

VET TEACHER TRAINING SYSTEM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

I. BACKGROUND

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is located in Southern Europe and covers an area of 51,129 km². Bosnia as a state was mentioned for the first time in the 10th century. The Bosnian state was ruled by Bosnian bans and kings until 1463. Owing to its geographic location, its exceptional scenery, climatic conditions, cultural-historical heritage, Bosnia and Herzegovina has often been a target of conquest campaigns. In 1943 Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed a federal unit (republic) within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. By the will of the majority of its population, Bosnia and Herzegovina withdrew from the SFRY in 1992, becoming an independent and internationally recognised state; on 22nd May 1992 it became a UN member state.

Demographic changes have always taken place with migrations being particularly pronounced in the past one hundred years. According to the last census (1991), it had 4 377 033 inhabitants with a population density of 85.5/km². Today, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina are dispersed all over the world, so the population density and ethnic, gender, and age structures have been seriously affected.

BiH was, and is, a multiethnic, multi-religious, and multicultural state community.

The Dayton Agreement (1995) stopped the war, but divided the country into entities that resulted in the fragmentation of the political, economic, social, cultural life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In reality Bosnia and Herzegovina is functioning as a protectorate, as all the major decisions have been imposed by the High Representatives.

BiH has been going through a difficult transition period from a centralised, planned economy towards the market economy. Privatisation of state-owned enterprises left a huge number of people jobless. The unemployment

rate is 22%; the unofficial rate is 44% (including the grey economy). The country has no national employment action plan. Compared to EU countries its GDP is lower by 39%. The GDP is earned by a small number of the employed, but it is used by a great number of people.

The economy of BiH is based on agriculture, mineral and energy potentials, and on service economy activities. The only achievements are its stable currency (KM) and a low average inflation rate.

Frequent instances of social unrest, and the bitter struggle of the population to change the economic-social status of the country as well, have been the current reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They all affect the education system and especially the secondary vocational education and training since there is no real information on the labour market needs so that the school enrolment is not in line with the needs, but with the vacancies in schools.

II. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VET TT

1. VET IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

An exceptionally complex political, social and economic situation in BiH is a constant obstruction to faster and better quality implementation of the reform processes. BiH is probably the only state in the world that has not a single ministry at the state level apart from the Ministry of Civil Affairs having a coordinating role. All authority is with the Entities and Cantons, so that the processes of agreement are very slow, if there is any. Nevertheless, we must state that it is in the VET field, owing to experts from the international community (particularly PHARE and EU VET) and local experts, that the best quality changes have taken place.

The current governance of the education system was defined by the Dayton Accord with a limited development of a state-level common approach. Responsibility for education policy and implementation was decentralised to Ministries of Education in the ten Cantons. Encouraged by this fragmentation of responsibility, three parallel, highly centralised education systems have developed, even though the differences in substance among the systems appear minimal.

The basic structure of the current education in BiH has its origin in the ex-Yugoslavian system. As in the former Yugoslav system, compulsory educa-

tion (7-15 years) ends with primary school. There is a high enrolment - equal to some 90% - of primary school graduates in the secondary system. Some 80% of graduates from primary schools enter the vocational stream, and only 20% enter general secondary education schools. This represents more than double the average enrolment in vocational education and training in EU Member States. Some 50% of vocational school students enter 4-year technical courses, which enable graduates to qualify for access to higher education upon passing their matura exam; the rest enter three-year craft courses. Graduates from 3-year courses do not have a school leaving examination.

There are currently 37 types of technical and related schools in BiH where students can acquire knowledge in 120 technical or craft professions; likewise, in Republika Srpska (RS) it is estimated that there are programmes in 14 occupational areas with over 100 professions.

