



**Ministry of Education, Republic of Serbia
Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme**



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REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

**VET REFORM PROGRAMME – PHASE II: CAPACITY
BUILDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT**

**“Lessons Learnt in Vocational Education Teacher
Training in VET Reform Programme - Phase II and
Recommendations for Setting up a System of In-
service Vocational Teacher Training”**

Written by Jasminka Markovic and Michael Axmann

October 2007

Who Should Read This Paper?

This paper is meant to be a final review of the teacher training Programme in the VET Reform Programme – phase II, and should be discussed among internal and external Change Agent Teachers (CATs) from the participating pilot schools. However, it should also be made available to other interested teachers, teacher trainers, directors from pilot and other interested VET schools in Serbia, maybe even for government officials, such as pedagogical advisers from the Ministry of Education and people from the VET Centre.

1. Background

Human resource development and in particular teacher training in vocational education and training in Serbia has lately received a special attention through a major policy paper: “The Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Serbia”, which was adopted by the Government of Serbia in December 28th 2006.

According to this document, the modernisation of the system of professional development of teachers implies the improvement of pedagogical skills of teachers in order to prepare them adequately for the implementation of new curricula.

The initial strategy in teacher training should therefore be directed towards:

- Renewal and modernisation of the system of professional development and training
- Support to the current reform of vocational education and training
- Achievement of a higher level of pedagogical skills and competencies of teachers
- Setting foundations for continuing education and life-long learning, and
- Introducing the concepts of environmental protection and sustainable development into professional development and training Programmes

Within this strategy the new concept of the development of vocational education, in-service teacher training has the main objective to develop functional competencies of teachers which will enable them to actively and creatively participate in the further development of vocational education and training in Serbia.

Unlike previous approaches to teacher training in vocational education in Serbia, the new concept now “should promote the culture of continuing changes and a systematic approach in determining the needs and possibilities for professional development” (ibid. p.18).

The new concept in teacher training – according to this paper – is based on four pillars:

- Improvement and development at the school level
- Modern teaching and learning methods
- New information technologies
- Development of “professional cooperation and social partnerships” (ibid. p. 19)

The teacher training Programme under VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II has tried to systematically support these initiatives over the last 21 months, since the inception of activities in January 2006.

2. A Systematic School-based Approach

The analysis of the above-mentioned strategy for teacher training policies in that document is very clear and very functional. However, it should be said that at this point there are only two accredited and approved VET in-service teacher training courses available and can be chosen by VET teachers from the official "Catalogue of teacher training seminars".

We started off with at the beginning of the two-year VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II teacher training component with issues how to put these policy issues into practice, e.g. by selecting teacher trainers according to clear criteria and to male-female representation, by preparing groups of specialised teacher trainers, by developing important VET in-service teacher training Programmes based on clearly identified needs and by providing modern teaching methods.

