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# Professional Development of Teacher Educators in Europe and Myanmar

**Abstract:** The learning opportunities for teacher educators should respond to individual professional needs, but also prepare educators for new developments in (teacher) learning, (teacher) education and the teaching profession (Smith, 2003). To communicate the needs of society, the professional development and the lifelong learning of teacher educators are essential. This article aims to discuss the different approaches to the professional development of teacher educators, an overview of the European policies and country-specific studies, and observe and analyse professional development (PD) activities for teacher educators that create strategies to ensure quality education in Myanmar. It is found that compared to some European countries, it should provide opportunities for international professional networks and research projects to promote positive research culture. Moreover, sufficient financial support for developing a practical knowledge base for Myanmar teacher educators is needed. Finally, we present some suggestions for effective professional development pathways for teacher educators in Myanmar.

**Key words:** professional development, teacher educators, higher education.

## Introduction

Scholars in the field of education suggest that professional development (PD) is a process that may have a positive impact on student learning. Timperley, et al. (2007) argue that professional development may have a moderate to large impact on student achievement. For Evans (2014), “professional development is a process whereby people’s professionalism may be considered to be enhanced, with a degree of performance that exceeds transitoriness” (p. 188).

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It is obvious that at the heart of sustainable development of education systems is teachers' professional development (Hargreaves et al., 2010) and the role of PD is increasing in training and development. Moreover, there is significant research showing the positive effects of professional development on teacher effectiveness. In addition, experts continue to find that teacher professional development activities have the potential to impact teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs. According to Smith and Gillespie (2007), professional development activities enable teachers to get specific ideas for their teaching and provide them with the opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues.

Significantly, the purposes of PD may vary along a continuum from the transmission of knowledge and skills to transformative practices where teachers are encouraged to work collaboratively in a constructivist manner to change their practices to better meet the needs of their students, in their context (Kennedy, 2014). Professional development programmes that have shown the greatest effects on student learning tend to focus on pedagogical content knowledge in connection with teachers' diagnostic assessment skills. According to Fleming & Kleinhenz (2007), PD needs to be conducted regularly so that teachers can share their experiences and difficulties in teaching.

It is often assumed that graduate students will develop as teacher educators simply by participating in a doctoral program. However, research has shown that "doctoral students find the shift from teaching K-12 to preparing teachers to be a difficult transition" (Allen et al., 2016, p. 1). "There is growing recognition that teacher educators can only continue to act as professionals if they are engaged in further professional development throughout their entire careers" (Van Der Klink et al., 2017, p. 163). Smith (2003) suggests three main reasons for the professional development of teacher educators: to improve the profession, and teacher education; to maintain interest in the profession, to grow personally and professionally; to advance within the profession, and promotion.

As teacher educators are key players in supporting teachers in raising student attainment, their academic and professional development is of vital importance in education sectors. To support the professional learning of teacher educators, setting formal requirements and regulations about continuing development, stimulating self-directed activities, creating incentives or arranging favourable conditions for their learning are essential. In this regard, it is essential to develop a coherent and sustainable system of professional learning for teacher educators with a variety of development opportunities (subject-oriented, practice-oriented, research-oriented). Thus, it becomes important to reconfigure teacher educators'

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<sup>3</sup> For a literature review on this transition see Williams et al. (2012).

PD practices aiming for enhancing the quality and promoting the ‘new knowledge production’ within the international practices.

Professional learning activities for teacher educators can vary depending on the country context, the preferences, learning styles and career prospects of teacher educators. The following areas are common in any context:

- new developments in society and education with significant impact on teachers and teacher educators—for instance, ICT, second language learning, diversity and inclusion, learning to learn competencies;
- specific competencies in innovation and change management, since teacher educators can be key actors in educational reform;
- courses for school-based teacher educators or mentors concerning the methodology, pedagogy and didactics of teacher education;
- programmes engaging teacher educators in practice-based research in both school and university settings—school-based teacher educators, if inexperienced in doing research, may find this useful in helping them meet the expectations of the newly joined higher education community. (EC, 2013, p. 23).

This study aims to discuss the different approaches to the professional development of teacher educators, give an overview of the European policies and present the results of some European country-specific studies, and observe and analyse PD activities for teacher educators in Myanmar. This study helps those responsible for teacher educators’ development programs either on the policy or institutional level to gain a broader understanding of the issue and some suggestions for future improvement in Myanmar are also included based on the European experiences.

