

# Professional Development Support Facilities for Teachers

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## Introduction

### Professional development of teachers and the support institutions

Before we go over to the description of the professional development support system for Polish teachers, we shall briefly review the different issues appearing in the relevant literature on the subject. Let us start with the basic term of this study: the professional development of teachers. It is being widely used in the latest pedagogical texts and especially in compilations concerning the education policy.

In the special issue of the *European Journal of Teacher Education* (2001), which has broadly covered the issue, Maureen Killeavy is pointing out that many researchers define professional development of teachers as the result of a formal, institutionalised education of candidates and the process of improving personal skills in the course of work placement and further studies. However, it happens more and more often that the idea of professional development pursued by means of a structured knowledge-conveying process within a formal framework offered by authorised institutions loses to a wider understanding of development - as a phenomenon occurring in all sorts of different formal and informal contexts. Those include conferences, seminars, courses, postgraduate studies, doctoral research and all kinds of liaisons - with peers, friends, neighbours, in museums, pubs, via the Internet and using other media.

Having emphasised the role of professional development of teachers, the authors of the special issue of *EJTE* make reference to M. G. Fullan and his thesis presented in his famous book *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991), according to which it is not only teachers who benefit from the professional development but - what is more important - it is also the educational practice which is the beneficiary. Fullan treats professional development of teachers as the cornerstone for all shifts and reforms in education. It should, however, be emphasised that the concept devised by Fullan

14 years ago unfortunately never provoked any theoretical discussions that would put light on the real meaning of professional development and point out to features the support institutions should have.

The weakness of theoretical discussions on professional development of teachers resulted - according to Scottish researchers K. Livingston and J. Robertson (2001) - in many institutions in Scotland having been established under bureaucratic procedures, the statutory objectives of which involve the support for professional development of teachers, however, they never managed to build a clear support network. Since the situation described by the two researchers is quite typical for the whole Europe, let us have a look at the list of those facilities. It begins with postgraduate studies organised by teacher education institutes (TEIs) established in the seventies and financed from the central budget. Their programmes pursue the philosophy of teacher's competencies, so much favoured by educational politicians, officials and the evaluation and accreditation agencies. The said competencies are determined arbitrarily and can be general - such as for example the education of children with special educational needs, or more specific - when relating to teaching individual subjects. Since the seventies, the teacher education institutes has had the right to conduct graduate studies, which, before, had been the privilege of universities. The postgraduate studies are funded by centrally distributed grants. All that teachers or their employers - local governments or schools - need to pay is the registration fee.

Apart from extensive postgraduate and graduate studies, TEIs offer short, two- or three-hour methodical courses and workshops to meet the current needs of teachers. K. Livingston and J. Robertson give examples of the subjects: "Calculators in the primary school", "Evaluating the reading achievements of

children aged 5–8; “Computers in learning mathematics”. In the eighties those courses were financed directly from central grants, later the grants were shifted to local governments.

The idea behind the teacher education institutes was that they were supposed to ensure individual methodical tutorship for schools in their area. A spicy piece of news is that the posts of school counsellors –tutors were financed thanks to the reduced expenditures for education of candidates for teachers. It had soon become clear that the school tutorship provided by counsellors was very expensive and difficult to monitor. Today, the local school counselling schemes operate on a very limited scale and are entirely funded from the school funds.

Apart from TEIs, Scotland has a network of professional development support facilities for teachers, which are organised by local government. Here we are also faced with a typical situation: the facilities from large and rich agglomerations operate well, whereas those from small and poorer ones – are doing much worse. Initiating cooperation between the small facilities could constitute a remedy, yet, such cooperation is being rarely initiated. Since 1999, there has been also another factor that has deteriorated the position of institutions organised by local governments. The paradox is that the transfer of control over education by the United Kingdom government to the Scottish parliament contributed to that deterioration. This move has reinforced the position of the Scottish central authorities – at the expense of the local governments.

Let us go over now to traditional institutions supporting teacher vocational training in Scotland, such as the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Until the end of the nineties, they offered classical university courses to teachers interested in raising their qualifications - in philosophy, psychology, sociology, history of education or methodology. Those courses provided the basis for obtaining the master's degree in education. Today, the situation looks different. Since the enforcement in 1998 of the ordinance of the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID), the teaching of traditional university subjects has been superseded with teaching competencies and introduction of a substantial number of in-service practice hours. It should be pointed out that the standardisation of teacher education, which has brought alignment of the university programmes with those offered by non-university teacher education institutions (TEIs), has not been happening without protests of the university staff. V. Halstead (2003) has used bitter words to describe the changes in the Scottish universities and the corresponding changes introduced earlier in English universities as “the transformation of the communities of scholars, which the traditional universities had once been, into vocational schools with externally imposed educational programmes”.