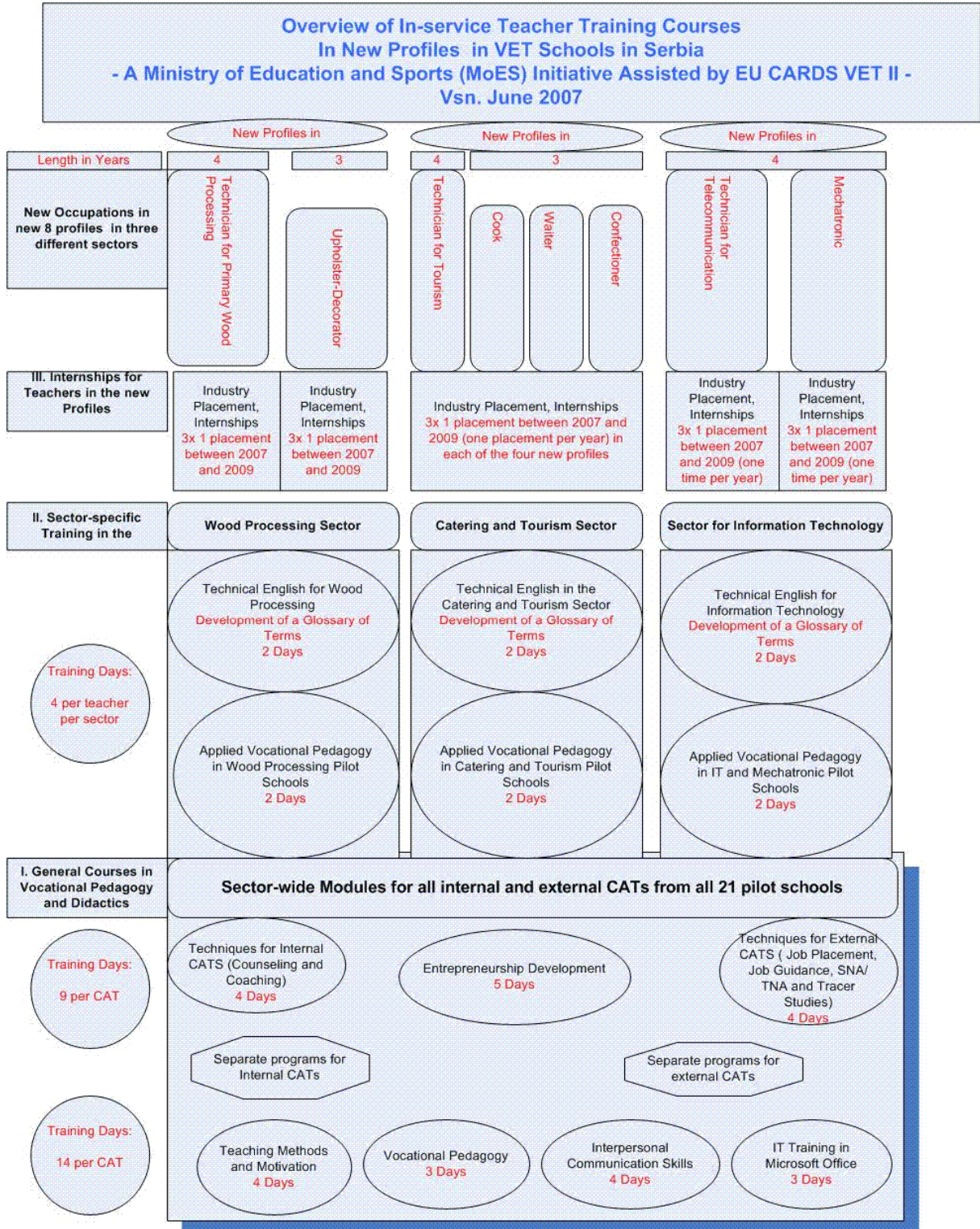
The advice of MoE and the VET Centre and the Centre for Professional Development Employed in Education was sought intensively at the beginning in order to establish clear and transparent professional development, certification mechanisms and incentive systems for all teachers participating.

We believed that it was also necessary to investigate mechanisms to establish top-down support from the Ministry and the VET Centre to the school directors and teachers as well as bottom-up initiatives where it should be possible to take up best practice and/or successful cases to serve as driving forces in the reform of the system of teacher training. Strong efforts were made to find these mechanisms. Every effort was made to have teacher training done by practitioners with hands-on experience and train teacher trainers.

Lessons Learnt:

1. Our change agents (both internal and external ones) and the school directors from the participating VET pilot schools were truly interested in new trends in VET teaching (e.g. vocational pedagogy, applied vocational pedagogy, new teaching methods, new assessment techniques in VET, management of VET learning etc.),
2. Having on mind lack of human resources (which will be dedicated only to the activities regarding to the human resources development within the pilot schools and in-service teacher training) in MoE, VET Centre and Centre for Professional Development Employed in Education, engagement of these institutions was very limited. However, we can conclude from the experience that stronger support and engagement will give better achievements, and closer and more intensive cooperation should be one of the things we pursue to.
3. On the other hand, once again, schools and teachers were really interested in linking VET training Programmes to labour market needs and working closely with key stakeholders in their region. Internally, CATs were ready to open up to new teacher functions, such as counselling, educating, innovating, fund-raising, setting up public relation functions of schools with their clients (such as with local businesses, municipalities, parents, students and other stakeholders in the region), job placement and job guidance including tracer studies.
4. We were positively surprised how much prepared the change agents were and how much initiative they took to be cascading these activities to other colleagues in their own schools and almost 1000 teachers in pilot have been reached during the cascading processes in the pilot schools.
5. In looking back, we are very glad to say that the whole Teacher Training Programme was carried out with the help of true practitioners and, they did an excellent job!

3. Elements of In-service teacher training



In the overview it can be seen how many different modules in VET teacher training have been carried out and how many days have been spent on each of them under second phase of the VET Reform Programme.

