



**Teacher Professional and  
Career Development Project**



**MACEDONIAN  
CIVIC  
EDUCATION  
CENTER**

## **QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015**

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

**Submitted by:  
Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC)**

**CONTACT PERSONS:**  
**Loreta Georgieva**  
**MCEC Executive Director**  
**E-mail: [lgeorgieva@mcgo.org.mk](mailto:lgeorgieva@mcgo.org.mk)**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. BACKGROUND.....	4
2. PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES.....	5
3. PROJECT UPDATE .....	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 .....	8
5. LESSONS LEARNT .....	11
6. ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD .....	11
7. INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION .....	12
LIST OF ANNEXES.....	12

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)**

BDE	Bureau for Development of Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EU	European Union
MCEC	Macedonian Civic Education Center
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NEC	National Examination Center
SEI	State Education Inspectorate
TCD	Teacher Career Development
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TPCD	Teacher Professional and Career Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET Center	Vocational Education Training Center
WB	World Bank

**MACEDONIAN CIVIC EDUCATION CENTER (MCEC)  
USAID TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (TPCD)  
QUARTERLY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT #12**

---

<b>Cooperative Agreement No:</b>	<b>RFA-165-A-13-00001</b>
<b>Progress Report No:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	<b>October 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015</b>

---

## 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 the improvement of national policies and practices.

The TPCD project aims to create a comprehensive, transparent, feasible and cost-effective system that will strengthen teacher performance and credibility and improve students' achievement. 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 primary and secondary education to determine and propose changes in order to 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 the first year, 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 second year, the Project finalized the teacher standards, and developed Catalogue of Core Professional Competencies and Standards for student support services. The established working groups worked on improving the mentoring process of novice teachers in schools, establishing an internal school performance assessment of teachers, and developed and piloted procedures and instruments for teacher and student support services career advancement. Along this, the Project worked on legal regulation of the developed products in the adequate laws.

Subsequently, the project received one-year no-cost extension period and in close cooperation with BDE, developed a plan of activities. During the extension period, piloting of processes for career advancement of education staff will be finalized. Based on that,

---

<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.

procedures and instruments will be improved and legal regulations will be proposed. In addition, guides for relevant bodies will be developed. At the end of the project, training events with representatives of all schools will be organized, to familiarize with the novelties proposed in the TPCD system.

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 uses 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:

- Meetings with MoES Heads of Unit for Primary and for Secondary Education and the BDE were organized related to the development of the system for teacher professional and career development;
- A focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders organized, in order to gain feedback on professional competencies for student support services staff included in practical lessons in VET Schools;
- TPCD team participated in different relevant events and promoted the project achievements;
- Three focus group discussions organized related to teachers' work load and administrative burden in schools;
- The third edition of the TPCD Newsletter developed and published;
- A focus group discussion with key stakeholders organized to review the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff during Integral Evaluation;

### Component One, Comprehensive Legal System:

- Book of Rules for the form and content of the individual/personal development plan approved by Minister of Education and Science;
- Book of Rules for the form and content of the teacher professional development approved by the Minister of Education and Science;
- Draft Rulebook for accreditation of training providers finalized.

### Component Two, Enhance Financial Schemes:

- No activities during this reporting period.

### Component Three, Standards for Teacher Competencies:

- A bid opening and interviews with three companies interested to conduct the feasibility study of online professional development organized. Further processes related to the study stopped on the request from BDE as their timeline was extremely ambitious and could not correspond with the dynamics of the project needs and to follow and comply with all internal and USAID procedures;
- The process of piloting the career development of student support services staff in schools finalized;
- SEI guideline for individual assessment of education staff finalized and feedback from SEI Inspectors and other stakeholders incorporated into the document;
- Regular meetings of the members of the Committee for assessing teacher e-portfolios held;

---

<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.

- Feedback from different stakeholders related to the role of the school and the process of soliciting of parents and students opinion for career advancement of teachers obtained;
- Modules for training SEI inspectors related to the Guideline for individual assessment developed;
- A draft version of the report on the analysis of the workload and administrative burden on teachers in schools developed.

### 3. PROJECT UPDATE

---

#### 3.1 Key Project Personnel Position

There are no changes during this reporting period.

### 4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

---

#### 4.1 Crosscutting Activities

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

TPCD project continues to work closely with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and other relevant education intuitions in the process of establishing the system for professional and career development. The project discussed some of the open issues related to the teacher career advancement with MoES and BDE management. Among other activities, the process of soliciting parents and students opinion for the purpose of career advancement was agreed with BDE. Furthermore, it was agreed the BDE advisors to take an additional responsibility related the career advancement of teachers. Namely, upon application, the BDE advisor will visit the candidates and check the level of achievement of the competencies related to the areas which are difficult to be assessed through the evidence in the teacher portfolio. In addition, the project team discussed with BDE Director the process of certification of education staff that piloted the draft process for professional and career advancement in schools.

In this reporting period, the project continued with the cooperation with the State Education Inspectorate (SEI) in finalizing the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff and instruments. Training modules to introduce all SEI inspectors with the changes in the School Performance Quality Indicators and the process of Integral Evaluation were also developed. The project jointly with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Center finalized the competencies for student support services responsible for practical trainings in VET Schools.

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

Three focus group discussions with lower primary teachers, subject teachers and VET subject teachers were organized and their workload and administrative burden in the school was discussed. The TPCD project developed a draft report based on the feedback from the focus group discussions. The information from the report will be used in the process of developing the Rulebook on regulating the time teachers spend on different tasks separate from teaching hours.

On November 5, 2015 the project organized a focus group discussion with practitioners from primary and secondary schools related to the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff during Integral Evaluation and the developed instruments. The participants gave feedback related to different areas of work presented in the document. In addition, the points for different areas in the instrument were revised according to the specifics of different teaching positions in the education system. In this period, the project also organized several meetings to develop training modules to train and inform SEI Inspectors about the changes in the process of Integral Evaluation.

During the focus group discussion organized on December 23, 2015 the professional competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in

VET Schools were finalized. Based on the specifics of student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET, the competencies were divided into two groups: (1) competencies that relate to student support services that carry out the practical lessons independently and (2) competencies that relate to student support services that don't work directly with students and only supports teachers in implementing practical lessons. As a next step, the expert group will develop an instrument for self-evaluation of student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons that will be part of the Guideline for professional development of the education staff in schools.

In order to resolve the open questions identified by the Commission for assessment of e-portfolios, a round table discussion with all relevant stakeholders was organized on November 25, 2015. As a result, the participants successfully mapped the process and defined the bodies in the school that will provide feedback during the career advancement of teachers. The participants also proposed some possible ways of gathering feedback from parents and students that were presented to BDE.

Furthermore, during this quarter, the project held regular coordination meetings with MoES and BDE to discuss issues that relate to the establishment of the system for professional and career development in schools.