The Open University is another facility in Scotland to play a major role in supporting professional development of teachers by organising graduate studies and doctoral research. The authors emphasise that those studies– although furnished with the “competence-driven” curriculum, demonstrate high level and are particularly attractive for teachers from rural regions.

The authors do not quote any figures concerning the number of teachers participating in the activities organised by all the above institutions. In Scotland, life-long learning is advisable but not compulsory. The authors are pointing out that the motivation of teachers to take it up is “stimulated” by way of providing the possibility of writing a master's and doctor's thesis, as is offered by all institutions, not only universities.

Apart from the programmes offered by professional development support institutions, the authors of the special issue of the *European Journal of Teacher Education* took into account many more practical issues. One of the major issues

was the interdependency between the teacher's professional position and his or her income and undertaking further development studies. In Sweden, for instance, as we can learn from the article by M. Drakenberg (2001), the income of teachers is not dependant upon further education. It only depends on the seniority. In the neighbouring Norway, the situation looks quite different. Having decided to raise his or her qualifications, the teacher can choose between two types of courses. Accomplishment of the first course type raises the teacher's professional status and entails a higher income. The subjects to be studied during those courses are usually wide in scope. The second course type usually involves short training sessions aimed at improving the teacher's methodological tools. The former is generally organised by teacher education institutions: colleges and universities, the latter is carried out by teacher development facilities at the local governments (Hansen and Simonsen 2001).

The literature on teacher development devotes little space to the theory of that process. Exceptions in that respect include the above-cited article by K. Livingston and J. Robertson. In the conclusion to the description of the professional development support institutions in Scotland, they emphasise the difficulty in determining their effectiveness without giving a deeper theoretical thought to the nature of the professional development process and its effects. Their considerations can be summarised in one sentence: the theory allows to find solutions to the very complex practical problems and enables to solve them ever more reliably. Their suggestion is to derive the theory of professional development and the supporting institutions from the Fullan's concept (1991). According to them, one of the possible measures of the effectiveness of the courses, workshops, graduate studies, doctoral research and postgraduate studies are the changes in the school practice introduced under their influence (or: changes which have not been introduced under their influence). The teacher support institutions are the more effective the better they can stimulate the sense of authorship and teach how to effectively measure the immediate and long-term effects of the introduced changes.

Taking into account the concepts devised by J.H.Vonk (1991), K. Livingston and J. Robertson have considered two models of changing the school reality. The first – bureaucratic one – has resulted from the assumption that education is an arbitrarily controlled system with rules formed to a major extent in political and economic debates rather than deriving from communication between members of the broad educational circles, i.e. teachers, parents, pupils, local community members. The role of the teacher is in this case reduced to the right of introducing changes that have been planned by somebody else; it has become a common saying that the teacher manages the process of changes.

Another model – a “participation” model, as Vonk (1991) put it, is based on the assumption that the structure of the school and other educational facilities is jointly decided by the representatives of the environment in which they operate.

Adoption of these two extreme models of introducing changes to the educational institutions opens two paths for teacher professional development. In the first model, the professional development profile of the teacher is decided to a large extent by somebody else rather than him- or herself. The teacher's tools are in this case determined by external quality standards of the school's work, elaborated lists of professional competencies etc., while the needs of the school and the society are determined over the heads of teachers. Incidentally, as we can see from the considerations of K. Livingston, J. Robertson and V. Halstead, the tools of teachers in English and Scottish universities are also structured in the same external, arbitrary way.

In the second model teachers are perceived as leaders of the educational environment, able to take up the responsibility for their career development. Institutions supporting that development supply the teacher solely with some rules to help him or her make the decisions, as well as with the methods of evaluating their consistency.

## The study objectives and the report structure

Our report has been an attempt to joining in the discussion on professional development of teachers. The study presented in it had two objectives. The first one was to recognise the institutional structure of the professional development support system for teachers. The second one involved working out a diagnosis of the professional development support network and the professional needs of teachers. Due to the research possibilities, the exploration was limited to two provinces.

We neither knew much about the county-based or communal systems nor were we familiar with the objectives, work methods or evolution of the results of the counsellors' work. We were seeking to find the answer to the most important question: to what extent does the entire teacher vocational support structure (and the new institutions in particular) meet the needs of teachers and what is the extent of cooperation between the counselling system and other educational system institutions.

This report is a summary of the research carried out in two provinces: Lower Silesia and Podlasie. We chose those provinces taking into account the very different teacher vocational support systems. The differences concerned the number of teachers per one methodical counsellor and the teacher vocational support policies, which is reflected in the structure of the entire system.