Initial steps in teacher training were taken in VET Reform Programme – phase I, with individual training exercises, such as in IT and in Entrepreneurship Development. The emphasis in the second VET Reform Programme was on developing a systematic approach to VET teacher training and furthermore on designing modules that responded to real needs of VET teachers in Serbia. The Programme was divided into three different parts (consisting of a total of 27 training days and 1 placement in industry for teachers in the new profiles per school year):

- General courses on vocational pedagogy and vocational didactics,
- Sector-specific teacher training, and
- Internships for teachers in the new profiles.

Lessons learnt:

1. According to teacher training evaluations, the designed package of in-service VET teacher training was very useful and covered a good deal of training needs of VET teachers in the school system in Serbia.
2. Teaching Methods, Vocational Pedagogy and Applied Vocational Pedagogy were new courses to most of the CATs and other teachers involved and got very good reviews.
3. “Interpersonal Communication Skills” was a particularly interesting course, which was much needed for the practical work in school. This is further illustrated by the fact that it was almost always the first course picked by the CATs in the cascading process in the schools!
4. The Entrepreneurship Development module was developed under CARDS VET I and now used again in VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II. From our perspective and participants’ evaluation of this training course, it seems that much more hands-on practice and real-life entrepreneurship needs to be integrated into it, if to be continued under teacher training programmes in the future. However, at the moment, this is the only course which has government accreditation.
5. The course “Special Techniques for External CATs” was covered in a 4-day workshop dealing with job placement, job guidance, skills and training needs analysis, tracer studies and labour market analysis. However, it seems that still much more training is required for external CATs, including case studies on how to start social partnership in school districts and how to better work with all the stakeholders involved in VET. This should be kept in mind when re-designing and finalising teacher training Programmes for VET schools in Serbia.
6. The IT training package in Microsoft Office had to struggle with mixed abilities of teachers participating and therefore had to be offered in a highly differentiated way. For the future, it might make a lot of sense to offer tailor-made courses in IT for specific target groups.

7. Industry placements for teachers have not been started yet. Given the importance of having the practical experience on the job, it is strongly suggested to start with this in the school year 2007/2008 and continue this exercise in the following two school years¹.
8. The training package should now receive the accreditation within the teacher training Programme for VET teachers by the Ministry of Education as soon as possible so that these courses can be repeated on a larger scale, and be carried out by internal CATs in the future.
9. These teacher training modules are a “starting point” for systematic in-service VET teacher training in Serbia and they should be turned into a strongly recommended training package for all teachers in VET schools in Serbia.
10. It is obvious that much more can and needs to be done in in service teacher training but the experience made and the teachers trained and used in the cascading should be further used intensively to spread they knowledge in order to reach as many as possible VET teachers in the school system in Serbia!

This last lesson is one that we would like to emphasise very much: there is an excellent pool of teacher trainers available now after this experience and we would strongly once again like to encourage the Ministry of Education, the VET Centre and the Centre for Professional Development to make use of their gained expertise in teacher training!

