

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE NEW CONTEXT OF TEACHER PROFESIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVA

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Abstract

In recent years, due to the ongoing educational reforms, teacher Professional Development in Kosovo is being restructured intensively and aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Education reforms in Kosovo, when speaking of the Teacher Professional Development is presented in two forms: as pre-service teacher education which means professional and practical preparation of teachers, and the in-service teacher training for teachers that work. Professional development is a broad term that refers to a variety of education, training and support opportunities for teachers.

(http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/12/child_trends-2007_06_15_rb_prodevel.pdf, 2015)

In this context, some of the opportunities for teacher professional development are:

- Various courses of education;
- Training of new staff pre-service;
- Training of current staff in service through various programs;
- Local and international conferences etc.

Based on the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP), one of education priorities in Kosovo is to develop in-service teacher training through the organization of training with the aim of developing competencies for the implementation of the New Kosovo Curriculum 2011.

(<http://masht.rks.gov.net/uploads/2015/05/psak-2011-2016.pdf> , 2015)

Currently, in – service teacher professional development is characterized with transferring the competencies from central to municipal level and even to school level. In addition, the introduction of teacher licensing is a challenge for all teachers in Kosovo.

The paper examines the overall goal of Teacher Professional Development in general, describing the characteristics of pre-service teacher professional development, obligations of relevant institutions for the preparation of new teachers, as well as in-service teacher professional development, the responsibilities of relevant institutions dealing with the organization of teacher training who aim their professional development. The significance of the paper lies in the introduction of new developments regarding Teacher Professional Development in Kosovo and providing opportunities for other researchers to understand the current professional developments of teachers in Kosovo.

Key words: *Professional development, training, competencies, pre-service, in-service, teacher.*

Introduction

Kosova Teacher Professional Development has traditionally been oriented towards workshops, seminars and conferences whereby the selected teachers gathered at the central level in order to participate in a particular event. But so far, this approach has proved not to be effective. According to the OECD, the most effective forms of Teacher Professional Development are those that focus on clearly articulated priorities and that provide school-based continuous support for teachers.

(GIZ, Learning together, Teacher Professional Development Framework for teachers in Kosovo. Module 1A, 2009)

Teacher professional development means the preservation, enhancement and expansion of knowledge and skills in a consistent manner.

According to Michael Fulani (1991), teacher professional development includes formal and informal experiences throughout a career starting from in-service until retirement.

(http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pdf_prof.htm , 2015)

Therefore, professional development is a broad term that refers to a variety of education, training and support opportunities for teachers.

Some of the professional development opportunities are:

- Various education courses;
- Pre-service training of new staff;
- Training of current staff through various programs;
- Local and international conferences;
- Mentoring programmes;
- Online courses, etc.

(http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/12/child_trends-2007_06_15_rb_prodevel.pdf, 2015)

In order to follow the trends of the European educational systems, the rapid changes in education of Kosovo represent a challenge for all teachers since they require their continuous commitment.

1. The objective of the Teacher Professional Development in Kosovo

The overall objective of in-service teacher professional development in schools of Kosovo is to develop capacities for an effective teaching using new student-centred approaches in accordance with the New Kosovo Curriculum.

Teacher professional development in Kosovo aims:

- To enhance the subject and pedagogical knowledge bases of teaching based on the content of the Curriculum and based on teaching approaches;
- To help teachers in developing skills and collaborative approach to their work at the school level;
- To introduce the idea of the reflection practice through which teachers study their practice in order to improve it;
- To promote teachers by acknowledging their efforts for advancement.

(GIZ, Learning together, Teacher Professional Development Framework for teachers in Kosovo. Module 1A, 2009)

In order to keep up with constant changes in education, teachers must acquire, preserve and enhance the skills, attitudes and new knowledge in a continuous manner.

2. Pre-service Teacher Professional Development in Kosovo

The obligations for pre-service teacher professional development are addressed to the relevant institutions which are obliged to prepare and train the individuals for the teaching profession in different areas. Currently, pre-service teacher preparation at the University of Pristina (UP) is characterized by:

- Fragmented structures (6 faculties of UP offer programmes for teacher education);
- Lack of standardization of teacher education programmes (different faculties apply different standards and "KOSOVA EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2011 - 2016" contain little or no credited work and practical work to be fulfilled by all students);
- Different quality levels of academic and pedagogical education between different educational programmes.

Pre-service teacher professional development according to (Administrative Instruction 16/2005 which defines the professional and practical education of prospective teachers) means the delivery of a four-year programme, with 22 weeks of compulsory practical work for all students and a proportional division between academic and professional courses.

Teachers that have non-education degrees should receive an appropriate pedagogical education as soon as they start the teaching profession and are associated with the licensing system. The necessary pedagogical education training will be a decisive criteria and prerequisite for new teachers entering the teaching profession.