Each school has a statutory school board with representation from teachers and parents; the role of the private sector in education is almost non-existent. Secondary schools have the legal basis to deliver training to different target groups, incl. adults. Assessment and Certification are the responsibility of the Cantonal authorities in BiH, and the Entity in RS;

Financing of vocational education and training is again devolved to the Cantonal level in BiH, and Entity level in RS. The education system is funded through general taxes with no transfer from the State budget. In general, expenditure in BiH is much higher than in RS. Salaries of teaching and administrative staff in the education system represent up to 90% of the education budget and investment in materials (textbooks etc.) is as low as 1-2%. Funds are allocated to schools through a student pro-capita system; each 28 students entitle the school to a teacher. Schools are entitled to raise own funds through commercial activities. As regards the capital and equipment base for education in BiH, less than 50% of VET schools have been refurbished since the war.

2. TEACHERS WORK

Economic collapse and the war have a serious impact on the teaching staff in BiH. Despite enormous difficulties throughout the 1990's the education system has been kept going largely through the motivation and effort of the teaching staff – sometimes without regular salaries. In many cases, in order to keep the system going, unqualified teachers have been employed in the system. As a result, in some areas up to 25% of teachers are not trained for the grades they teach.

The number of students and teachers varies constantly due to the frequent migration; therefore, the following data should be taken conditionally. In the academic year 2004/2005, the technical and vocational schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina were attended by 121 939 students. Teaching was done by 5 011 teachers (general education subjects by 1 614 teachers, vocational theoretic subjects by 1 604, and practical instruction by 793 teachers).

The specific profile of a vocational teacher is strictly regulated by Cantonal and, in RS, Entity level laws that are largely common across BiH. There are three teaching profiles in secondary VET schools according to the subjects they teach:

- General subject teachers (history, foreign language etc.). These teachers have a relevant higher education qualification.
- Specific vocational subjects (e.g. energy management). These teachers have specific higher education degree in the relevant technical subject such as engineering. They are mainly trained in technical colleges and are obliged to pass exams in pedagogy during the first 2 years of study.
- Practical training. These teachers can be either higher education graduates in a relevant discipline, or secondary school graduates with relevant work experience.

Teachers are recruited directly by the school. Principals are nominated by the Ministry for a four-year term of office.

Teacher performance is evaluated by Principals and Inspectors on their capacity to respect the prescribed syllabus, and the capacity of students to remember what was taught. The emphasis of evaluation is on control rather than on developing innovation. Little space or encouragement is given to empowering teachers to take own decisions regarding what to teach or how it is taught.

Working conditions are still not satisfactory in a considerable number of schools as a large number of school facilities were completely destroyed or drastically damaged. In the post-war period, owing to the donors from abroad, schools were reconstructed and equipped. Local authorities also invested some funds in the equipping of schools, but still a lot remains to be done. Teachers complain about the outdated technology, shortages of the required equipment and resources for the preparation of classes, the lack of modern course-books and technical literature, and small financial means for teacher development. The best equipped are the EU VET project schools.

Average teachers' salary is 556 KM (270 euro) in the BiH Federation (in RS is probably a bit lower than this) and is not adequate to the teachers' efforts. Principals earn about 100 KM/month in addition to the basic. There are differences of up to 50% in salaries between the education authorities.

Career promotion is regulated by the Law on Secondary Education and a by-law: 'Rules for the assessment, professional development and award of professional status of teachers in education institutions.' In reality, apart from becoming a principal, there are limited opportunities for career advancement. More experienced teachers receive an incentive to help newly appointed staff. In cases where teachers are judged to be good performers by their principals, they can be nominated as a pedagogical supervisors or inspectors.

3. INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

Pre-service teacher education and training are carried out at university institutions (faculties of technical and social sciences). In addition to theoretic and professional courses of study, students also have practical classes. In general, a 4-year higher education degree is a prerequisite for accessing a teaching job, although up to recently several universities were still offering two-year courses. This training is provided either directly by faculties, which offer pedagogical training as part of a specific discipline, or by way of sitting the examinations in pedagogy set by the Pedagogical Academies. (e.g. students of engineering faculties who did not complete a teaching strand, and who want to work in schools, have to pass additional exams in adult-pedagogical group of subjects at the Faculty of Philosophy).

Currently there are 7 universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (even 2 in one town/city) with 90 faculties delivering teacher training, with 5 800 students. There is high demand for places on pre-service teacher training courses. Applications exceed capacity by up to 50%. The reason why so many young people wish to become teachers appears linked to the indications that over 50% of graduate teachers find employment, which compares well with other areas of study.