4. Monitoring, Supervision and Cascading to 1000 VET teachers in Serbia

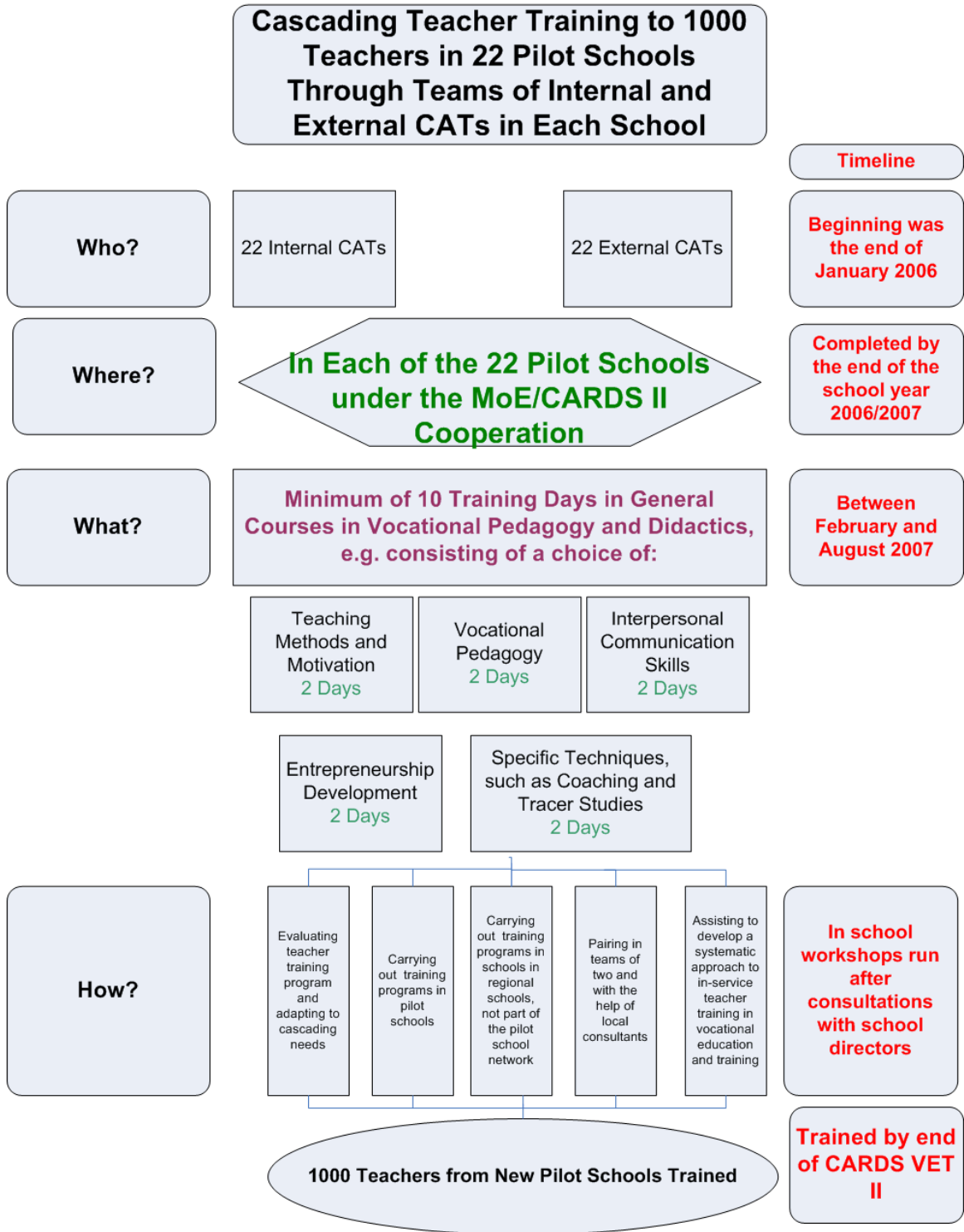
The cascading of teacher training to 1000 teachers in the pilot schools was carried by the change agents and cascaded those modules of the teacher training Programme. 10 days out of the 27 total training days (given to the CATs, see above) were supposed to be cascaded and it was up the change agent teachers to decide on quantities and intensity of teacher training (for a graphical overview of cascading, see next page).

It should be said at this point that the cascading efforts went way beyond the expectations of the teacher training team and also way beyond the contractual requirement of reaching 300 teachers in all pilot schools.

Monitoring of CAT activities was done by regular monthly reports of the CATs, contrasting items from their job descriptions with precise activities carried out in each month.

The supervision of the CATs activities has been done by monthly reports (which containing very detailed description of activities, number of days dedicated to the CATs activities and plan for following month) and reports on cascading process in a school combined with the list of participants involved in school based training. Monitoring and evaluation of the cascading seminars took place through school visits in the continues presence Programme’s experts.

¹ For a detailed description see: “Guide for Internships for Vocational Teachers in MoE/CARDS II Cooperation/ Version 3 – June 2007” by Jasminka Markovic and Michael Axmann



5. Recommendations for Setting up a System of In-service Teacher Training in Serbia

At this point some readers might say, these in-service courses might have worked in pilot schools in Serbia, and they also worked in some other European countries, but there is no guarantee that it will work nationwide in Serbia. We believe, however, that there are a number of reasons why in-service teacher training might work anywhere in Serbia. Nonetheless, there are a few prerequisites that need to be observed before running teacher training Programmes in vocational schools.

Organizing In-service Training for Teachers in Vocational Education and Training in Serbia

The following sets of recommendations should serve as guidelines for improving upon the experiences made in the pilot phase of teacher training under VET Reform Programme and should be kept in mind when planning in-service teacher training for all teachers in vocational education and training in Serbia.