### **Conceptual Approaches to the Professional Development of Teacher Educators**

Several approaches may be considered when identifying frameworks for the PD of teacher educators. Among others, (1) building on what teacher educators actually do, (2) setting professional standards for them, and/or (3) building on their identities may be taken into consideration.

(1) The International Forum for Teacher Education Development established a conceptual model for the PD of teacher educators, building on the assumption that “acting teacher educators have good reasons for doing their job in the way they are doing it”. They call it “a practice-based approach, contrary to a

blueprint approach that would attempt to identify, as well as assess, professionalism via an exhaustive list of standards or competencies” (InFo-TED, 2019, p. 10). The model lists seven possible content domains that ought to be included in teacher educators’ professional development:

- ICT and technological changes,
- social changes,
- diversity,
- communication and relations,
- boundaries,
- multiple identities of teacher educators,
- visions teacher educators have about the nature and future of ‘good’ education.

This approach stresses the importance of thinking of teacher educators’ professional development “as situated in a temporal context that recognizes that teacher educators enter the profession at different moments in their careers, with different experiences and different learning needs” (InFo-TED, 2019, p. 11).

(2) Another approach for a framework for the professional development of teacher educators may be defining standards that teacher educators have to meet and build their PD on them. The Association of Teacher Educators has defined the following standards:

- Standard 1. Teaching: Model teaching that demonstrates content and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions reflecting research, proficiency with technology and assessment, and accepted best practices in teacher education.
- Standard 2. Cultural Competence: Apply cultural competence and promote social justice in teacher education.
- Standard 3. Scholarship: Engage in inquiry and contribute to scholarship that expands the knowledge base related to teacher education.
- Standard 4. Professional Development: Inquire systematically into, reflect on, and improve their practice and demonstrate commitment to continuous professional development.
- Standard 5. Program Development: Provide leadership in developing, implementing, and evaluating teacher education programmes that are rigorous, relevant, and grounded in theory, research, and best practice.
- Standard 6. Collaboration: Collaborate regularly and in significant ways with relevant stakeholders to improve teaching, research, and student learning.

- Standard 7. Public Advocacy: Serve as informed, constructive advocates for high-quality education for all students.
- Standard 8. Teacher Education Profession: Contribute to improving the teacher education profession.
- Standard 9. Vision: Contribute to creating visions for teaching, learning, and teacher education that take into account such issues as technology, systemic thinking, and world views (ATE, 2007).

There are national initiatives on developing such standards. The British Council, for example, developed a framework explicitly for the PD of teacher educators. It defines:

- seven enabling skills: communicating effectively, teamwork skills, thinking critically, building relationships, effective organisational skills, increasing motivation, leadership/supervisory skills;
- ten professional practices: knowing the subject, understanding the teaching context, understanding how teachers learn, planning, managing and moderating teacher learning, managing and developing learning resources for teachers, demonstrating effective teaching behaviour, supporting and mentoring teachers, monitoring teacher potential and performance, researching and contributing to the profession, taking responsibility for their professional development;
- five self-awareness features: openness, conscientiousness, interactivity, empathy, and resilience (British Council, n.d.).

In the Netherlands, standards were developed and safeguarded by the professional association for teacher educators (for details see Koster et al., 2008).

In Flanders, the ‘Flemish Teacher Educator Development Profile’ has been developed describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes teacher educators need to be able to function effectively. Rather than prescribing the knowledge base needed by teacher educators, it aims to support the development of the relevant, contextualised professional expertise by the teacher educators (Kelchtermans et al., 2017).

A comparison of teacher educator standards from the Netherlands, Australia, Israel and the US, found ‘a great overlap’ among ‘the main requirements’ including model teaching, research and scholarship, leadership in the profession, and ongoing professional development (Smith, 2005, as cited in Goodvin, Kosnik 2013). Although such professional standards are often criticized, “it is important to note that many who criticize the development of standards do in fact sup-

port the value of a professional standard for professional development” (Zuzovsky & Libman, 2003, as cited in Koster et al., 2008, p. 570).