### ***Public relations***

Members of the project team participated at the ETF event on the Continuing Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers in Macedonia organized on November 11, 2015. During this workshop, the findings of a new research carried out by ETF in partnership with MoES that examines the provision of Continuing Professional Development for VET teachers and trainers in Macedonia were presented. Throughout the event, the representatives from the VET Center presented the specific competencies for VET school teacher as part of the teacher core professional competencies and standards developed by TPCD project and confirmed that they present a good starting point for developing more specialized competencies for different profiles of VET school teachers in the future.

Following the presentation of teacher competencies to Universities during British Council event, a meeting was organized with the FON University to discuss the teacher competencies in detail. The representatives of the University were interested to learn about the possibility of providing accredited trainings to teachers and the process of application to become training providers.

The third edition of the TPCD Newsletter (**see Annex 1**) was developed during this reporting period. Upon finalizing the texts and designing all three versions of the Newsletter (Macedonian, Albanian and English), the Newsletters were published on the MCEC webpage.

### ***Other activities***

The project team participated in the MCEC strategic planning for period 2016-2020 held December 4 - 6, 2015

On December 15, 2015 the project team participated at the USAID Local Capacity Development Workshop. The USAID finance team from Sarajevo presented in detail requirements and information that relate to the financial reports and financial procedures.

The annual audit process for 2014 was successfully finalized by the selected audit company.

During the month of October 2015, MCEC representatives participated at a roundtable discussion on education programs with US State Department officials organized by USAID. The discussion was focussed on the main challenges faced in the implementation of the projects and the main problems that Macedonian education system is currently facing.

## **4.2 COMPONENT 1: Comprehensive Legal System**

### **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* was approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Within the upcoming period, the project working group will commence the development of the Rulebook for career advancement and the Guideline for regulating the assessment procedures, as well as the teacher friendly booklet for career advancement.

### **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 were approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Furthermore, the expert group for revising the Rulebook for accreditation of training providers held few meetings and finalized the document.

## **4.3 COMPONENT 2: Enhance Financial Schemes**

### **4.3.1. Developing financial scenario for teacher professional development**

No activities during this reporting period.

### **4.3.2. Developing financial scenario for teacher career advancement**

No activities during this reporting period.

## **4.4 COMPONENT 3: Standards for Teacher Competencies**

### **4.4.1. Expert Groups**

Within this reporting period, TPCD project established the Commission for assessment of student support staff e-portfolios. In addition, the already existing working groups established under Component 3 continued working and implementing the planned activities.

### **4.4.2. Develop Professional Competencies for School Directors**

Following the finalization of the Professional Competencies for School Directors, the document was submitted to NEC Director for approval. During this reporting period, the project received the approval and commenced with the activities related to developing a graphic layout. In addition, the project team discussed with the working group the regulation of the professional competencies within the Law for School Directors. As a result, NEC informed the project that will draft and propose the legislative changes to MOES in order for the newly developed competencies to become part of the Law for School Directors (and the Laws on Primary and on Secondary Education). During the reporting period, the proposed changes by NEC were not still amended in the Law. Upon finalizing the design, the Professional Competencies for School Directors will be published on the websites of MOES and NEC.

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

Several working session with the Commission for assessing the received e-portfolios from teachers were organized during this period. The members of the Commission continued with the evaluation of teacher e-portfolios from the pilot phase. Based on the findings from this activity, part of the procedures and instruments were improved, i.e. the points in the instrument for assessment of training certificates were revised. Furthermore, the members of the Commission concluded that once the process for career advancement is established, the evaluation of teacher training certificates should be conducted by the schools, since it is their responsibility to guarantee for the trustworthiness of the information.

In order to resolve the open questions that relate to establishing the system for career advancement of teachers, the project organized a round table discussion with representatives

from USAID, MoES, schools and parents. During this event, the roles of different school bodies in providing opinion on the candidates for career advancement were defined and the process was mapped. In addition, possible ways of soliciting feedback from parents and students were discussed and some solutions were presented. Finally, a report from the round table was developed and shared with all participants.

The members of the Commission continued with the assessment of all received portfolios from the pilot phase. After processing and analyzing the data from the assessment of teacher e-portfolios, during the upcoming period, the Commission will finalize the instruments and procedures for career advancement of teachers.

#### **4.4.4. Develop procedures, tools and instruments for student support services career advancement**

Upon developing the procedures and instruments for career advancement, over 120 student support services staff were invited to pilot the process. As a result, 15 psychologists, 13 pedagogues and 3 special educators volunteered to pilot the career advancement process. The project team organized an informative meeting with the volunteer student support services on October 13, 2015. During this meeting, the participants were informed about project achievements and activities, as well as the instruments, procedures and open issues related to career advancement of student support services in schools.

In the period between October and December 2015, the student support services staff piloted the system for career advancement. Furthermore, the project set up a system for sharing information and responded via email to all the issues arising from the piloting process. The student support services staff submitted their pilot portfolios on December 31, 2015.

During the upcoming period, the project will set up a pilot Commission for Assessment of student support services e-portfolios and based on this activity, will further revise and improve the instruments and procedures for career advancement.

#### **4.4.5. Piloting the Guideline for the Professional Development of Education Staff**

During this reporting period, the Project worked on finalizing the professional competencies for student support services staff involved in practical lessons in VET Schools. As a result, an instrument for self-evaluation for this category of student support services will need to be developed and inserted into the Guideline, during the upcoming period. Hence, the Guideline for the Professional Development of Education Staff will be finalized and ready for publishing.

#### **4.4.6. Improvement of guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school integral evaluation**

Upon developing the draft Guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school Integral Evaluation, the document was sent to all SEI Inspectors for review. Furthermore, the project organized a focus group discussion with practitioners from primary and secondary schools in the country, in order to obtain their feedback and improve the document and the instruments. The participants at the focus group discussion stressed that the new Guideline is very useful, as it is much clearer what is expected of them. The representative from the music schools suggested that the points given for certain areas of work in the instrument should be adjusted to their specific activities in the school. Thus, the project organized a separate meeting with the representatives of the State Music and Ballet School Center Ilija Nikolovski – Luj and discussed possible changes to the Guideline and the instruments. The school Ilija Nikolovski – Luj is expected to send their comments within the upcoming reporting period.

During the meeting organized on November 6, 2015 the working group incorporated, in the Guideline for the individual assessment of education staff, the received feedback from the round table discussion and from SEI Inspectors. Furthermore, the expert group developed two

additional instruments for assessment of both categories of student support services staff involved in practical lessons in VET Schools.

Following, TPCD project in cooperation with the Interethnic Integration in Education Project (IIEP) commenced with the preparations for trainings to be conducted for all SEI Inspectors that will be implemented during the upcoming reporting period. Thus, a number of meetings were organized to develop training materials and modules related to the changes and amendments in School Performance Quality Indicators, instruments for Integral Evaluation and the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff.

#### **4.4.7. Professional Competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools**

According to the Law on secondary education, the student support services staff involved in organizing practical lessons in VET School are part of the student support services team involved in the education process. Based on the need for professional development of all categories of education staff in schools, the project developed professional competencies for this category of student support services staff as well.