The main objective of pre-service teacher training appears still to enhance knowledge about the specific discipline the teacher will teach. Little attention is given to developing student-centred interactive methodologies based on learning. Less than 10% of the course is dedicated to the development of teaching methodologies, classroom practice etc. As a result, the vast

majority of teachers have a limited, teacher-centred approach to their profession compared to state of art in Europe.

Teachers have a probationer status of 6 or 12 months. Their performance is monitored by a mentor appointed by the School Board. After that, the teacher takes the teacher licensing (state) exam (consisting of delivering a lesson, exam in the respective teaching methodology and legislation). With years of experience and results achieved, the teacher can be promoted to the status of a teacher mentor, teacher adviser, and teacher senior adviser. More ambitious teachers continue their education at University, where they can earn MA or Ph.D. degrees.

Education at university institutions is regulated by the Law on Higher Education (each Canton, Entity has its own law). According to the legislation currently in effect, the full education autonomy is provided in Entities and Cantons. Such a situation is unsustainable. In addition to the financial problems, there is also the problem of teaching staff. Frequently the same professor teaches in several Cantons, which has seriously affected the quality of teaching. At the majority of faculties, the courses of study are carried out by curricula that are not in harmony with the European standards; degrees thus acquired are degraded and are valid only in the narrow region. This is why hopes are directed towards amendments to the Law on Higher Education, i.e., towards the adoption of the Draft Law on Higher Education at the state level and the implementation of the Bologna Declaration principles. Among other things, this Law would guarantee the following principles: equal right to education for all, quality, recognition of the academic qualifications, mobility. These changes would enable greater possibility to find employment in the wider region for the young graduates.

There is no specific pre-service training for school principals or management staff. However, in-service seminars for school managers are organised by Pedagogical Institutes. These seminars represent the main means of cascading developments in the system through to the VET schools and teachers.

4. IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

In-service teacher development and promotion is regulated in a number of laws and by-laws and it is a legal obligation of all teachers and other employees in education. It is the integral part of the education system in BiH and has a long tradition. Life-long learning is not unknown in BiH but it used to be called the 'collective and individual professional development'. The seminars

organised were mainly of the lecture type. In recent years, much more attention has been paid to the quality of seminars. They are of the workshop type, the exchange of experience is better and they offer opportunities for teachers to manifest their creativity.

In charge of the professional development are the ministries of education, the pedagogical institutes, university faculties, schools and many non-governmental organisations. There are good examples of training programmes implemented by the international community in cooperation with local institutions (UNICEF, UNESCO, EU, the Council of Europe, Finland (CES), Kultur-Kontakt Austria, CIVITAS BiH, SOROS Foundation, and the EGP Education for Peace).

However, the most substantial in the VET school teacher training segment is the EU VET programme as they have been working intensively on teacher training since 2001. The teachers in the pilot schools were trained for the new teaching methods, methodology for the development of modular curricula, market research, evaluation and assessment of the adult teaching methodology. Thanks to this training, 110 teachers in BiH received certificates and the status of a mentor. Their task is to train other teachers in their respective schools. Also, the training of school headmasters was carried out in the fields of strategic/participatory planning, market orientation, vision and managing, democracy in teaching and management/ administration.

Most of the Pedagogical Institutes implement professional development in line with the Development Programme for all employees. Prior to the adoption of the Programme, a training needs survey was carried out in all schools in order to see in which field the teachers and other employees would like to develop.

Charges for the teacher training are borne by the Ministries of Education and the schools which in their budgets are allotted the funds for teacher training. Having in mind that such funds are rather modest, they cannot cover the needs for training. But most of the VET schools generate the funds for professional development from their own resources, earned from offering commercial services.

After each seminar the teachers are awarded certificates, but their relevance is local. The teachers show a high interest for professional development and such certificates earn them a certain number of points for their career promotion. The teacher career promotion carries a higher payroll accounts coefficient; however, this increase is symbolic.