(3) A third approach is to define the different roles or identities of teacher educators since these can be an integral part of efforts to improve competencies relevant to existing or future responsibilities (Phuong et al., 2017). Williams, Ritter, and Bullock (2012, as cited in Allen et al., 2016) found that the path to becoming a teacher educator is influenced by the individual’s prior identities, ability to navigate through complex institutional contexts, and ability to construct a new professional identity as a developing teacher educator.

Swennen et al. (2010) found four sub-identities that are available for teacher educators:

- schoolteacher,
- teacher in higher education,
- teacher of teachers (second-order teacher)
- researcher.

Murray and Shagrir (2008) define the following roles:

- teaching and supervising student teachers,
- designing curriculum,
- working with school-based mentors,
- contributing to scholarship and research.

Denderink et al. (2015) defined six roles for teacher educators:

- Teacher of teachers
- Researcher
- Coach
- Curriculum Developer
- Gatekeeper
- Broker.

There seems to be a broad understanding that the development of these roles and identities depends on the various national and institutional contexts and the development of teacher educators over time.

Comparing the different concepts it may be concluded that although they build on different approaches, there are some common elements in them. Vision, communication and relation-building, collaboration, model teaching, inquiry and research are recurring items of the different models.

*Professional development of teacher educators in the European Union:  
an overview*

In 2011, the results of a European-level research (including EU policy document analysis and national surveys) of policies on teacher educators in Europe were published, with the following main findings. Concerns regarding teacher educators' professionalism—especially their insufficient academic level—were expressed quite frequently. Yet, the European policy documents pay limited attention to teacher educators, their professionalism and their further development. Teacher educator induction programmes are rare. There are no national policies in this area: support is entirely dependent on local initiatives undertaken by universities or teacher education institutions (Austria, England, Estonia, Flanders, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway). Opportunities for the continuing professional development of teacher educators were mentioned by only nine respondents. Examples are participation in research projects and enrolment in PhD studies (Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). Continuing professional development is sometimes supported by the establishment of national expertise centres (England, Hungary, the Netherlands and Norway). Participation in—mainly international—professional networks seems to be common practice and is seen as a strong impetus for improving professionalism. Again, the main stakeholders in these processes are the local institutions, while in some cases the government or national agencies provide financial support. The issue of research and knowledge development is not addressed in any of the policy documents. In seven Member States (England, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Romania) there are initiatives to develop or further develop a practical knowledge base for teacher educators, mainly by making information available through a database (England), and through books (Hungary) and journals (the Netherlands) published by associations for teacher educators (Snoek et al., 2011).

In 2013, the European Commission issued guidance for supporting teacher educators for better learning outcomes, that focuses on the PD of teacher educators. It states that “making sure that Europe’s six million teachers have the essential competencies they require to be effective in the classroom is one of the keys to raising levels of pupil attainment. Teacher educators are crucial players for maintaining—and improving—the high quality of the teaching workforce” (EC, 2013, p. 4). This report was the first time that the EU had made such a clear declaration about teacher educators (InFo-TED, 2019). Due to several factors, such as being a role model for teachers and the rapidly changing societal challenges, the lifelong learning of teacher educators is essential. But, as the report observes,

teacher educators do not always get the support and challenge they need in terms of their professional development.

The document differentiates three stages of teacher educators' career—initial phase, induction, and continuous PD—emphasizing the importance of professional development in each. Unfortunately, initial courses of preparation to become a teacher educator are not available in any EU country. As far as the induction phase is concerned, “in most member states, there are no national policies in this field, and induction for teacher educators is only addressed in some small-scale initiatives at the institutional level” (Snoek et al., 2011, as cited in EC, 2013, p. 23). Since there is no initial training for teacher educators and only limited induction, opportunities for teacher educators to develop their professional qualities throughout their careers are extremely important. It can be implemented in different ways. As good practices, the guide mentions:

- Austria, where the University Colleges of Education offer training courses for teacher educators in supporting school-based innovation processes;
- Hungary, where the Association of Teacher Educators (Tanárképzők Szövetsége) created a Teacher Educator Academy, which offers several one-day or half-day sessions covering a wide range of topics;
- Finland, where teacher educators develop knowledge and competence through constant engagement in research projects;
- Belgium (Flanders), where professional networks of teacher educators are promoted at a regional level;
- Estonia, where a project has been set up with a focus on placement exchanges between schools and teacher education institutions;
- The Association of Teacher Educators in the Netherlands has developed an extensive online knowledge base for teacher educators (EC, 2013).