Upon developing the draft competencies, the project used the already established methodology of work to finalize the document and organized a round table discussion. After a short presentation of the project goals, including a presentation of the competencies, the group consisted of student support services staff from various professions engaged in a plenary discussion. The participants remarked that two categories of student support services staff work in VET School. The first category of student support services staff carries the teaching process and the second category only supports teachers in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools and don't work directly with students. The participants then were divided into groups and worked in reviewing the competencies. As a result of the focus group discussion, specific competencies for each category of student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons were marked in the document and the professional competencies were finalized.

During the upcoming period, the project will work on publishing the competencies and standards for all categories of student support services staff in schools (pedagogue, psychologist, sociologist, social worker, special educator, librarians and student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools) in one joint publication.

#### **Activity 4.4.8: Feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line courses (cancelled)**

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. A total of six offers were received and a public bid opening was organized. Following, a detailed review of bids by the selection commission was organized and three companies were invited to an interview. As a result, the project compiled a report from the interviews and forwarded the Request for Approval to USAID AOR. However, on the request from BDE this activity was canceled due to the fact that the Ministry of Education and Science established an expert group to work on the model/platform for online teacher training, thus it was considered that the feasibility study is obsolete.

#### **Activity 4.4.9: Designing and printing the professional materials and guidelines for professional and career development of education staff in schools.**

In this period, the project team organized tender and received bids from companies for designing the materials and guidelines for professional and career development of education staff in schools developed by the project. On December 18, 2015 a public opening of bids was organized and based on the lowest offered price, a company was selected.

The project discussed the design and the timeline for conducting this activity with the company during the meeting organized on December 30, 2015. It was agreed the company to send samples of at least three possible designs in January 2016 and upon receiving approval from the project, will commence with the graphic layout of the documents.

## **5. LESSONS LEARNT**

---

Based on requirement arising from the Law for teachers and in the process of establishing the system for professional development, BDE identified the need for creating a platform for online courses for teachers. As a result, the project planned to support the process by implementing a feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line courses. Thus, all necessary activities were implemented to select the most suitable company to conduct the study. However, due to the Law for teachers (enforced since September 2015), which stipulates that MoES and BDE will need to provide 50 hours of professional development for all teachers in the period of three years, MoES changed their priorities and decided to establish an expert group that started to work on the model/platform for online teacher trainings immediately. Hence, the BDE considered the feasibility study obsolete and requested that USAID puts the study on hold. Albeit, the project will not be able to conduct the feasibility study, it will continue to contribute towards establishing the teacher professional development system in cooperation with MoES, BDE and other relevant institutions and work on identifying training programs in accordance with the competencies.

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

---

### **6.1 Crosscutting Activities**

- Organize a Steering Committee meeting to adopt the procedures and instruments for career advancement of teachers and student support services staff in schools;
- Organize meetings with MoES, BDE and other relevant stakeholders related to establishing the system for professional and career development;
- Participate in events to promote the achievement of TPCD project;
- Participate in relevant events related to teacher professional development;
- Commence the fourth edition of the TPCD Newsletter;
- Prepare and share TPCD Project updates with stakeholders;
- Upgrade the MCEC webpage with project updates;
- Commence the preparations for the project close-out event organized;

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

- Commence working on the Rule Book for career advancement of teachers and student support services staff in cooperation with BDE, VET Center and SEI.
- Summarize findings from activities related to teachers' workload and develop a Rulebook;
- Commence the process of identifying training programs that match teacher core professional competencies;

### **6.3 Component Two: Enhanced Financial Schemes**

- Present to MoES the draft system for career advancement and discuss financing of the process.

### **6.4 Component Three: Standards for Teacher Competencies**

- Work on finalizing the translation of the professional materials developed by the project;
- Commence the process of developing the graphic layout for all the materials and commence the process of selecting a printing company;
- Initiate the publication of the designed materials in the education stakeholders' webpages;
- Finalize the process of assessing the teacher and student support services e-portfolios from the pilot process;

- Commence developing a Guideline for career advancement of teachers and student support services;
- Commence developing a Guideline for Commissions for assessment of e-portfolios;
- Commence preparations for the regional informative meetings with representatives from schools, on the system for professional and career development;

## **7. INCLUSIVENESS OF EDUCATION**

---

During this reporting period the Teacher Professional and Career Development Project worked on finalizing the professional competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools. In the process of developing the document, the working group included professional competencies that student support services staff in practical lessons need to acquire to create and maintain an inclusive environment and/or working area which supports the need of all students, including students with special needs. In this regard, the student support services staff in practical lessons will be required to: link the specific student needs with the process of learning, implement appropriate approaches to students with special needs, support teachers in selecting appropriate resources in order to include in the practical lessons the students with special needs, etc. The document was finalized during the focus group discussion organized with representatives from VET Center and practitioners from schools and is linked to document consisting all student support services competencies.

### **LIST OF ANNEXES**

---

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Annex 1</b> | TPCD Newsletter, third edition            |
| <b>Annex 2</b> | Summary report of TPCD activities in 2015 |

Annex 1 TPCD Newsletter, third edition

## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

### CONTENTS

Introduction ..... 2

Professional Competencies  
of Teachers - Why Are  
They Important  
to Teachers ..... 3

Professional Competencies  
and Standards for  
Professional Associates  
- Personal Aspect ..... 6

For the First Time Ever -  
Professional Competencies  
for School Principals in  
Our Country ..... 8

Reflections on Professional  
Competence and Career  
Development of Teachers  
in Initial Teacher  
Education ..... 9

Piloting the Professional  
Development Processes  
and Tools in Primary School  
“Manchu Matak”  
- Krivogastani ..... 11

# NEWSLETTER number 3

## December 2015

The USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Center (MCEC), in cooperation with the Step by Step Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives, which is involved in the activities related to the preparation of teacher standards and competencies.

The aim of the project is to upgrade and improve the system for professional and career development of teachers and thus contribute to a better quality of teacher performance and higher student achievements in the Republic of Macedonia.

The project implementation started in December 2012 and will last until June 2015.



The Teacher Professional and Career Development Project is implemented with the support of the Bureau for Development of Education.

## INTRODUCTION

*Dear readers,*

In this third issue of our Newsletter, a central place is given to the experiences of teachers and professional associates in schools regarding the piloting of the draft solutions for professional development prepared by the Project Working Groups. In addition, you will have the opportunity to read about the novelties introduced into the system for schools' educational staff professional and career development.

During this period, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education have, through their preparation and adoption of laws and bylaws, regulated part of the solutions arising from Working Groups' proposals. With the beginning of the school year 2015/2016 and under the Law on Teachers, teachers should already prepare their Personal Professional Development Plans based on Teachers' Core Professional Competencies and identify their professional development needs. In determining the form and content of the Plan, the experience and feedback of about 150 teachers and professional associates from 14 primary and secondary schools piloting

the process, procedures, tools and Guidelines on Professional Development Planning were taken in consideration.