I. Prepare teachers and trainers in VET schools in Serbia better for their jobs, by:

- ✓ Setting up pre-service and in-service teacher facilities for future teachers in vocational education and training,
- ✓ Helping teachers and trainers to take their own process of learning-and becoming-teachers into their own hands, for example by emphasising Vocational Pedagogy, Micro Teaching experiences and Applied Vocational Pedagogy,
- ✓ Combining theoretical and practical aspects of teaching in learning situations that have real-life and real-work importance,
- ✓ Emphasising a legal and didactical framework in teacher training and the joint role of vocational schools, vocational education teacher training institutes (VET Centre and the Centre for Professional Development), and enterprises in training of teachers and trainers, and
- ✓ Recommending frequent internships and/or initial apprenticeships in enterprises for vocational school teachers in Serbia (as it already is in place in many European countries).

For example, in the preparation of teachers and trainers, new and innovative approaches in teacher and instructor training in vocational education and training need to be used. This was done during VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II. Furthermore, it also requires strengthening the school management of vocational schools interested in making those changes. This was also part of the Human Resource Development component in the Programme. Teacher training in Serbia, as elsewhere, should always be supported both on the university level (prep courses in teacher training, not only in the social sciences and in language teaching, as this is the current practice in Serbia, but also for engineers, economists, mathematicians and the like) and, of course, on the school level (in-service training). It is important to us at this point that it should be kept in mind that this usually does not show immediate results but is a rather long-term effort.

II. Design new learning environments in teacher training for vocational education and training that allow for more independence on the side of the teachers, flexibility on the side of the teacher training planners, and more relevance when it comes to curricula and learning materials, by:

- ✓ Qualifying teachers in vocational education and training to organise their students' learning, both for on and off-the-job learning,
- ✓ Designing flexible and short cycles of teacher training schemes and training modules that directly respond to training needs,
- ✓ Seriously shifting the role of the teachers and trainers away from lecturing and moving towards coaching, and
- ✓ Trying to have inputs for teacher trainers in curriculum development and the design of learning materials in Serbia, thus making this much more of a joint process between different ministries, VET Centre, vocational schools and associations of enterprises.

For example, new learning environments can put vocational students more in the “driver’s seat” of their own learning, e.g. dealing with complex tasks such as designing marketing concepts or planning routines for CNC machines. Reflection Learning always requires the teachers to help their students to plan, carry out and evaluate their own (the students’!) learning. Vocational education and training has for too long been like teaching our students how “to drive without ever putting them in the car”. A whole rethinking process of what vocational education and training should be started and within that the “Achievement of a higher level of pedagogical skills and competencies of teachers...”² is needed. However, we are fully aware that this will not and can not happen over night.

III. Make school-based vocational education much more of a hands-on experience with real-life and real-work situations, by:

- ✓ Making the content in vocational schools more relevant,
- ✓ Ensuring that young people learn how to solve problems, work in teams, be enterprising and be creative, also by learning from the way they are taught,
- ✓ Introducing much more soft skills such as languages and communication skills,
- ✓ Providing sufficiently wide skills and slowly move away from pure transfer of knowledge to application of sets of skills,
- ✓ Ensuring that young people get direct opportunities to learn about the nature of the economy and the world of work, and altogether
- ✓ Making vocational education and training tracks less of a dead end or –like in Serbia – only alternative pathways to reach universities in a different way other than going through the “gymnasium track”.

For example, school-based vocational education can be made more hands-on and with more of a problem-solving approach by working with Simulated Travel Agencies in vocational education and training. In Simulated Travel Agencies, students could be guided through a process of actually starting a new travel agency and developing products and services and – at the same time - getting exposed to lots of entrepreneurial skills needed in the future.

² “The Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Serbia”, adopted by the Government of Serbia in January 2007, page 8f.

IV. *Making the national institutions of vocational education and training, much more supportive in teacher training, by:*

- ✓ Adapting the vocational education teacher training system to the needs of its users: the students, the labour market and higher education institutions,
- ✓ Supporting efforts – in close collaboration with teacher trainers trained under VET Reform Programme - Phase II (internal and external CATs) – to do nation-wide research on what teachers in VET schools really need in carrying out their tasks,
- ✓ Updating initial and continuing vocational teacher training e.g. by developing an array of in-service teacher training courses, based on the 100 hours teacher training requirements in Serbia,
- ✓ Developing scenarios for future development of teacher training in vocational education and training, and
- ✓ Conducting vocational training research with a view to identifying correlations between technological and labour market developments and teacher training within all these developments.

For example, the VET Centre in Serbia and the Centre for Professional Development can be made much more effective by improving upon their own organizational structures and task descriptions of their staff for teacher training. One could also make cross comparisons of recently-established institutes for vocational education teacher training, for example in certain transition countries such as Hungary and Slovenia, examining their institutional set up and drawing lessons for Serbia, assuming, of course, that Serbia will be interested in setting up similar Programmes in vocational education teacher training.

