians was added to the Guideline. Upon developing the competencies for student support services staff involved in practical lessons in VET Schools, the working group will need to develop an instrument for

self-evaluation of this category of education staff too, and it should be inserted into the Guideline.

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

During this reporting period, the working group involved in developing the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school Integral Evaluation held number of meetings with the purpose of finalizing the documents and instruments. As a result, the descriptions for different areas of work of education staff in school were developed, which are assessed by the State Education Inspectorate. The Guideline for individual assessment of education staff was aligned with the novelties introduced in the system for professional and career development. Furthermore, the working group developed the procedures and drafted the instruments for the implementation of the evaluation process.

As a next step, the Guideline will be sent to all SEI Inspectors for review. Additionally, the project will organize a focus group discussion with practitioners from primary and secondary schools in the country in order to obtain their feedback and improve the document.

**Activity 4.4.6: Professional Competencies for School Librarians**

According to the Law on primary and secondary education, the school librarians and student support services staff involved in organizing practical lessons in VET School are part of the student support services team in schools involved in the education process. Based on the need for professional development of all categories of education staff in schools, the project developed core professional competencies and standards for primary and secondary school librarians.

As per the already established methodology of work, the project organized a round table discussion on September 28. After a short presentation of the project, including a presentation of the competencies and standards, the group engaged in a plenary discussion during which participants expressed their main concerns. They remarked that the competencies related to the area “Work with parents” and thought that these competencies do not apply to them because they do not work with parents and barely see them. However, during the discussion it was agreed that the competencies and standards set a level of practice that is above the current one, thus, the area was retained in the document. As a result of the focus group discussion, the project managed to finalize the competencies and standards for this category of education staff in school.

Moreover, the project established a working group for identifying professional competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools, which is the last category of student support services staff in schools.

**Activity 4.4.7: Feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line courses**

During this reporting period, the project team implemented a series of activities, in order to select a company for conducting a Feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line courses. Initially, the project team prepared a Scope of Work for the study and published an advert on the daily newspapers Dnevnik and Koha on September 19. Furthermore, the project team organized a pre-bidders meeting for the interested companies and presented the expected results from the study on September 23.

During the upcoming period the project team will select a company and submit a request for approval to USAID.

## **LESSONS LEARNT**

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In the process of piloting teacher career advancement, it was agreed that teachers will submit their portfolios electronically on a memory stick provided by the project. However, when the Committee started the assessment of the portfolios number of memory sticks were affected by a computer viruses and the antivirus program deleted the materials of the teachers' portfolios. The same issue will recur when the advancing process starts to be implemented, and thus, the project discussed possible ways of overcoming this problem. Submitting a paper portfolio is not possible because they encompass evidence which should be submitted in a digital form only, for example a video of a lesson. In addition, the paper portfolios will cause additional expenses for teachers related to printing large number of documents and postal costs. On the other hand paper portfolios of the teacher portfolios are not very convenient for the members of the Committee in the process of reviewing and assessing the portfolios. Therefore, the project recommends developing a software application which will enable teachers to submit their portfolios electronically and at the same time providing the committee members with independent access to review and access the portfolios.

## **5. ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD**

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### **5.1 Crosscutting Activities**

- Organize meetings with MoES Heads of Unit for Primary and for Secondary Education to discuss the open questions;
- Participate in events to promote the achievement of TPCD project;
- Participate in relevant events related to teacher professional development;
- Organize three focus group discussions with teachers on work load and administrative burden in schools;
- Prepare the third edition of the TPCD Newsletter;
- Prepare and share TPCD Project updates with stakeholders;
- Participate in the developing the MCEC Strategic Plan for the upcoming four years.

### **5.2 Component One: Comprehensive Legal System**

- Continue the work on revising the rulebook for accreditation of training providers;

### **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**

- Organize a bid opening, selection and interview with the top three companies;
- Preparing recommendation memorandum for approval of selected company to conduct a feasibility study of online professional development;
- Commence the process of piloting the career development of student support services staff in schools;
- Organize round table discussion with representatives from schools to gather feedback on the SEI guideline for individual assessment of education staff;

- Gather feedback from all SEI inspectors on the draft guideline for individual assessment of education staff;
- Regular meetings of the member of the Committee for assessing teacher e-portfolios;
- Obtain feedback from different stakeholders considering the role of the school and the opinion of parents and students in the process of career advancement of teachers;
- Develop training modules for conducting trainings for SEI inspectors related to the guideline for individual assessment of education staff;
- Conduct trainings for all SEI inspectors to introduce them to the new guideline;
- Commence the analysis of the workload and administrative burden on teachers in schools.

## **6. INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION**

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As part of the support provided to SEI in developing new Guideline for individual assessment of education staff in primary and secondary schools, TPCD continued to ensure that the instruments include the aspect of inclusion of children with disabilities. In the process of developing the guideline the team worked in line with the following principles: validity, nondiscrimination, transparency and rationality. Concerning the nondiscrimination in the guideline due care is taken to avoid discrimination and favoring of education staff according to the work position and the type of education (primary, secondary, VET, art school and schools for children with special educational needs). In the instrument 10 areas for assessment of teacher work were identified: 1) Teacher planning and preparation, 2) Quality of teaching, 3) Professional cooperation and development, 4) Assessment, 5) Planning and using IT in the education process, 6) Planning of additional support classes 7) Conducting extracurricular activities, 8) Maintaining pedagogical evidence, 9) Cooperation with parents, and 10) Priority areas in education. All these areas are applicable to teachers who teach in special school and also to teachers who teach in regular classes where children with special educational needs are studying.