Under the new approach to professional development, each individual shall, in a systematic way, identify their personal needs and take responsibility for their further development of competencies using different forms of learning. Competencies represent a pillar of the system for professional development of entire educational staff and serve as a basis for evaluation and self-evaluation of teaching staff. Some personal views of Working Groups' Members involved in the development and piloting of such competencies are presented in this issue.

At the same time, the Project took an important step forward in linking

teacher professional development with the process for teachers' promotion to a higher title. Teachers from 23 primary and secondary schools in the country that piloted the process of advancement in rank, developed electronic portfolios that will be used to test the tools and evaluation procedures produced in order to establish a functioning career advancement system.

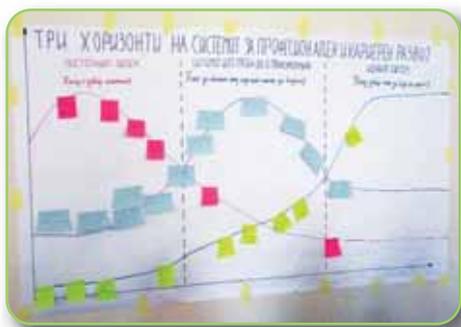
This issue includes and focuses on the linkage between the new solutions for the professional and career development system and the preparation of future teachers at pre-service teacher faculties.

Also, an overview of activities completed in the period since the publication of the previous issue of this Newsletter is provided.

We hope that the contents of this issue will inform you and keep your attention.

Sincerely,

**Vera Kondic Mitkovska,**  
Project Chief of Party



## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS - WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO TEACHERS

Following the global trends, in recent years, a number of reforms in the educational system of the Republic of Macedonia have been taken seeking to provide teaching and learning that would prepare students for life in the 21st century and develop their lifelong learning skills. These changes often confused teachers, because it seems that they are constantly required to do something new and different. On the other hand, numerous studies show that the quality of teaching and student achievement largely depends on the knowledge, skills and commitment of teachers. Only a teacher who is willing to change themselves can contribute to students developing their skills and attitudes essential for lifelong learning. Formal education, especially basic education only, is no longer enough to keep up with the large number of changes and their successful implementation in educational work. Hence, the necessity of continuing professional development of teachers through various forms of non-formal and informal education arises.



We all agree that quality education undoubtedly requires quality teachers. But, do we all mean the same when we talk about teacher quality? What are the characteristics of a quality teacher? What is the knowledge and skills to be possessed by a teacher, what should be the teaching like, how should the teacher cooperate with students, parents and the wider community, to what extent and in which direction should a teacher advance professionally in order to be called a quality teacher?

Although the answers to these questions are necessary to achieve the desired quality of education, up until now there has been no common understanding of the term “quality teacher”, which has led to different interpretations even by teachers themselves, so they are trying to achieve the quality that they have defined somewhat on their own depending on their current potential, experiences and work environment. Further, each teacher seeks to improve according to their own vision and observations about what a quality teacher is, upon their individual initiative, without any established policy for professional development of teachers and in the absence of standards and criteria for professional development and career advancement.

The Program for Professional Development of Teaching Staff, which is part of the 2005-2015 National Program for Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia, emphasizes the need for professional and career development of teachers as a major factor that would motivate education staff to embrace lifelong learning and professional development, and thus, realize quality instruction and increase student achievement. Nevertheless, although teacher professional and career development is legislated, up until now, it has not been prescribed by secondary laws and procedures on its implementation.

For the first time ever, the Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools adopted in 2015 regulates the way of teacher professional and career development. Under this Law, in order to perform instruction, a teacher shall possess basic professional competencies for teachers and may progress to titles such as Teacher Mentor and Teacher Advisor, if they achieve the prescribed standards for such titles.

The existence of documents such as Basic Professional Competencies of Teachers and Professional Standards for Teacher Mentors and Teacher Advisors is the first step towards identification of the knowledge and skills to be possessed by a teacher for successful implementation of upbringing and educational work, as well as for their ability to advance in terms of their titles.

Professional competencies are actually something that has been long needed for teachers in the Republic of Macedonia, i.e. a description of what the teacher is expected to know and be able to do, as well as the values by which they should be guided in their profession, that is to say a description of the term “quality teacher”.



Standards, on the other hand, describe the expectations about what every teacher should possess to be able to acquire the titles of Teacher Mentor and Teacher Advisor, i.e. to advance in their career.

Basic Professional Competencies of Teachers are an important document that is expected to contribute to better regulation of the teaching profession. They are quite detailed in terms of what the teacher should know and be able to do in order to successfully realize upbringing and educational work.

Competencies are defined as a set of acquired knowledge, skills and professional values, i.e. proven ability to use knowledge and skills in learning situations and implement upbringing and educational work. They refer to the overall professional engagements in both classroom and extracurricular teaching work with students, colleagues and the wider community, encompassing professional knowledge, skills and values of the 21st century teacher, which also incorporate the competencies developed in teachers within various innovative projects implemented in the last 15 years in the Republic of Macedonia. They include examples of teacher’s professional practice activities that will help the teacher in their teaching practice self-assessment, and can also be used by other entities that monitor and evaluate the work of the teacher.



**НАМЕНА НА КОМПЕТЕНЦИИТЕ ЗА НАСТАВНИЦИ**

- Планирање на професионалниот развој на сите нивоа;
- Поставување стандарди за повисоките звања за наставници (наставник-ментор и наставник-советник);
- Изготвување на процедури и инструменти за следење на работата на наставниците;
- Изготвување компетенции за одделни профили на наставници;
- Подобрување на законската регулатива и актите кои се однесуваат на професијата наставник.

The existence and use of such competencies is expected to encourage teachers to improve their professional practice and support activities for the creation of quality teaching. According to these competencies, every teacher can easily plan their professional development, identifying the competencies they have achieved and the ones that should be improved. For this purpose, every teacher should be able to plan their professional development by drafting a Personal Professional Development Plan for each school year (in line with the Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools). The planning of professional development shall be primarily based on self-evaluation in terms of professional competencies through which each individual shall identify their strengths, professional aspirations and plan how to reach them.

Standards for Teacher Mentors and Teacher Advisors represent the framework for teachers' career development and explain which competencies should be developed by the teacher in order for them to progress with their titles. They contribute to the professionalization and raising the teaching profes-

sion status. To achieve a certain level of career development teachers will have to demonstrate their achievement of certain competencies. The standards represent a framework that clearly describes the knowledge, practical work and professional engagement of teachers at different levels of their careers. Using these standards, teachers themselves will be able to identify which levels of career development they have reached and what they should yet do to meet the requirements for advancement into their next title.

If we take into account the fact that the Catalog of Core Professional Competencies was developed in 2014 and that the Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools was adopted in 2015, it is obvious that we are at the beginning of the journey called "quality teacher professional development and teacher career advancement". Still, the preparation of basic professional competencies and standards for advancement laid the foundations for a better and uniform understanding of what teachers need to accomplish in order to become quality teachers, how to self-evaluate and improve professionally, which competencies they should reach in order to advance. Competencies provide an accurate and specific description of the kind of work towards which teachers should strive in order to ensure higher quality instruction and improve achievement among students.