National governments may have a crucial role in facilitating the PD of teacher educators. Examples from European countries are the following:

- In Hungary, the National Association for Teacher Educators has developed formal education programmes for school-based teacher educators, while the government has issued a decree which defines such programmes as compulsory qualifications for all school-based teacher educators;
- The Dutch Ministry of Education has created several centres of expertise for teacher education (EC, 2013).

In 2014 the Association of Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) carried out a research with participants from ten countries, including six EU member states. The research question addressed in the study was: ‘Do experienced



teacher educators from different countries differ in their concerns, professional development activities and developmental goals?’ The most important findings were the following: All participants were attending learning activities such as training courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and courses. In addition to these organized learning activities, learning activities embedded in the daily work, such as attending meetings, discussions and consulting colleagues, mentoring or coaching new colleagues appeared as a professional development activity. Research appeared to contribute significantly to professional development. Research was often perceived by the participants as a way to keep in touch with the latest developments and to contribute actively to enlarging the body of knowledge. Encouragement to enrol in professional development activities was often lacking, the vast majority stated that the driver for PD was their own motivation and needs (Van der Klink et al., 2017). To bridge the gap between research and practice in teacher education, ATEE also organises conferences, issues the European Journal of Teacher Education and sets up research and development communities in the area of professional development of teachers and teacher educators (Symeonidis, 2018).

Despite the EC guide of 2013, the White Paper of the International Forum for Teacher Education Development (InFo-TED) published in 2019 concludes that since the publication of the abovementioned guide:

The often small-scale developments that have taken place in teacher educators’ professional development have, in the main, been initiated by professional groups, the research community and individual organizations or institutions. They have not been sufficiently addressed by policymakers within national governments or by European Union policymakers. The professional development of teacher educators is still neglected. Little pan-European progress has been made on this issue since the European Commission 2013 report. (InFo-TED, 2019, pp. 4–6)

Thus, we may conclude that the different European professional organizations realize the importance of the PD of teacher educators, but initiatives have been made mainly by local education institutions and individual professional organizations. Induction and initial courses of preparation to become a teacher educator are rare, and the issue is not frequently addressed in policy documents.

*Country-specific studies on teacher educators' professional development*

Studies about teacher educators' professional development have gained increasing attention and various related studies have been conducted. Below, their most important findings are summarized.

- The Netherlands: Teacher educators want to develop their coaching and teaching as well as their knowledge of the theoretical foundation of their work, whereas the improvement of pedagogical content knowledge, skills in curriculum development, assessment, and organizational matters is less emphasised as an improvement aim (Dengerink et al., 2015 as cited in Byman et al., 2010). Professional development is mostly connected to collaboration with peers, a broadened theoretical knowledge base, the capability to connect theory with practice, and a deepening awareness of professional identity and their role as a teacher educator (Boei et al., 2015 as cited in Byman et al., 2010).
- England: Teacher educators met challenges in two main areas: becoming research active and developing a pedagogy for higher education. New teacher educators need to develop pedagogical knowledge and understanding of how research and teaching might be interrelated (Murray and Male, 2005, as cited in Byman et al., 2010). Regarding professional development programmes for new teacher educators, the Higher Education Academy in England supported the development of the 'Becoming a Teacher Educator: guidelines for induction' (Boyd, Harris, and Murray, 2011, as cited in Kelchtermans et al., 2017).
- England, Ireland, Scotland: Most teacher educators in all locations are only moderately satisfied with their experiences of professional learning. However, many activities are considered highly valuable, including those associated with research, personal reading, informal learning conversations with colleagues and opportunities to develop pedagogy. Of less value are those activities associated with online learning, observations by colleagues, peer coaching and training activities undertaken within the employer institution (Czerniawski et al., 2018).
- Finland: Teacher education in Finland differs from many other countries since it is only placed in research-intensive universities. Thus, research plays a significant role in the Finnish teacher educators' conceptions. Teacher educators also view research as a means to develop professionally. Their professional development or learning consisted mostly of consulting colleagues, reading scientific or professional literature and par-

ticipating in seminars or conferences. Formal professional development, such as professional development courses, did not play a significant role for these teacher educators, through studying either by reading research or participating in free-time education seemed to be more important. There are no official initiatives for teacher educators' professional development in Finland, as is the case in some other countries (USA, Israel, Norway) (Maaranen et al., 2018).