In addition, teachers who have had no pedagogical education during their regular studies will need to go to in-service programmes of pedagogical training. In this context, there will be a course based on the specific needs within the framework for professional development of teachers and teacher licensing process.

(http://www.masht.gov.net/advCms/documents/PSAK_2011-2016.pdf,2015)

The aforementioned represent the pre-service teacher professional development or the professional development of new teachers.

3. In service teacher professional development in Kosovo

Based on the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan, in recent years, particularly with the implementation of the new Curriculum Framework of Kosovo of 2011, the municipality, respectively the Municipal Education Directorate (MED) has the main role for the in-service teacher professional development. According to Article 5 of the Law on Education in Municipalities of Kosovo, the municipality is responsible for the training of teachers and other professional staff in accordance with guidelines, principles and standards promulgated by the MEST.

(<http://masht.rks.gov.net/uploads/2015/06/9ligji-i-arsimit-ne-komuna2008-03-1068-al-arse-kom.pdf>,2015)

In this regard, each school is required to prepare an annual report about the needs of the school and continuous professional development of teachers. An important role in teacher professional development has the Faculty of Education whereby a group of experts, in cooperation with other experts of GIZ, have provided pedagogical support in designing modules for teacher professional development in accordance with professional standards of teachers.

The catalogue for in-service teacher training includes five modules whose objective is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills in order to be more effective and creative in their teaching.

- Module 1A: Introduction to the in-service teacher training (ISTT) in Kosovo;
- Module 1B: Introduction to continuous professional development (CPD). These two parts show the need for in-service teacher professional development and also how continuous professional development of teachers can be an instrument for improvement.
- Module-Mentoring: This module provides opportunities for teachers to develop critical thinking by showing ways how mentoring helps in-service teacher training. Mentoring means that more experienced teachers take responsibility for the professional development of teachers with less experience.
- Module-Teaching and learning: This module offers teachers the opportunity to have an overview of teaching and learning and to examine the opportunities for incorporation of new teaching methods and approaches in the classroom.
- Module- Introduction in the management of the new Kosovo Curriculum: This module offers teachers the opportunity of complying with the principles of the new Curriculum Framework of Kosovo.
- Module- Assessment: This module offers teachers the opportunity to improve teaching and learning by using different assessment approaches.

4. In-service teacher training in Kosovo

The in-service teacher training system has a school-based approach, whereby the municipalities and schools cooperate and organize activities for professional development. Various researches conducted in the world regarding the effective professional development of teachers have indicated the following characteristics:

- Teacher professional development is done in school premises (school-based);
- Teachers support each other;
- Emphasis is in teaching;
- Teachers play an active role by defining the goals and activities;
- The training is concrete and continuous.

(GIZ, Learning together, Teacher Professional Development Framework for teachers in Kosovo. Module 1A, 2009)

Such a model of in-service teacher training is designed currently in the Kosovo education system. The reflection done by teachers in their work has an important role in their professional development because it gives them the opportunity to analyse their experiences, make necessary changes, improvements, etc.

The role of reflection in professional development is presented in the following six-step model:

- Reflection of professional practice;
- Analysis and identifying of development needs;
- Designing a professional development plan;
- Applying activities for professional development;
- Completing the document on professional development;
- Reflection on the impacts of professional practices.

Learning from experience: Learning by reflecting on experience is essential to the improvement of teaching, which has an impact on professional development as well.

Working together: It is one of the methods that influence the professional development of teachers. Research show that activities for teacher development are more effective when carried out in an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement. This is an important

characteristic of school based in-service teacher training activities (ISTT) and professional development (CPD).

(GIZ, Learning together, Teacher Professional Development Framework for teachers in Kosovo. Module 1A, 2009)

Through cooperation, teachers can share teaching experiences, ideas and knowledge, and this can result with an impact to one another to apply good teaching practices.

5. Responsibilities of institutions for in-service teacher professional development

The responsibility for teacher professional development in Kosovo, for providing access, for a continuous follow up and monitoring of teacher professional development, in addition to the individual interests and responsibilities, lies in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), municipalities, namely the Municipal Education Directorates (MEDs) and schools.

The role and the responsibility of these institutions are regulated by the Administrative Instruction.

According to Article 6 of the Administrative Instruction, some of the responsibilities of MEST for teacher professional development are:

- Determine the standards for the quality of teacher professional development programmes;
- Accredit the programmes for teacher professional development either by central or school providers;
- Determine the purpose of the orientation of teacher professional development at the country level;
- Ensure the accountability mechanism for municipalities related to the provision of professional development;
- Monitor the implementation of teacher professional development.

According to Article 7 of the Administrative Instruction, some of the responsibilities of the Municipal Directorate of Education for teacher professional development are:

- Create opportunities for schools to assess the needs of teachers;
- Support groups at school level to accomplish teacher professional development activities for teachers;
- Monitor and evaluate the programmes on teacher professional development;
- Report annually to the MEST about the results of teacher professional development.