Keeping up with all changes and providing quality education requires well-educated and skilled teachers who continuously develop and advance professionally, and competencies and professional standards for teachers are a good road map on this path.

**Maja Videnovik,**  
teacher, PS „Krste Misirkov“, Skopje

## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AND STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES - PERSONAL ASPECT

In addition to teachers, professional associates also work in schools as part of educational staff. Their involvement in the school system began several years ago by employing either a pedagogue or psychologist in schools, and in rare cases, both profiles at the same school, so that today, schools can operate with teams staffed with professional associates (a psychologist, pedagogue, special education teacher, and somewhere, a sociologist, social worker ...).

In the years back, it was often not realized what exactly professional associates were doing, and we oftentimes had no idea of what to focus on: individual work with students, or actions to improve the entire school. Today, in

most schools, the professional associate is recognized as someone who is well informed and involved in the overall operation of the school - its organization, development and evaluation, as well as the creation of its policies and programs, and as an initiator of innovative approaches to the overall educational work. Professional associates have a key position in connecting psychological, educational and social sectors in school circumstances. Our work does not stop at the classroom level only, but it takes place at the school level; not only with a given number of students, but with all students, parents and teachers, and it also includes prevention, counseling, evaluation, intervention, education and research. Part of our work is the analysis of the situation in the school and general educational system, research and proposition of possible solutions.

Therefore, in parallel with the preparation of Teachers' Core Professional Competencies, it was also important to draw up a similar document regarding professional associates. The importance of Basic Professional Competencies is that they finally showed the role of professional associates in schools, so that it became clearer to other educational staff, and ultimately to all users of our services. In addition, they guide professional associates to what they are sup-

posed to possess in terms of knowledge and skills in order to be able to provide quality in their work, and develop and advance such knowledge and skills.

Basic Professional Competencies cover areas within which the work of professional associates takes place, such as: work with students, teachers, parents, cooperation with the community, professional development and professional collaboration, analytical and research work, and school organization, culture and climate. Although the work of all profiles of professional associates takes place within these areas, each profile has its own specifics. Significant about these competencies is that they recognize such specifics and



## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



are expected to be used in certain situations. In addition, the importance of teamwork is emphasized, thus putting the competencies of various profiles into operation for the purpose of optimal contribution to building a school that shall be a friendly and stimulating environment for all.

Given the fact that professional associates are the ones that should, with their knowledge and skills, and their example, contribute to the school climate and culture, I believe that of special importance are the values described and which should guide every professional associate in their work. This will contribute to a greater respect and integrity of the professional associate.

Basic professional competencies are important in several respects, including:

- they will help professional associates, especially the younger ones, to plan their own work and their own professional and career development;
- for the public, competencies mean a source of information and recognition of the role of professional associates in schools;
- professionally, competencies present the basis for setting standards for higher ranks of professional associates (Professional Associate Mentor and Professional Associate Advisor).

For all professional associates, and at present, especially for those that have reached a higher professional development level, of particular interest is that Standards for Titles of Associate Professional Mentor and Professional Associate Advisor have been developed. In fact, these standards indicate the direction in which professional development of associates should evolve and which competencies they should have developed to advance their career. Finally, those whose work contributed to the professional development of their fellow teachers and development of the profession and schools in general, got an opportunity to progress both professionally and in terms of their career. These standards verify the work of professional associates involved in all important processes and changes at both school and national levels and actively contribute to the promotion of education in general.

The one who loves their profession surely knows what needs to be done, knows how to do it and continually refines and upgrades it. Nevertheless, documents such as Basic Professional Competencies and Standards for higher ranks of professional associates will certainly be a good guide.

**Andrijana Tasevska,**  
psychologist,  
PS „Krume Kepeski“, Skopje

## FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER - PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN OUR COUNTRY

The position of Primary School Principal is increasingly regulated and professionalized. In this context, within the Teacher Professional and Career Development Project and in cooperation with the State Examination Center, which is responsible for the training and examination of Directors, professional competencies for directors were developed.

Candidates for directors of primary and secondary schools should, among other requirements, attend and complete a training course and pass an exam for directors. Training is regulated by Rules of Training and Examination of Directors, and as of 2016, the new Law on Training for Directors shall start to apply. The regulation of this matter by law entails obligations to review the training program for directors, as well as draft a Program for Advanced Training of current directors, which will serve the purpose of their continuing professional development. Hence, the need for preparation of a document, which according to the increasing complexity of School Director's position, shall clearly define the competencies necessary to successfully perform this function.

A Working Group composed of primary and secondary school principals, university professors, representatives of MES and NEC and other experts has, after numerous meetings and consultations, developed a Draft of Professional Competencies for Directors. During its work, the Group took into consideration similar documents from other countries and the already prepared competencies for teachers and professional associates in our country.

Draft Competencies were discussed at a round table, where a wider circle of professional community representatives were invited to participate, such as: school principals, representatives from the Minis-

try of Education and Science, the State Examination Center, the Bureau for Development of Education, the World Bank, the private school NOVA, USAID, university representatives, the authorized education inspector in the Municipality and others. Also, a public debate was organized and Draft Professional Competencies were delivered to all primary and secondary school principals, and opinions were given by 50 current directors. This approach to the document preparation enabled a transparent way that involved all stakeholders. Opinions and suggestions received were taken into account in the process of document finalization.



Professional knowledge and understanding, competencies and skills, as well as examples of possible activities were included in the following areas of principals' work: Leadership; Human Resource Management; Pedagogical School Management; Financial Management; and Legal and Administrative Operations of the School. These competencies address the entire school life, both within the school and outside of it.

With its substantial impact on the programs for basic and advanced director training, this document is included both in the system for training of directors and the system for their continuous professional development.

With its substantial impact on the programs for basic and advanced director training, this document is included both in the system for training of directors and the system for their continuous professional development.

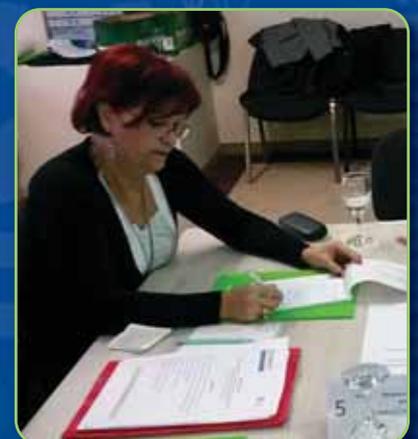
**Violeta Naumovska,**  
head of sector,  
National Examinations Centre

## REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Initial teacher education is “still” the initial and only requirement for entry into the teaching profession<sup>1</sup>. It is an integral part of the subsystem of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia and it produces teaching staff for preschool education, primary and secondary education. As such, the system of initial education of teachers is subject to legal effects, new institutional solutions, impacts of technical and technological advances and the needs of today's modern families and children/students.