- Belgium, Flemish community: There is a lack of attention to teacher educators' professional development in the Flemish teacher education system and a structural need for participation in professional development activities that are linked to teacher educators' practices, organised as long-term sustainable professional development trajectories and formally recognised (Tack et al., 2017).
- Norway: The government has invested in several support systems, not a required formal education for teacher educators, but support related to the doctoral education of teacher educators. The National Research School in Teacher Education (NAFOL) was established in 2010 and offers specialised education and training in the thematic fields of pre-school, school and teacher education.<sup>4</sup> Another positive governmental initiative is the provision to school-based teacher educators of courses that provide theoretical and practical knowledge about mentoring and support for practice-oriented research activities (Cochran et al., 2019).
- Cyprus, Greek community: Teacher educators are involved not only in formal, but also informal learning, both through and without interaction. Learning through interaction involves participation in seminars as well as informal conversations with colleagues, but not structured forms of peer learning. Learning without interaction resembles self-study and reflection, but not intentional experimentation with practices. Teacher educators' professional development appears as an individual rather than an institutional responsibility. Systemic opportunities for peer learning remain scarce (Karagiorgia & Nicolaidou, 2013).

Country-specific surveys show that informal and nonformal learning play a more important role in teacher educators' development than formal programmes in most countries. Self-study, reading and informal interaction with colleagues are frequently mentioned by teacher educators as ways of competence building.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://nafol.net/en/nafol/>

## Professional Development of Teacher Educators in Myanmar

### *Who are teacher educators in Myanmar?*

Teacher educators are not only responsible for the initial education of new teachers, they teach teachers how to teach, and facilitate and encourage their learning. They contribute to the PD of teachers, explicitly, via lectures, seminars and tutorials. Importantly, it is teacher educators who teach (student) teachers how to link theory with practice and how to reflect on and evaluate their own practice to enhance their learning. They look after the well-being of student teachers and offer guidance and counselling to serve teachers on professional issues. They play a key role in introducing innovation into schools. And they undertake the key research that develops our understanding of teaching and learning.

In Myanmar, pre-service teacher education is the responsibility of two Universities of Education for upper secondary teachers and of 25 Education Colleges (EC) for primary and middle school teachers. In addition, the University for the Development of the National Races of the Union, operating under the Ministry of Border Affairs, provides pre-service teacher education for both primary and secondary levels specifically to ethnic minorities.

25 education colleges are serving a wide range of aspiring teachers primarily through pre-service teacher education courses.

The ECs offer three types of certificate and diploma awarding courses, namely:

- *Diploma in Teacher Education*: A two-year full-time residential course for teaching at the primary and middle school levels for secondary school graduates.
- *Pre-service Primary Teacher Training*: A course for degree holders consisting of four months of residential lessons in ECs and a two-month practicum in schools. The residential lessons are conducted in two slots of two months each, one before and one after the practicum.
- *Primary Teacher Education Correspondence Course*: A year distance education course with one-month EC-based lessons for degree holders. The number of in-service teachers taking this course reached several thousand per year in recent years due to the recruitment of a large number of 'daily wage teachers' (degree holders without credentials in teaching at the time of recruitment).

*Current provision on PD*

Myanmar is currently undergoing education reforms, especially in the teacher education sector to vastly and rapidly improve the quality of basic education. Education Colleges are also undergoing a massive transformation with a major focus on getting the new education degree programme up and running. The PD of teacher educators plays a key role in the transformation process along with significant changes in teaching methodology, developing the competence of teacher educators. That is why Myanmar is designing the national PD framework for teacher educators but is not fully ready.

PD in the ECs is currently supported by two dynamic and complementary projects, STEM and TREE. “Strengthening pre-service Teacher Education in Myanmar” (STEM) project was initiated by UNESCO, in partnership with MoE, in 2014 to strengthen pre-service teacher education in Myanmar. The specific focus of the STEM project is to upgrade teacher education degree courses, one of the National Education Strategic Plan strategies, attempting to improve the quality of pre-service teacher education. The intentions are to develop the new competency-based EC degree course, support its implementation in ECs and build teacher educators’ capacity. With the STEM project, a Curriculum Core Team of EC personnel was established in 2019 to support international authors in developing a competency-based curriculum (including syllabi, manuals, teacher educator guides and student-teacher textbooks). Simultaneously, STEM is working to strengthen teacher educators’ knowledge, capacity and resources (particularly ICT) to successfully implement the new curriculum.