V. *Integrate “life-long vocational learning” in the institutional framework for vocational education teacher training, by:*

- ✓ Emphasizing “learning to learn” skills in vocational education teacher training,
- ✓ Focusing on team work capabilities,
- ✓ Focusing much more on adult education issues in Serbia, also integrating, for example, Regional Training Centres into the system of current VET strategies,
- ✓ Mobilizing resources, also financial resources, for making lifelong learning opportunities more widely available for VET teachers,
- ✓ Encouraging teachers to regularly go to and have frequent learning experiences in teacher training Programmes,
- ✓ Developing policies for the recognition and accreditation of all forms of “lifelong learning” among teachers, including distance and e-learning,
- ✓ Giving credits and designing incentive systems, also financial ones, for teachers to pursue the path of “life-long vocational learning”.

For example, lifelong vocational learning can be integrated in the institutional framework of vocational education teacher training by making annual regular internships (for example 1-2 weeks per year) for teachers in new occupational profiles a necessity.

If and how lifelong vocational learning can be integrated into schemes of vocational education teacher will have to be seen in individual planning processes in Serbia, when and if it is willing to experiment with this.

6. Internal and External Change Agents Look Back at Their Own Experiences made in the In-service Teacher Training in CARDS VET II

Finally, we would like to add to this “Lessons Learnt...” paper an overview of experiences of CATs with this Programme and let them give us feed back to the in-service teacher training Programme practised in the last 21 months of the project cycle largely with them as the main beneficiaries.

The following CATs will be asked to look back (and maybe forward) and write down their experiences with the teacher training component in a one-pager feed back:

- Drinka Savic - Gutesa and Maja Todorovic (internal and external CATs from Technical PTT school in Belgrade),
- Slavica Popovic (external CAT from Tourism School in Leskovac)
- Dejan Stefanovic (external CAT from Tourism School in Paracin)
- Katarina Stanic and Nadezda Popovic (internal and external CATs from “Radoje Dakic” Mechanical Engineering School in Belgrade),
- Vera Stojanovic and Milena Kristic (internal and external CATs from “Nikola Tesla” Technical School in Nis),
- Miroslav Markovic and Biljana Samardzija (internal and external CATs from Wood Processing School in Belgrade)

Observations about the Work on VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II

1. The topics were carefully chosen, of current interest, necessary for permanent teacher development;
2. The seminars were carried out in a modern and adequate way (by the use of the modern methods - what was learnt during the training was directly implemented, without the excessive use of theory);
3. The teacher training seminars were suitable for the target groups of Internal and External CATs, and lately for training of other teachers, from 22 VET schools in Serbia;
4. The topics covered were diverse and practically applicable; they can be easily adapted and applied to particular target groups of teachers during the dissemination;
5. The atmosphere during the teacher training seminars was extremely pleasant, working, creative and encouraging;
6. The dissemination system was effective and efficient – potential users of these trainings are all the teachers who work in the pilot schools; the obligation of the CATs is to organise teacher training seminars in their schools for at least 20 teachers, i.e. for all teachers who are interested in them. The experience of our school is that through 3 cycles of trainings we involved 80% of the teaching staff. In this way the teachers were able to attend teacher development seminars in their own school (in the school where they work) without paying and without having other organisational and technical difficulties;
7. The teacher training seminars held in PTT School were positively evaluated;
8. The implementation in the teaching process has started and the students are very satisfied;
9. Jasminka Marković and Michael Axmann showed that they are competent, professional, eloquent, communicative and pleasant teacher trainers;
10. It is concluded that teacher training seminars for Internal and External CATs should be continued and, among other topics, particularly useful would be covering the following topics: Assessment, Projects development and Implementation, etc.
11. Should continue with strengthening of team potential of the external and internal CATs groups in order to exchange of experiences among the pilot schools, monitoring the results in the pilot schools, periodical panel discussions, etc.