III. CHALLENGES, DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

Having in mind that BiH is divided politically, ideologically, burdened with the difficult economic situation and high unemployment, reforms are inevitable. Much is expected especially from the reform of VET whose improvement and modernisation would speed up the economic development of the country and reduce the number of the unemployed. It is hard to determine priorities on this reform path. Currently, it is the most important to upgrade the curricula for all the thirteen occupational families, at the same time train teachers to work by the new methods of learning and teaching, pay higher attention to adult education (enable adults retraining, additional training), establish a better partnership between the universities and VET schools, complete the legislation, and find new finance sources.

The decentralised structure of BiH has reinforced to a proliferation of pre-service teacher training institutions. In BiH alone, there are some 70 institutions delivering pre-service teacher training. Each Entity and Canton has sought to be autonomous in preparing teachers. The burden of maintaining this diversity of provision is unsustainable in the long term. A re-engineering of the system at State level would help to develop more economies of scale.

The current pre-service teacher training system is in general currently over-producing graduate teachers although there is a shortage of teachers in specific disciplines (e.g. languages, IT); special needs (for example, dealing with war-related trauma, disabled); particular target groups (e.g. there are no courses of preparation for trainers of adults). At the same time, the current system does not provide adequately structured in-service teacher training despite the high numbers of teachers still in post who were been trained to different standards and largely on outdated teaching methodologies. A key target group is those teachers who have received only a 2-year pre-service training preparation and were take on during the war. Lastly, pre-teacher training curricula do not currently cater for preparing the administrative, management and career guidance capacities needed to run modern VET institutions.

The current system of teacher training is not fully integrated into the overall development context for VET in the country. Appropriate skills of teachers and school managers are a prerequisite for the successful implementation of any reform policy. In BiH, there is limited investment in teacher training from this systemic perspective. For example, the teacher training institutions are not fully involved in the development of new curricula which is ongoing in the country. As a result, the graduate teachers need further training

in the new curricula before they are able to perform adequately. There is little co-ordination and synergy between the school teachers and the inspectorates which is a pre-requisite for improving quality of instruction. Principals and administrators are not fully trained in issues related to leadership, change management skills, democratic decision making, revenue generation and in the development of education information and management systems necessary to contribute to the reforms which are ongoing in the country.

The capacity of the VET school to create an interactive network of communication between itself and local stakeholders (parents, economic actors, public authorities) is a critical success factor for employability and increased accountability. Especially since the start of the transition in 1990, schools have reduced their networking capacity with local stakeholders. In particular, VET schools need to develop links with employers. Teachers and school managers need to be supported in developing the skills necessary to set up and maintain these networks.

Currently, in BiH great efforts are being made to re-establish the broken links, but with a much better quality in order to prepare young people, through the exchange of ideas, experiences, services, joint strategy and team work, to be able to work, after graduation, in the companies with high standards and developed technologies.

Teacher training implies close cooperation with all the enumerated stakeholders. The result of such efforts is also the "Open Door School" project. Almost all schools, on a certain day, through a series of programmes, present to the public the school activities, improvements in the teaching process, speak through pictures and texts about occupations and possibilities of employment, present technical projects; teams of teachers and students implement various projects and distribute video records to guests. In addition to many questions asked by the guests, the schools become richer with versatile proposals, ideas and remarks. This project has great importance both for parents and primary schools students in terms of professional orientation, partnership between parents and students of other schools.

No framework exists for the recognition of certification for teachers across the different education authorities. Graduate teachers tend to find jobs within their local areas. As a result, there is no effective freedom of movement in the labour market for teachers.

Professional development is not paid the same attention in all Cantons and Entities.

This is why it is important to point out that within the Education Reform in BiH, the Working Group on modernisation of pre-school, primary and secondary education prepared a very important document (2003) "Strategic Teacher Development and Promotion System in Bosnia and Herzegovina". This document defined:

- successful start of the teaching career (licensing)
- continuous and efficient in-service development through accredited training programmes
- quality control of teacher performance (re-licensing)
- enhancing human resources through teachers' specialisation in particular areas (certification)
- promotion in the career, career development and financial stimulus (mentors, teacher advisers, senior teacher advisers, trainers)
- providing high quality staff of all profiles in upbringing and education (headmasters, senior advisers, specialists in education policy).