Specifically, the STEM project has five key cross-cutting priorities:

- Continuing professional development and empowerment of teachers and teacher educators,
- Promoting rights of teachers and teacher educators,
- Promoting equity and inclusion,
- Enhancing ICT and media and information literacy in teacher education, and
- Information and knowledge management and sharing.

Ultimately, STEM provides training and technical support for the teacher educators, in preparation for teacher educators to deliver the new curriculum.

Under STEM, teacher educators receive training in ICT and media and information literacy and ICT-pedagogy integration. STEM has also produced a manual that teacher educators can use for independent study of ICT skills.

The manual covers word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and online communication tools. STEM has developed an e-library, which is operational and accessible by all ECs. The e-library contains teaching and learning resources supplementary to the new degree curriculum. In addition, STEM supports short workshops for teacher educators on education for sustainable development and peace, gender equality, sexuality education and inclusive education. STEM also conducts research about teacher education, organises study visits and learning opportunities overseas and strengthens partnerships and networking on teacher education regionally and globally.

Besides the STEM project, the ECs are supported by a newly initiated project called “Towards Results in Education and English” (TREE). The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development launches the TREE project, a component of the five-year Myanmar–UK Partnership for Education programme to improve teacher education in Myanmar. The British Council in partnership with The Open University, Montrose, and Voluntary Service Overseas is taking charge of this project.

TREE has four intended outcomes, namely:

- Increased competence in EC principals and teacher educators in implementing teacher education reforms;
- Improved learning outcomes for student teachers, particularly in English Language Teaching;
- Greater use of evidence to inform teaching practice, and
- A stronger, more effective and more inclusive education system to support teacher education reforms.

The TREE model is based on four integrated and inter-dependent workstreams with two cross-cutting themes. They are continuous Professional Development; English Proficiency and Pedagogy; Systems Strengthening through practicum and partnerships; and inclusive practices and disability. The two cross-cutting themes are educational technology and research and monitoring. At present, 50 TREE trainers are working in the education colleges to support these four workstreams (British Council). A TREE facilitator is deployed to each of the ECs to support English proficiency and pedagogy. Another TREE facilitator provides face-to-face support on inclusion and inclusive practice. The trainers co-plan feasible project activities to ensure effective solutions respond to the specificities and needs of Myanmar’s context and use adaptive programming, flexible to Myanmar’s changing context and opportunities ensuring long-term outcomes of TREE continue beyond the project term.

TREE focuses on building on evidence-based approaches to improve the skills of teachers and outcomes of students and learning lessons that can support ongoing sustainability. Furthermore, the project provides support to improve student outcomes in English, improve linkages between educational institutions and finally, achieve more effective education systems in Myanmar.

Since 2016, The Department of Educational Research, Planning and Training has been undertaking the basic education curriculum reform (revising and updating basic education curriculum emphasizing 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills). Teacher educators from all the ECs have attended training on the new basic education curriculum, and several teacher educators received trainers training. The result is that many TEs have a good understanding of the new basic education curriculum and the pedagogic principles upon which it is based. In addition, the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee conducts one-day training sessions twice a year on quality assurance. Furthermore, teacher educators need to attend the ICT training provided by the ICT teacher educators or in some cases by some local institutions. PD clubs and Lesson Study groups meet regularly, usually weekly or monthly, in some ECs with attendance voluntarily. These both provide opportunities for peer learning and sharing of experiences.

As one of the PD activities, the annual national Teaching Aids Competition and the annual national Action Research Competition are held in ECs. Teacher educators put in a lot of effort in preparation for these competitions as they are developed within each college, in clusters of ECs and nationally. TREE also has a budget for conducting research and organising study tours and regional coordination.

Another important avenue for PD is international study. Teacher educators from the ECs have many opportunities to attend postgraduate courses abroad as well as short courses, workshops and seminars in various countries. However, an analysis of the data from several studies conducted by STEM in the last five years and more recently by TREE, indicates that several areas will need to be systematically addressed to ensure that the capacity of teacher educators continues to be developed over the coming years.