Internal Change Agent Teacher in (VET) PTT School: Drinka Savić-Guteša
 External Change Agent Teacher in (VET) PTT School: Maja Todorović

Comments on the teacher training programme within VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II

1. The choice of the topics of the seminars shows that the teacher trainers thoroughly dealt with the needs of the teachers in the second phase of VET Reform Programme. The topics were carefully chosen (selected) and they were in accordance with the need to modernise the teaching process and to help the teachers master the skills necessary for achieving the desired results in their further cooperation with their business partners. The knowledge and skills acquired during these seminars can be applied in the future, not only in teaching, but also in other areas of life.
2. All the seminars were well - organised and well – planned, dynamic, interesting, and concrete; enough time was devoted to each topic. None of the seminars was too ambitious, i.e., all the topics were systematically covered step by step. During the teacher training seminars, the teacher trainers gave clear instructions so the participants knew exactly what was to be done all the time. The activities and their aims were always clearly defined.
3. During the seminars the participants were given very useful printed materials with detailed descriptions of all the activities covered, which means that they could read what they were interested in over and over again.
4. The teacher trainers monitored the work of the participants all the time and they were ready to give answers to all questions. They showed willingness to help at any time, not only during the seminars, but also during the Programme. They demonstrated their professionalism through giving advice and suggestions.
5. The teacher trainers fully dealt with the feedback they received from the CATs and planned all the activities taking into consideration the needs of the participants in the Programme.
6. They built an excellent team of the External Change Agent Teachers who will continue their business cooperation after the official end of the Programme.
7. Teachers were asked to try out all teaching methods in practice as they saw which methods best suit their students (and themselves, of course) and the curriculum.
8. It was insisted to apply Interdisciplinary approach – Teachers of different subjects are trained to work on simple projects which would aim at connecting the curricula of two or more subjects.
9. In the area of self – assessment big movement has been gained – Teachers are trained in self-evaluation and in giving feed-back in order to emphasise good and bad aspects of the running lessons.

The Report by the External Change Agent Teacher about the Work on VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II

The work and cooperation with Mr. Michael Axmann and Mrs. Jasminka Markovic along with the work on VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II started on 16 September 2006. with the seminar "Teaching Methods and Motivation" and continued with the seminars which referred to vocational pedagogy, communicative and interpersonal skills, techniques for External Change Agent Teachers and entrepreneurship, and they were the direct confirmation of the positive results in projects of this kind.

VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II Project has shown that school system reforms are a constant process (and that they must exist all the time) and that school system as the public service of economy and citizens should be in accordance with the economy itself and tendencies in it.

The teacher trainers, with their excellent rhetoric, communicative skills and the use of modern methods, fully shared their knowledge and information with seminar participants. It actually means that the colleagues Jasminka Markovic and Michael Axmann were given the highest marks.

This project points to all the problems that exist in our school system at the moment, i. e. it shows the alienation of the school system from the economy and the National Employment Service, which causes unemployment, i. e. producing a surplus of cadre as the final result.

Through VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II Project we have learnt how to make a link between education and economy, the National Employment Service, as well as linking with other social partners, with the aim of educating the deficit cadre which will reduce the percentage of the unemployed.

Also, as a typical representative of the Serbian schools I would like to make a reference to the Ministry of Education that is vary valuable organisation of the projects of this kind as often as possible so that the Serbian school system could reach the level of the European Union school system and that these two school systems could become equal partners one day.

Dejan Stefanovic, Tourism School in Paracin

The School of Mechanical Engineering “Radoje Dakic”

The Analysis of the Teacher Training Seminars for Change Agent Teachers in VET Reform Programme – Phase II

Since the School of Mechanical Engineering “Radoje Dakic” from Belgrade participated in both projects, CARDS I and VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II, and since both External and Internal Change Agent Teachers attended teacher training seminars in both projects, we thought that it was interesting to give the comparative analysis of the activities of these two projects.

The aim of these projects was creating a new school that would meet the needs of students and the needs of labour market, but only in the second phase, from the very beginning, the activities and the duties of all the participants were very precisely defined.

The topics covered during the teacher training seminars were carefully chosen and planned. The written material that accompanied the seminars was useful and it included diverse topics. The teacher trainers showed a high level of professionalism.

We would like to emphasise the fact that we were regularly monitored by the experts engaged on the project. It is important to say that we knew all the time who to ask for help or advice. We received all the necessary information in time, clearly and precisely.

The participants in the project wrote monthly reports which helped them (the Change Agent Teachers) to plan, carry out and evaluate the activities. The places where the seminars were held were adequate and suitable for the activities and the needs of the participants.

We think that the Change Agent Teachers have acquired the knowledge that will help them in carrying out their future activities.

Contrary to the first phase of the project in which bad organisational skills, bad choice of teacher trainers, the lack of coordination, a lot of vagueness and improvisation were present, in the second phase VET Reform Programme made the right choice of topics and teacher trainers, and the overall (good) impression was reinforced by the fact that all teacher training seminars were well organised.

