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Fact sheet about the EU Twinning project and results achieved

Title: Strengthening the quality assurance and control of the educational system

Twinning number: MK 13 IPA SO 02 15 TWL

Overall objective: The overall objective of this operation is to support the modernization of the primary and secondary education system by further strengthening of the quality assurance and control towards achieving higher student results and competencies

Project purpose: The specific objective of this operation is to support the revision and updating of the existing Programmes for training and examination of directors and also development of new Programme (Training Needs Assessment and Training Action Plan) for strengthening the school management structures

Total budget - 250.000.00 €

Project duration: April 2016 – December 2016 (8 months)

Programme: IPA Component IV-OP HRD 2007-2013

Partners:

EU Member State – Republic of Lithuania

Institutions – Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, National Agency for School Evaluation, Education Supply Centre, and Education Development Centre, European Social Fund Agency

Beneficiary institution: The National Examinations Centre (NEC)

The Project was implemented through eight activities:

Activity 1. Analysis of the current state of play, including the legislative framework regarding management of primary and secondary schools considering the European experience and good practices

The activity was accomplished following the steps:

- The assessment and analysis of existing school management structures of the primary and secondary schools in Beneficiary Country was done.
- Data on school directors' training and examination framework was analysed;
- Data on existing legal framework and management and administration schemes: actors, processes, responsibilities, etc. was analysed;
- Investigative joint visits to primary and secondary schools conducted;
- Discussions, interviews and observation of director's trainings and examination processes were performed.

Based on the methodology described above **the state of play of the system of training and examination of directors** has been analysed. The analysis has revealed two main critical gaps:



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- A scheme of the school head career is missing an approach to the professional growth and it leaves school professionals and their experience outside;
- School head training should be focused on leadership for learning, it should include a deeper content and more of a practical approach, embrace an induction period, an advanced programme updated regularly in accordance with directors' needs.

Activity 2. Revision and proposal for amendment of the relevant legislative framework concerning training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools

This activity was implemented having organised numerous meetings, discussions with NEC specialists / school directors / education administrators on the legal basis for quality assurance in education.

In the meetings and discussions these working methods were used: interview, appreciative inquiry, Open space/world café methods, in-depth analysis and peer review.

Based on the information gathered, **the relevant legislative framework concerning training and examination of directors has been revised and amendments have been proposed.**

The main aspects of proposed intervention are in areas of:

- Professional development of directors by efficient 3 level school directors' training (initial, induction, advanced);
- School directors' mentorship;
- Professional development of assistant directors.

Activity 3. Revision and update of the Programme (modules) for the initial training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools

This activity was implemented having gathered relevant information about existing leadership development models, standards, including the basic evaluation methodology and practices through numerous meetings, interviews and discussions with local experts.

Based on the analysis and researched done **the programme (modules) for the initial training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools has been revised and updated.**

The revised and updated Programme includes the expected achievements of the candidates after graduating the training course, the criteria and the rules for the assessment of their seminars' and final presentations, the criteria for the selection of the programmes for the training, description of the possibility to take an experience test before the training, etc.



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Activity 4. Revision and update of the Programme (modules) for the advanced training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools

This activity was implemented having gathered relevant information about existing leadership development models, standards, including the basic evaluation methodology and practices through numerous meetings, interviews and discussions with local experts.

As a result **the programme (modules) for the advanced training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools has been revised and updated**

A wide spectrum of school director activities are divided into three main areas: “Educational management”, “Operational management of school” and “Strategic leadership”. A quite new thing in the Beneficiary Country training traditions to give the possibility to choose the training topics for upcoming year based on voting results was included into the programme.

Activity 5. Developed and piloting of ToT module (Training of Trainers) for conduction of the training and examination of directors of primary and secondary schools

During the project implementation within activity 5 numerous meetings with the NEC team and other representatives from other relevant institutions to discuss their vision of the system of professional development of school directors, the roles and responsibilities of school director, needs for professional development, school management structures and challenges of quality management and the needs and expectations for the ToT program were performed.

Having implemented this activity the programme for Mentorship for newly appointed directors was developed. It includes an overview of the global context, concept of mentoring, action plan to implement mentoring in the Beneficiary Country.

Three module programmes for the Trainers of Mentors were developed and 12 Trainers of Mentors were trained who practised their training skills at the workshops for the future mentors.