Certainly, significant changes in the system of initial teacher education are expected even upon the establishment and adoption of core teachers' professional competencies that are the product of project activities under the USAID's *Teacher Professional and Career Development Project*. On this occasion we would single out a few assumptions about its possible impacts on the current structure of initial teacher education.

- **Preparation based on competence (Competence based learning) instead of preparation oriented to the process (Process oriented learning).** Current teacher education focused on the success in the implementation of teacher training process, duration of both theoretical and practical parts of teacher education, respect of ECTS standards and principles, etc. is directed to an organization based on the principle of developing teacher competencies (highly structured and organized) that would be subject to further development through other forms of professional lifelong learning.
- **Professionalization of the teaching profession rather than personalization of subject teacher initial education programs.** Certain conditions are created for personalized solutions arising from the presence of university professors engaged in initial teacher education and the good positioning of management structures to be replaced with staff that will implement subject course programs in accordance with teacher competencies and teaching profession needs.
- **Evenly dispersed, inclusive and equally thorough approach to the development of teacher competencies instead of selective, favored and dominant selection of competencies developed in institutions for initial teacher education.** In the current program structure of initial teacher education, there are differences in initial teacher education curricula showing that some institutions put more emphasis on the



<sup>1</sup> Iliev D. (2001). *Initial teacher education for primary education in Macedonia and England*, Bitola: Faculty of Teachers and Educators Bitola

development of competencies in the area of subject knowledge or substrate fundamentals of teaching in a given subject, while others put the focus on the teaching and learning area in their study programs. Unfortunately, the number of initial teacher education institutions where competencies in the areas of professional development, professional collaboration and social and educational inclusion take a significant part is small. The catalog of teachers' professional competencies can change such situation by balanced distribution of subject course programs in terms of initial development of all teacher competencies specified.

- **Instead of a profession developed on the basis of theoretical knowledge, initial teacher education focused on visible and measurable actions.** There is a possibility for many of the subject courses at teaching universities in the area of practical activities and exercises to be realized in the direction of design, production and implementation of the “Activities” category incorporated in the structure of teacher professional competencies, which are described in detail by appropriate descriptors.
- Under the influence of teachers' core professional competencies established, **professional and career development of teachers is increasingly becoming a field of interest for initial teacher education institutions.** In fact, the description of competencies ensures the awareness of teachers about their possession of the said competencies or lack thereof, encouraging their involvement in the permanent professional development process. Here lies the chance for teacher training faculties, which they should use by designing training courses, accreditation thereof and active work with teachers. To this end, in addition to the subject programs for initial teacher education, it is necessary to design programs for supplementing the knowledge in terms of competencies, i.e. programs for advanced courses on teacher professional development.
- The existence of a catalog of teacher professional competencies initiates, and also describes and defines **the need to determine the unique teacher competencies to be possessed by anyone who wants to deal with teaching.** It is particularly important to review the format of realization of further pedagogical training, the presence of teacher professional competencies in study and subject course programs of teacher training faculties etc.

These are only some of the presumed secondary impacts of USAID's *Teacher Professional and Career Development Project* on the system and institutions for initial teacher education in the Republic of Macedonia.

**Prof. Dr. Dean Iliev,**  
“St. Kliment Ohridski” University, Bitola  
Faculty of Pedagogy



## PILOTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES AND TOOLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL “MANCHU MATAK” - KRIVOGASHTANI

Our school was one of the 14 primary and secondary schools in Macedonia that have piloted the professional development processes and tools in accordance with the Guidelines for this purpose. This was a great honor and commitment for our teachers and the Pedagogue.

Even during the first focus meeting with the Advisor Natalija Aceska from the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and without knowing what to expect, a large number of teachers applied to participate in the piloting (12 teachers or 40% of the teachers employed at the school, the Pedagogue and School Principal).

We have never had the opportunity before to participate in piloting of something that is so important for our work (usually, anything that is being introduced is given ready-made), so the feeling of significance and importance that teachers had when they got a chance to make their contribution fully motivated them to commit and give their maximum contribution in the piloting.

During the piloting, all envisaged processes and tools were simulated, which has led to a number of suggestions on our part, as well as long discussions, constructive contributions for improving the Guidelines themselves and even identification of some flaws therein.

During the piloting with the teachers under the coordination of the Pedagogue, several meetings were

held as learning communities in which the processes of the Guidelines were explained, some of the tools were jointly filled in, proposals were noted down and corrections that we thought necessary were made. This way of work was nothing unknown to us - even before we continuously worked as learning communities.

The biggest challenge for all teachers was filling out the Personal Professional Development Plan, the manner in which they were supposed to define their competencies as priorities, and to implement them under the current conditions. Therefore, there was a proposal made to reduce the number of competencies and/or limit them more precisely, which was then taken into account in the final version thereafter.

In the meeting simulation of the Professional Development Team at the school, a conclusion was made that we needed an additional tool that would define competencies as priorities in accordance with teachers' Personal Professional Development Plans, so we also suggested this as a possibility and as a Form.

As regards the process of piloting we went through, all teachers think that is very similar to what is usually done in our school, certainly including a few new tools/forms, especially the Personal Professional Development Plan, since up until now we have identified priorities at the school level through teachers' questionnaires.

Most of the teachers agreed that the Guidelines for planning the professional development were comprehensible, and that the tools and procedures recommended were useful with minor modifications and additions.

After this experience we had in our school, and then, after the piloting of career development, we can conclude that:

- this type of piloting is useful and should be mandatory for every new program, reform and/or innovation in the educational process;
- most of our teaching staff are competent enough to give their contribution to the piloting of such important processes;
- the practice of collaboration and work in learning communities proved to be useful and productive even for this way of working;
- coordination and guidance is required by someone in the school, and the most prepared and competent persons for this are the Pedagogue and Psychologist;
- during such processes, support from school leadership and creators of novelties is necessary.

**Ubavka Butleska,**  
pedagogue, PS „Manchu Matak“,  
Krivogashtani, Prilep



## Annex 2 Summary report of TPCD activities in 2015

## ANNEX 2

### SUMMARY REPORT OF TPCD ACTIVITIES IN 2015

#### **1. CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES**

---

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

###### **Cooperation with key education stakeholders**

TPCD project continued to maintain professional communication and cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE) and the other relevant education intuitions. Regular meetings were held to discuss the project implementation and the establishment of the system for professional and career development of education staff in schools.

During this period, the project, together with BDE and other education institutions managed to finalize the piloting of the professional and career development process in schools. In addition, the open issues related to establishing the teacher career advancement were reviewed during a focus group discussion. The representatives of MoES, BDE and other education stakeholders at the focus group discussion presented different ways of soliciting parents and students' opinion for the purpose of career advancement. As a result, the BDE Advisors were assigned with this additional responsibility. Therefore, upon application, BDE Advisors will visit the candidates and check the level of achievement of some of the competencies that are difficult to prove.