As suggestion we would like to stress that it would be good to have some kind of institutionalisation of the CATs cooperation in order to secure further cooperation organised even after the official end of the project.

Nadezda Popovic, graduate mechanical engineer, External Change Agent Teacher
Stanic Katarina, psychologist, Internal Change Agent Teacher

The Opinion about the Seminars for Change Agent Teachers

In the course of the previous (2006/2007) school year a few several – day long seminars for Change Agent Teachers within VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II Programme were organised covering the topics of communicative and interpersonal skills necessary for the teaching process, new teaching methods and techniques, vocational pedagogy, etc. The authors and teacher trainers of these seminars who acted on behalf of VET Reform Programme were Mrs. Jasminka Markovic and Mr. Michael Axmann.

The contents of all well – organised teacher training seminars for Change Agent Teachers were so carefully chosen and planned that each participant could acquire the maximum of theoretical knowledge, and especially practical knowledge, skills and abilities, which is considered to be the merit of our teacher trainers. Besides the contents of the seminars, the methods applied by the teacher trainers helped a lot in creating a positive and healthy working atmosphere, which was the additional, facilitating factor in the work itself and the acquisition of new knowledge. The high - quality materials and the methods prepared and used by the teacher trainers, in combination with the clear and effective communication in the (teacher) trainer – participant relationship and constant motivating factors, as well as the professional organisation of the seminars, presentations and workshops proved to be useful and helpful to all the participants of the seminars for mastering the contents of the seminars completely.

The teacher trainers also showed understanding and offered all their help whenever we needed it and asked for it. Their advice concerning different issues referring to the CAT job description helped us enormously to fulfil all the duties we had in an appropriate way showing responsibility and professionalism.

In addition to the topics covered during the teacher training seminars and their application in teacher training seminars in our school and in our own work, we, as CATs in our school, are interested in training seminars dealing with project construction and social partnership between schools and the participants in the economy of our country. We believe that those seminars, along with the ones we have already had, could help us a lot in our future work.

Vera Stojanovic, Internal Change Agent Teacher, graduate electrical engineer
Milena Krstic, External Change Agent Teacher, graduate electrical engineer

The Cooperation with the VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II and HRD and Teacher Training Team

As the VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II Internal Change Agent Teacher in the Technical School of Wood Processing, Interior Decoration and Landscape Architecture in Belgrade, from September 2006, I have had the opportunity to cooperate with Jasminka Markovic and Michael Axmann from the HRD and Teacher Training Component. During our work on the VET Reform in the school where I work, I noticed their professional characteristics and, to a certain level, under the given circumstances, their personal characteristics, too.

First of all, I would like to point out a high level of their professional commitment to the tasks we had to perform as the basic characteristic of their work with the Internal and External CATs from 21 schools in Serbia.

Their professionalism could be first seen in their preparation, and then in the presentations of the topics covered during our seminars. This especially applies to the presentations given by Jasminka Markovic, since during the seminars we had the chance to meet other teacher trainers from different programmes. The presentations were made in an interesting way and given in an easy and smart way; I would like to emphasise that the presentations reflected the strong belief in the value of the necessity for reforms of our school system.

On the other hand, the professionalism of Jasminka Markovic did not exclude the human component. She showed the understanding for the difficulties we had to face in our schools; she prepared us patiently for all the challenges, helped us in our work, and gave advice. She was very careful in giving advice and she did not want to impose her ideas. At the same time, in our work she insisted on our independence, individuality development, freedom of thought and action and the respect for our differences. Our communication was actually based on deep mutual respect.

Jasminka Markovic and Michael Axmann were a real team – well-coordinated, precise, and qualified. Observing their work from “the other side of the teacher’s desk, that is, from the students’ point of view”, we have learnt how a team should work. Jasminka and Michael’s actions actually reflected everything they talked about during the seminars.

Besides his professional experience and knowledge, Michael Axmann showed, with his honest curiosity and understanding, that there are no boundaries between people that cannot be crossed. He was a good – natured foreigner. He was a careful listener, patient and, I would say, an incorrigible optimist (ever the optimist).

At the end, I would like to wish success in further professional work to all VET REFORM PROGRAMME - PHASE II representatives with whom my school cooperated in the previous period.

Miroslav Markovic, Internal Change Agent Teacher
The Technical School of Wood Processing, Interior Decoration and Landscape Architecture,
Belgrade