Under Article 8 of the Administrative Instruction, some responsibilities of schools regarding teacher professional development are:

- Do an annual assessment of school needs for professional development;
- Support groups of various schools for teacher professional development;
- Provide regular activities for teacher professional development through staff meetings and professional development sessions;
- Prepare the annual report to the Municipal Education Directorate, in terms of activities for teacher professional development at the school level for one school year;
- Report annually to the MEST about the results of teacher professional development.

According to Article 8 of Administrative Instruction, some responsibilities that schools have regarding the teacher professional development are:

- Do the annual evaluation of the needs of schools for professional development;
- Support various school groups for teacher professional development;
- Provide regular activities for teacher professional development through staff meetings and professional development sessions;
- Prepare the annual report for the Municipal Education Directorate, about the activities for school-based teacher professional development within a school year.

Based on Article 9 of the Administrative Instruction, the obligation to ensure access to professional development of teachers lies in the Municipal Education Directorates.

(<http://masht.rks.gov.net/uploads/2015/05/16-2013-ua-1.pdf>, 2015)

In this regard, MED are obliged to have adequate staff that will manage the professional development of teachers in general, in order to be able to make qualitative performance assessment of teachers, as one of the main criteria for getting the license and for their advancement. MED must manage the information regarding the teacher training in order to:

- Track the teachers' progress in meeting the criteria for licensing;
- Use the information for developing policies related to decisions on teacher training;
- Understanding of the individual teacher profiles and identifying priority needs for their professional development.

In this regard, the contribution will come from the in-service teacher training unit (ISTT) based in the Faculty of Education -University of Pristina which will:

- Offer pedagogical support;
- Cooperate with MEST and municipalities to provide ISTT;
- Support a systematic monitoring / evaluation of ISTT;
- Offer technical assistance for the organization of school-based activities.

(GIZ, Introduction in In-service teacher professional development in Kosovo, 2009)

6. General categories of in-service teacher professional development

In-service teacher education providers are subject to regulations on accreditation and/or evaluation in the majority of EU countries (OECD 1998, Zaferiakou 2002, Eurydice 2004, Eurydice 2006). The continuous teacher professional development consists of four categories:

-In-service education, mainly taking place in schools, comprising of the initial induction processes, counselling and mentoring, action research, classroom observation, peer discussions and sharing good practice;

- Professional conferences and meetings and/or networking through professional associations and regional/ local agencies, or specialized educational centres;

-Non-certified and certified external seminars and workshops provided by external agents, such as regional / local agencies, colleges of education, universities, non-governmental organizations or individual experts;

-Further full or part time education at postgraduate level provided by higher education institutions (specialized faculties departments and centres at universities, teachers colleges), offering special modules with certificates as well as accredited programmes leading to diplomas, master / professional masters or to doctorates / professional doctorates.

(http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/Publications/Tuning_Education_Brochure_Albanian.pdf, 2015)

The 21st century has seen the presence of ONLINE professional development. Various online courses in internet can have positive effects on teacher knowledge and instructional practices.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_development, 2015)

Higher education institutions have an important role in meeting the needs for improvement and continuous development of professional competencies of teachers at all levels, although their unique contribution remains in the field of higher education which can provide broad and substantial programs combining theories of education, scientific research and development of practical skills.

7. Types of in-service teacher professional development according to Talis

In-service professional development is defined as activities that develop relevant professional skills. According to TALIS, the types of teacher professional development done during the 18 months period are:

- Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics);
- Education conferences (at which teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems);
- Qualification programme;
- Observation visits to other schools;
- Participation in a network of teachers for the professional development;
- Collaborative research on a topic of professional interest;
- Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching;
- Reading professional literature;
- Engaging in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching.

(<http://www.oecd.org/berlin/43541636.pdf>,2015)

All these types of teacher professional development have an effect in the performance of teachers, and even in the increase of student success in learning.

Conclusion

In Kosovo, teacher professional development is defined as the process of improving the skills and competencies necessary for teachers to improve student outcomes.

Some of the competencies with which the new concept of teacher professional development is presented in Kosovo include:

- Decentralized financial management at school level;
- Provision of teacher professional development becomes the responsibility of the municipalities;
- Provision and monitoring of the education quality becomes the responsibility of the municipality, whereby MEST remains responsible for quality assurance in education.

To this end, it can be concluded that to keep up with constant changes in education, teachers must acquire, preserve and enhance the skills, attitudes and new knowledge.

For the successful implementation of professional development in most cases the responsibility for planning and choice of continuing professional education in particular remains up to the individual. We can illustrate this with the statement "The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education" Albert Einstein. Therefore, given the above, we can conclude that the teacher professional development forms the basis of positive changes in the school and the education system in general.

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