The cooperation with other education institutions continued in the areas that are directly linked to the system for teacher professional and career development. After the establishment of the working groups, the project, together with the State Education Inspectorate (SEI) developed the Guideline and instruments for individual assessment of education staff, jointly with the National Examination Centre (NEC) finalized the competencies for school directors, and in cooperation with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Centre, the project developed the competencies for student support services involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools.

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

In 2015 there were no activities which required the attention of the Steering Committee members.

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

Regular meetings with all relevant stakeholders and working groups were held, in order to communicate and coordinate TPCD project activities. The project ensured broad input from the key education stakeholders in drafting the Annual Work Plan for the extension period.

In the period between May and June 2015, a public debate on the professional competencies for school directors was organized. In addition, the project organized a round table discussion to finalize the competencies. Furthermore, the project organized a series of focus group discussions and roundtable discussions to finalize professional documents and resolve open questions related to TPCD. Thus a roundtable discussion on the professional competencies and standards for primary and secondary school librarians, a focus group discussion to finalize the Guideline and instruments for individual assessment of education staff during Integral Evaluation and a focus group discussion to finalize professional competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools were held.

The project also held three focus group discussions with lower primary teachers, subject teachers and VET subject teachers to examine their workload and administrative burden in the school. As a result, the TPCD project developed a draft report that will be used in the process of developing the Rulebook on regulating the time teachers spend on different tasks separate from teaching hours.

### **Public relations**

In order to keep the stakeholders informed about the project, as of May 2015 the project started preparing monthly updates and forwarding them to the key education stakeholders. In addition, two editions (second and third edition) of the TPCD Newsletter were prepared during this period. The Newsletters were developed in three languages (Macedonian, Albanian and English) and shared with schools, relevant stakeholders and posted on the MoES, BDE and MCEC website.

In 2015, the project team participated in different events and working groups organized by partner organizations, donors and other projects.

During this period, the project team established cooperation with the ETF project on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Conference calls were organized with the responsible persons for managing the project, and a meeting was held with the ETF National Expert. The project team also participated at the ETF event, during which the findings of a new research carried out by ETF in partnership with MoES on Continuing Professional Development of VET teachers and trainers were presented. In addition, 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 2015, TPCD project closely collaborated with British Council. A meeting was held with Tim Philips, Head of Teacher Development at British Council in UK, to present the teacher professional development, in order to avoid overlapping and better plan the British Council support to Macedonia. Additionally, TPCD project was invited to present the teacher professional competencies and standards during an event organized by British Council (BC). The BC's event organized by the Project for strengthening the system of continuing professional development for English language teachers was attended by representatives from all faculties which educate future English teachers. The faculty members were asked to compare the teacher core professional competencies developed by TPCD project with the existing competencies in the university syllabus, in order to align preservice training with core teacher competencies.

### **Other**

In January 2015, TPCD team, reviewed and updated the TPCD Performance Monitoring Plan with the help of USAID. Following the USAID approval of the Annual Work Plan end of July, the contract with the partner organization Step by Step (SbS) was renewed.

The annual 2014 audit of USAID funded projects implemented by Macedonian Civic Education Centre was organized in 2015.

In December 2015 the project team participated in the MCEC strategic planning, during which the strategic directions of the organization were established.

During this period, the project team participated at the USAID Local Capacity Development Workshop. The USAID finance team presented the requirements related to the financial reports and financial procedures. In addition, MCEC representatives participated at a roundtable discussion on education programs organized by USAID and US State Department officials. During the event, all USAID education projects gave short introduction about the area of work and discussed main challenges during the implementation of the projects.

## **2. COMPONENT 1: COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL SYSTEM**

---

### **2.1. Draft amendments in relevant laws and develop by-laws for regulating career advancement of teachers and student support services staff**

Despite all efforts to convince the Minister of Education and Science and Members of the Parliament to change articles in the Law for Teachers that relate to external testing, the Law was adopted without changes on January 22, 2015. At the same time, the Law on Teachers' Academy and the Law on Teacher Training Faculties including amendments to the Law on Higher Education were adopted in the Parliament. This caused great dissatisfaction and protests among university professors and students. The protests ended after the students' plenum succeeded in their request to void the amendments in the Law on Higher Education. The Law for Teachers remained in power and the project commenced the piloting of the career advancement. The project plans to use the results from testing the proposed solutions as an argument for amendments to the Law.

Most of TPCD solutions related to teachers competencies and standards were regulated in the Law for Teachers. However, it did not take into account the project suggestion to organize the teacher career advancement process on a municipality level. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) justification for centralizing the selection process is based on the assumption that the municipalities have no capacity to conduct a fair and objective selection process. In addition, in the final version of the Law, the criteria for advancing of teachers changed. MoES put an emphasis on the objectivity of teachers marks given to students, by comparing them to the results from the external testing of students. Furthermore, the results will be used as eliminatory criteria for applying for higher career position. This caused dissatisfaction among the teachers. The project team put effort to advocate against this proposal during the process of adoption of the Law, but unfortunately wasn't successful.

The project worked together with BDE in developing a number of by-laws. Thus, on April 26, 2015 the Minister of Education and Science approved the usage of the Rulebook 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>. In addition, the Rulebook for *Attaining Professional Standards for Teacher-Mentor or Teacher-Advisor* was approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

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

The professional development process was regulated in the Law for Teachers. There were no reactions on behalf of teachers related to the novelties in the professional development process regulated in the Law.

The piloting of the Guideline for professional development of education staff commenced in January 2015 and was piloted in 14 primary and secondary schools. The results from the piloting were used in the process of drafting two by-laws for regulating of the professional development of teachers: *Rulebook for the form and content of the individual/personal development plan* and *Rulebook for the form and content of the teacher professional portfolio*.

At the end of March, the two rule books were submitted to the Minister of Education and Science for approval. In June, the Minister requested slight changes. The changes mainly related to incorporating the responsibilities of the VET Centre in the text and changes in the articles related to the language in which the teacher portfolio is going to be filled out. Upon including the proposed amendments, the Rulebooks were adopted by the Minister of Education and Science.

On the request of BDE Director, the TPCD project organized a number of working sessions for revising the Rulebook for accreditation of training providers. The working group revised the process, including appendixes that regulate the accreditation process of training providers.

The project team made sure that the changes made in the TPCD system are reflected in the rulebook. The final document was submitted to BDE and is pending for approval.

### **3. COMPONENT 2: ENHANCE FINANCIAL SCHEMES**

---

#### **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 since 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 will be funded by BDE and MoES. Based on the calculations and 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, thus, the BDE is in the process of designing a platform for on-line courses.

#### **3.2. Developing financial scenario for teacher career advancement**

During this reporting period, the project met with the MoES Head of Finance Unit to review the process of ensuring funding for teachers who will advance in career. The main problem rests on the financial compensation. This is due to the fact that the education system in Macedonia is financed based on a formula which mainly takes into consideration the number of students per municipality. Approximately, 70 to 90% of the overall amount of the block dotation and/or the budget the municipalities receive 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 teachers 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.