With regard to PD activities of teacher educators, the ECs seems to depend mainly on external inputs, either through projects, such as STEM or TREE, or by different providers who view TEs as important avenues for the dissemination of information on their priority issues. It is noteworthy that some of the ECs are organising and conducting PD sessions on their own without external

prompting or support. This is truly positive and lays very good foundation for all teacher educators' professional development in the future.

*Plans for upgrading professional skills of teacher educators*

A high priority has been placed on two technical areas, namely English and ICT for developing teacher educators' skills. These must be given top priority, and PD interventions will need to be implemented over several years, progressively raising skill levels. Of equal importance are the professional areas directly related to the contents of programmes. These are the areas most closely related to the teaching and learning that takes place in the ECs. A solid foundation is being laid through the training on the new basic education curriculum and the new EC degree curriculum, and there are capable resource people within the ECs, particularly the Master Trainers for the basic education curriculum training and the members of the degree curriculum (the Core Curriculum Team), who have a thorough understanding of the reflective teaching methods that are key for successful implementation of the new curricula in schools and ECs. The teacher educator's PD must prepare them to be supportive of the new basic education curriculum, the teacher competency standards framework the new EC degree curriculum, the new assessment policy and the PD of basic education teachers. For most of these, the general pedagogical skills follow the same principles, so some general short courses may be sufficient for teacher educators already working in ECs along with introductory short courses for new teacher educators. Since teacher educators are expected to be Myanmar's experts in primary and middle school education, their knowledge and skills must exceed what is generally expected of basic education teachers. Their skills need to be developed in both formative and summative assessment, particularly since one of their additional roles is setting summative exam questions for primary and middle school.

In addition, teacher educators need PD that develops their understanding and practice of andragogy, mentoring and research. STEM and TREE have plans for providing support in ICT and English respectively, but it should be ensured that the PD initiatives are sustainable after the projects are completed. Moreover, as upgrading teacher educators' professional skills as well as their educational qualifications play a key role in the transformation process, it is essential to develop the National PD Framework for teacher educators including how PD will be managed and supported; and how PD will be linked to promotions and career development for TEs.



## Discussion

As innovation in teacher education is crucial for success in other education areas, the Ministry of Education in Myanmar is undertaking teacher education reforms under the National Education Strategic Plan through improving the status, quality, management and professional development of teachers. According to many survey results, teachers should be supported by external teacher supervisors and mentors through professional development courses, in-service training, combined with regular follow-up in the classroom. “Teacher professional development is most effective when it is linked to clear, widely owned standards, such as competency frameworks, that enable teachers to work towards clearly defined career development goals” (NESP, 2016, p.140). Noteworthy is the fact that the Myanmar Teacher Competency Standard Framework (TCSF) is designed based on local and global best practices and has been aligned with Myanmar’s context and circumstances. Linking with TCSF, appropriately calibrated PD activities should be organized with a focus on improving quality learning practices.

Given the importance attached to PD, it is not surprising that sources and support for PD are necessary for the growth of teacher professional learning. Compared to some European countries, there is no sufficient financial support for developing a practical knowledge base for Myanmar teacher educators, specifically, a database, books and journals published by associations for teacher educators. But, the e-library for teaching and learning resources supplementary to the new degree curriculum is introduced with the help of STEM.

Most importantly, the PD model of teacher educators introduced by The International Forum for Teacher Education Development (InFo-TED, 2019) indicates that ICT and technical skill is one of the key domains for teacher educators’ professional development. With the STEM project, teacher educators in Myanmar are receiving training in ICT along with ICT-pedagogy integration with a special focus on staff capacity building.

Like in any other country, there is no initial preparation course for a teacher educator in Myanmar. Although Snoek et al. (2011) addressed that there is only limited induction for teacher educators in some European countries, there is no induction for teacher educators in Myanmar. However, a National Centre for Teacher Professional Development will be established in Myanmar soon, with a special initiative on Teacher Professional Development Training and Mentorship Programme (NESP, 2016). Compared to high-performing countries, it is worth suggesting that it should provide opportunities for international professional networks and research projects to promote positive research culture. Channels for sharing across ECs should also be explored.