Activity 6. Study visit on introduction of the MS system for training and examination of directors, especially the MS Programme (module) for training and trainers of trainers and the manner in which it is organized and executed

In October, 2016 a study visit in Vilnius on the Lithuanian experience in the development of national policies in school leadership, national projects related to training and assessment of school directors, as well as training of trainers and the mode in which it is organized was arranged. The participants received a clear picture of the education system in Lithuania, school leadership and training, examination and attestation of principals.

Lithuanian practice that could be implemented in Beneficiary country’s system:

- to give more emphasis on improving student achievement in national and international tests;
- student achievement to be part of the criteria for the success of principals;
- in training to candidates for principals to introduce a test of personality as pretesting before the training;
- giving more freedom to schools;



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- external evaluation of the schools, principals and teachers with fewer assessments and penalties.

A study visit strengthened the newly built partnership between both countries in the field of education. This is also very important for future projects in the field of education and for further development of a better education system.

Activity 7. Preparation and execution of Training Needs Assessment and Training Action Plan for the relevant educational institutions (targeting the school management structure) including the other relevant local and national stakeholders

Aiming to reach the indicated result of an activity 7, numerous meetings with the NEC team and other representatives from other relevant institutions to discuss the current situation and expectations concerning future process with the trainings of the initial directors of schools in Beneficiary Country, the candidates from different training Modules with regard on collecting information about skills and knowledge needed for the headmasters position, the administrative structures and responsibilities of different stakeholders

Based on the information gathered **the Programme for Mentorship in Macedonia (including TNA (Training needs assessment) and TAP (Training action plan) was developed and executes.** 76 participants were trained and certificated as mentors, who will support newly appointed directors and are more motivated now to develop mentoring and facilitation skills in the future.

Final recommendations for further development of a mentorship project:

- To consider all possible stakeholders who would support mentorship project and create a network of project partners to neutralise resistance to change and lack of interest at different levels: national, municipal, and school;
- It is crucial to encourage newly appointed and experienced directors and other members of educational community to explore opportunities of mentoring as a new and inspiring form of professional development;
- If mentorship is considered as a tool to create trusting culture in schools much more attention should be paid to the values, dispositions and mindsets underpinning the importance of mentoring for improving student learning.

Activity 8. Preparation of recommendations for future interventions in the area of management of primary and secondary schools

Member State experts in tight cooperation with the relevant stakeholders of the Beneficiary Country identified weaknesses and strengths related to the school management by applying various methods such as documentary research, interview and group discussion with the relevant stakeholders.

Based on the analysis done **the final recommendations for future interventions in the system of training and examination of directors** have been developed offering three packages of innovations and different scenarios for the Beneficiary Country to increase capacity of school administrative staff and support school performance.



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The packages of innovations proposed for the Beneficiary Country in order to improve a system of training and examination of school directors:

Induction period (mentorship)	Experience test	Voting for training needs
Shadowing	Selection of training modules	Selection of training modules
Periodical mentoring	Different hours for modules	Different hours for modules
Raising new candidates	Modules oriented towards learning	Modules oriented towards learning
Building management team, involving school deputies	Guaranties after mandate	Decentralization
Decentralization	Measuring effect of training	Measuring effect of training
Collecting cases	Evaluation of satisfaction	Evaluation of satisfaction
Categories & evaluation	Scoring points	Categories & self-evaluation

- Changes take time. The project is just the start. The most realistic field for changes could be the Programme for Mentorship. Starting practicing mentorship could help newly appointed directors to make a smooth transition to a new role by building a lasting partnership with a more experienced colleague based on trust, respect, and continuous development. Mentoring is beneficial for everybody, all the parties benefit from the mentoring process. Newly appointed school directors develop increased confidence in their technical and adaptive skills, and are able to achieve growth and development goals identified in their learning plan. Experienced school directors receive support and resources to become effective mentors and to continue developing their own leadership competencies through learning with others. Schools, school boards, and the ministry benefit from improved performance of new school directors, increased capacity building across the system, increased student achievement, and support for system priorities. Most importantly, students benefit from strong and effective school directors. To sum it up, seeking for the long term goals to support the modernization of the primary and secondary education system, practising mentorship leads to achieving these goals: 1. Continuous professional development of school principals which is missing in the BC; 2. Improvement of the career system of school heads in the BC (reduces a waste of human resources and raises the capacity of school staff).

Twinning is a European Union instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or Partner countries. Twinning projects bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and beneficiary countries with the aim of achieving concrete mandatory operational results through peer to peer activities.