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

---

#### **4.1. Expert Group**

Within this reporting period, TPCD project established a number of working groups to implement the planned activities. Thus, the working groups for: 1) revising the Guideline for Individual Assessment of Teachers and Student Support Services Staff as part of the Integral Evaluation, 2) developing Professional Competencies for School Directors, 3) supporting the piloting of TPCD solutions in the selected schools, 4) developing professional competencies and standards for school librarians, 5) developing core professional competencies for student support services staff responsible for practical lessons in VET schools, 6) Commission for assessment of teacher e-portfolio and 7) Commission for assessment of student support staff e-portfolios, worked on implementing the activities in accordance with the Annual Work Plan.

#### **4.2. Develop Professional Competencies for School Directors**

Professional Competencies for School Directors were developed by the members of the expert group. The document is organized in the following areas: 1) Leadership; 2) Human Resource Management; 3) School Pedagogical Management; 4) Financial Management and 5) School Legal and Administrative Operation. In the process of developing the document, the expert group for each listed statement of knowledge provided corresponding skills and examples of activities. It is worth noting that Professional Competencies for School Directors contain a list of possible documents to be used as evidence of achievement of a certain

competence at the end of each area, which is a new approach and specific only for this professional document.

The document was developed in a participatory manner by organizing focus group discussion and a public online debate to which all schools were invited to comment and give contribution. After reviewing and incorporating the suggestions for improvement into the Professional Competencies for School Directors, the document was finalized and approved by the National Examination Centre (NEC).

#### **4.3. Develop procedures, tools and instruments for teacher career advancement**

Upon completing the process of professional development, the pilot schools commenced testing the process of career advancement. Based on the suggestion of project USAID AOR, the number of schools to pilot the career advancement was extended with additional secondary schools in Strumica (three), Prilep (two) and Gostivar (two), and primary schools in Skopje (two). The working group developed a Guideline for piloting the procedures, tools and instruments for career advancement with instructions for schools, BDE and VET Centre Advisors.

Following the informative meetings, 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.

Following, the working group for developing the process and instruments for career advancement of teachers 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.

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 Centre and Teacher Union. The members of the Commission tested the process of assessing the portfolios, including the reliability of the instruments. 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. 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 Commission routine in conducting the assessment and the budget implications related to this process; and modification of the appeal process.

#### **4.4. Develop procedures, tools and instruments for student support services career advancement**

During the second half of 2015, the project working groups developed procedures and instruments for career advancement of student support services staff in schools. Over 120 student support services staff were invited to pilot the process. As a result, 15 psychologists, 13 pedagogues and 3 special educators volunteered to pilot the career advancement process. The project team organized an informative meeting with the student support services and informed them about project achievements and activities. In addition, the instruments, procedures and open issues related to career advancement of student support services in schools were presented.

The student support services staff who volunteered to pilot the system for career advancement worked on preparation of their portfolio in the period between October and

December 2015. Furthermore, the project set up a system for sharing information and responded via email to all the issues arising from the piloting process. On December 31, 2015 the student support services staff submitted their pilot portfolios, which the Commission for Assessment of student support services e-portfolios will review during the upcoming period.

#### **4.5. Piloting the Guideline for the Professional Development of Education Staff**

In January 2015, TPCD project commenced the process of piloting the professional development in schools. Thus, the BDE and VET Centre Advisors, after participating in the instructive meeting organized by MCEC, held initial meetings with the pilot schools to introduce them to the Guideline for Professional Development of Education Staff. The management and education staff in schools were informed about their roles and responsibilities, instruments and process, and the expected outcome and feedback. The process of piloting the Guideline for Professional Development, and the instruments and procedures were finalized during the second half of March 2015. Furthermore, 14 focus group discussions were held in all schools and reports from the group discussions were produced. In addition, 178 participants completed the e-questionnaire and gave their feedback and suggestions for upgrading the system.

On May 27, 2015 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. In addition, upon developing the competencies for school librarians, the instrument for self-evaluation was added to the Guideline. During the upcoming period, the working group will need to develop an instrument for self-evaluation of student support services staff involved in practical lessons in VET Schools that will be incorporated into the Guideline.

#### **4.6. Improvement of guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school integral evaluation**

Bearing in mind that the individual assessment marks are one of criteria for career advancement, the project agreed to establish a working group and contribute towards updating the Guideline for individual assessment of education staff as part of the school Integral Evaluation. This enabled the project to harmonize the Guideline with other professional documents developed by the project.

Upon developing the draft Guideline for individual assessment of teachers, the project team and SEI inspectors tested it during the Integral Evaluation conducted in the secondary technical school Kole Nehnetin in Stip. The document was also tested in number of other schools throughout the country and based on the findings, the final draft was developed. In the process of finalizing the document the project organized a focus group discussion with practitioners from primary and secondary schools in the country and sent the document to all SEI inspectors to gather their opinion. Based on the feedback from the focus group and their colleagues, the document was completed.

During the upcoming period, TPCD project in cooperation with the Interethnic Integration in Education Project (IIEP) will support the trainings to be conducted for all SEI Inspectors.

#### **4.7. Professional Competencies for School Librarians**

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, developed the professional competencies for school librarians. As per the already established methodology of work, the project organized a round table discussion during which the opinion of other school librarians was taken into consideration. The professional competencies and standards for librarians are an integral part of the competencies and standards for student support services.

#### **4.8. Professional Competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons in VET Schools**

According to the Law on secondary education, the student support services staff involved in organizing practical lessons in VET School are part of the student support services team involved in the education process. Based on the need for professional development of all categories of education staff in schools, the project developed professional competencies for this category of student support services staff as well. Upon developing the draft competencies, the project organized a round table discussion to finalize the document. Based on the feedback from the focus group discussion the competencies for student support services staff involved in implementing practical lessons were finalized.

#### **4.9. Feasibility study for designing a platform for on-line courses (cancelled)**

The project, in close cooperation with BDE developed a plan of activities to be implemented during the one-year no-cost extension period. Among other activities, the BDE requested support from the project in establishing a platform for online courses for professional development of teachers. BDE considered that by establishing a platform, it will be able to meet the requirements stipulated in the Law for Teachers, i.e. to ensure 50 hours of continuing professional development for all teachers over a period of three years. TPCD project agreed to support BDE by funding a feasibility study and thus, enable them to make sound decisions on the type of the platform that is most suitable to establish. However, due to the requirements stipulated in the Law, MoES changed their priorities and established an expert group that started working on the model/platform for online teacher trainings immediately. Thus, the feasibility study was deemed unnecessary, and it was cancelled.

#### **4.10. Designing and printing the professional materials and guidelines for professional and career development of education staff in schools.**

During the last quarter of 2015, the project team organized a tender for designing the materials and guidelines for professional and career development of education staff in schools. A public opening of bids was organized and based on the lowest offered price, a company was selected.