Many researchers described teacher educators as being committed to lifelong learning and self-improvement, but also a collaboration with colleagues, students, practising teachers or other education-related professionals (Pantic, 2012). In Myanmar, one of the developing countries in Southeast Asia, adopting the concept of lifelong learning should be a major priority for teacher educators to keep abreast of new knowledge and innovation. Furthermore, online learning should become one of the predominant modes for PD inputs, usually combined with other modalities such as self-study and peer sharing and learning. Courses should be developed so that they can be available as needed, e.g. orientation courses for new TEs. They should be reviewed and updated regularly.

The Association of Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) highlights that learning activities embedded in daily work, such as attending meetings, discussions and consulting colleagues, mentoring or coaching new colleagues are key to improving teaching quality. Likewise, reviews of teacher competencies and educational goals (Pożarnik, 2011) suggest that reflective practice, good mentorship, collegial learning and learning communities are effective ways of improving teacher competencies that can support professional development. In this regard, various stakeholders such as policymakers, researchers, educational leaders, teacher educators, and teachers should be aware of the importance of PD of teacher educators on a daily work basis which can support promoting the skills and competencies of teacher educators. Next to this, it should be given top priority to develop monitoring and evaluation systems to track and assess the quantity and quality of PD in the Education colleges. Systems need to be developed which will provide feedback on PD activities so that they can be improved over time.

To sum up, the Myanmar Ministry of Education, through the Department of Higher Education, is trying to provide continuous professional development activities for teacher educators to ensure adequate capacity for implementing the teacher education sector reforms. Based on local and global best practices, it is essential to develop a national continuing professional development framework for management staff and teacher educators in education colleges in Myanmar to provide guidance for all future PD activities for teacher educators and to lay the foundation for a comprehensive PD programme.

## Conclusions

This paper offers some insights into effective professional development pathways for teacher educators in Myanmar that can help in developing the competencies of teacher educators. This paper also highlighted conceptual approaches for the

professional development of teacher educators in various national contexts, an overview of the European policies, and incorporated and analysed the professional development pathways for teacher educators to ensure quality education in Myanmar.

The professional development of teacher educators should not be underestimated since teacher educators are central to producing teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study helps teacher educators and policymakers to develop a broader understanding of the professional development of teacher educators through an overview of the European policies on PD, and country-specific studies on teacher educators' professional development. It also addressed current PD activities in Myanmar and concluded with some suggestions for future improvement. It has been revealed that opportunities for international professional networks and research projects are crucial for teacher educators' development, specifically for promoting positive research culture and supporting innovation, knowledge creation and dissemination. Developing a national continuing professional development framework for teacher educators in Myanmar helps to equip teacher educators with effective professional skills that can highly impact accountability and performativity. Moreover, a collaboration between and among institutions is an important factor, and teacher educators and educational authorities and other social and private sector partners should be involved.

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## Profesionalni razvoj edukatora za nastavnike u Evropi i Mjanmaru

**Apstrakt:** Prilike za učenje namenjene edukatorima za nastavnike treba da zadovolje individualne profesionalne potrebe, ali ujedno i da pripreme edukatore na nove razvoje u učenju (nastavnika), edukaciji (nastavnika) i samoj profesiji nastavnika (Smith, 2003). Profesionalni razvoj i celoživotno učenje edukatora za nastavnike od ključnog su značaja za zadovoljenje društvenih potreba. Ovaj rad ima cilj da razmotri različite pristupe profesionalnom razvoju edukatora za nastavnike, da ponudi pregled evropskih politika i nacionalnih studija i da ispita i analizira aktivnosti profesionalnog razvoja edukatora za nastavnike kojima se osmišljavaju strategije za osiguranje kvalitetnog obrazovanja u Mjanmaru. Utvrdili smo da je u Mjanmaru, u poređenju sa određenim zemljama Evrope, neophodno da se stvori prostor za međunarodne profesionalne mreže i istraživačke projekte s ciljem promovisanja pozitivne kulture istraživanja. Osim toga, neophodna je adekvatna finansijska podrška za razvoj baze praktičnog znanja za edukatore za nastavnike u Mjanmaru. Konačno, predstavili smo i određene predloge za efikasne putanje profesionalnog razvoja za edukatore za nastavnike u Mjanmaru.

**Ključne reči:** profesionalni razvoj, edukatori za nastavnike, visoko obrazovanje.

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