It is anticipated to set up a Council on Teacher Development and three Commissions on Accreditation of Training Programmes and a Catalogue of Accredited Training Programmes, a Commission on Monitoring and Analysis of Vocational Education System and its harmonisation with European standards. Also anticipated is the establishment of a Centre for Training in Education that would act within the Standards and Assessment Agency.

In May 2004, the document "Establishment of Teacher Development and Promotion System in BiH" was produced. If these documents are adopted at the state level, teacher development and promotion will gain in quality and all teachers in BiH will have the same chances and rights. So, in these reform processes, great attention is paid to teacher development in order to modernise the teaching process.

Since the most difficult thing is to change the consciousness of people, initially there was some resistance to the teaching process modernisation. However, the decisive role was with the teacher enthusiasts who joined all types of training and started to apply what they had learned. They received strong support from their students. As a chain reaction, team interdisciplinary and multi-media projects started to be implemented in schools. The projects were attended by all teachers from the schools, which increased the number of enthusiasts. A number of teachers (mainly older ones) keep boycotting the upgraded teaching process although the students give them the lowest number of points in evaluation polls.

Study visits to other countries have contributed a lot to the change of teacher awareness. The ETF project witnesses best to the importance of the exchange of experience. Participants in this project and transfer all their acquired experiences to the schools in their countries.

IV. DONOR REFORM INITIATIVES AND OWN RESOURCES

Since in the war period (1991-1995) over 80% of school facilities were destroyed or devastated, donors from all over the world extended great support to BiH in the construction of new or reconstruction of the devastated school buildings. A considerable number of schools were rehabilitated with local funds. The BiH authorities invested huge funds in the procurement of school furniture and teaching aids.

When the reform processes started, the CARDS Programme resources were invaluable for everything that happened in the VET piloting schools included in the EU VET project. Modular syllabuses were innovated from those funds, teachers were trained to prepare modular curricula, introduce new teaching methods; the piloting schools were equipped with modern technologies. Besides, many non-governmental organisations trained teachers through various projects.

From 1998 to 2002, 40 local experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina with the assistance from the PHARE VET programme experts (permanently or temporarily engaged) worked on passing the document “Strategy and policy for reform of Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina” adopted in 2000 at the state level (Green Paper and White Paper).

The Green Paper dealt with the strategy and the White Paper with its implementation.

Very important was the document “A Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Education Reform in BiH” in which the state committed itself to fulfil the five pledges by 2010. Pledge 3 refers to the vocational education and training, “We will support the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the development of a modern, broad-based, flexible and high-quality vocational education and training system that is responsive to labour market requirements”.

The Pedagogical Institutes have had a particularly important role in the education of teachers engaging over a thousand university professors as in-

structors at many seminars. But it will be an uphill struggle without financial and methodological donor support.

There are fewer and fewer donations from abroad so that local authorities will have to take on the obligation of future financing of teacher training. It is feared that such funds, due to the difficult economic situation in which BiH is, will be insufficient to meet teacher training requirements.

V. REFERENCES

Official reports submitted by the relevant institutions enumerated hereunder about respective period

LIST OF RELEVANT ADDRESSES

- Ministry of Civil Affairs, Trg Bosne i Hercegovine 1, 71000 Sarajevo; tel. 033 221-073
- Ministry of Education and Science FBiH, Obala Maka Dizdara 2, 71000 Sarajevo; tel. 033 663-693
- Ministry of Education and Culture of RS, V. Karadžića 1, 78000 Banja Luka; tel. 051 331-422
- Agency for Standards and Assessment, Tvornička 3, 71000 Sarajevo; tel. 033 766-161
- Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH, Branislava Đurđeva 10, 71000 Sarajevo; tel. 033 663-631
- Secondary Education Trade Union, Obala Kulina bana 1, 71000 Sarajevo; tel. 033 211-760