The objective of this part of the study is to identify the major problems that have been or remain to be solved by the life-long learning institutions for teachers in two regions of Poland – the Lower Silesia and the Podlasie provinces. The choice of these two regions was caused by the fact that after the 1999 reform they adopted an entirely different basis for life-long learning systems for teachers. The aim of our analysis was to draw a map of the major achievements and threats for both provincial life-long learning systems for teachers.

## The study questions

The study questions that we were seeking answers to in this part of the study were the following:

1. What is the structure of the regional life-long learning systems for teachers that we selected?
  - 1.1. What are the entities that are part of that structure?
  - 1.2. What is the cooperation network between those entities?
2. What are the features of the local policy with respect to the life-long learning problems of teachers?

## The study method

We decided to use case studies as the major study method. As a result of the analysis of the interviews with directors of provincial, county-based and municipal life-long learning facilities for teachers, interviews with staff members from the Marshal's Offices in both provinces, with school superintendents and employees of local universities, we managed to prepare

descriptions of the two provincial life-long learning systems for teachers. In the study we considered also the training offers prepared by the facilities for the school year 2003/04.

### The Lower Silesia life-long learning system for teachers

In addition to the interviews with directors of life-long learning facilities for teachers and the analysis of the training programmes, we asked employees of the local universities, staff members of the school superintendent's offices and employees of the provincial professional development facilities for teachers to evaluate the system.

The former Director of the Provincial Development Centre for Teachers (Wojewódzki Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli) – currently – a research fellow of the Lower Silesian College of Education, provided us with the following examples of the system success: building a large group of counsellors gathered in the county-based facilities, building the local base for teacher development – quite well equipped already, the rearrangement and alignment of the county-based teacher support facilities: pedagogical libraries, psychological and pedagogical counselling centres as well as ensuring extensive information on the development opportunities for teachers.

Weaker points indicated by our interlocutor included poor collaboration between the county-based and provincial facilities. Another weakness was, in his opinion, the excessive ambition of small county-based facilities: *the county-based facilities have ambition to be independent, however, with their limited funds and scarce specialists they don't stand much chance. And, it is not all about making every facility self-sufficient* (interview, 10.11.2004). Our interlocutor mentioned also other weak points: *Unclear development schemes for teachers. Some of the county-based facilities lack leaders, some directors prefer bureaucratic strategies. There are too few "pedagogical" strategists with a development vision of the local education and improvement in his or her own environment* (the same interview). He expressed no positive opinion about the escape provoked by counsellors from the teacher's in-service training to courses. According to our interlocutor, the county-based facility networks receive poor support, too: *both counsellors and directors do not benefit from development that would be tailor-made to their needs and duties. The provincial DODN (Lower Silesian Development Centre for Teachers) is a natural institution to provide support in that field, however, its role is too weak. It often happens that DODN perceives the county-based facilities not as institutions that would strengthen its authority, not as "clients" but as competitors in terms of teachers' development* (the same interview). He finished his evaluation of the system with the following statement: *the county-based facilities are very much differentiated. Some of them have a very good programme, excellent staff, very good directors who enjoy respect in their community. Yet, there are also facilities which are a real disappointment.*

After providing us with a few in-depth opinions, our interlocutor formulated recommendations for the founders of the Lower Silesian Life-Long Learning System for Teachers. He believed that the development of the county-based network of facilities should be supported in the following way:

- improvement of the work programmes (they often fail to embrace the existing needs or identify own possibilities or cooperation opportunities);
- essential support for the county-based facilities by providing expert's opinions and training opportunities;
- ensuring coordination and better cooperation – mainly between county-based and provincial facilities.

The above opinions overlap to a certain extent with the opinion expressed by the Lower Silesia School Superintendent. According to him, the system advantages refer to the following aspects:

- the possibility of establishing local pedagogical information and vocational counselling centres;
- the possibility for the facilities and schools to work together on execution of educational projects;
- the possibility of organising and coordinating various educational activities by the facilities, such as support for gifted pupils, education fair;
- the possibility of frequent verification of educational needs of teachers;
- the possibility of prompt accommodation of the counselling and development offer to the actual needs;
- the possibility of organising different forms of support (self-education teams, support groups);
- the possibility of effective experience sharing between teachers, integration of the teacher environment;
- the possibility of expanding the publishing house networks of the facilities,
- the possibility of reducing organisational costs of counselling and professional development.

The Superintendent noticed *certain* deficiencies within the system. Among them he mentioned the large organisational freedom in establishing county-based facilities and *charging the costs of operation to the managing body only, as a result of constant difficulties in concluding agreements with the communes* (conversation, 25.11.2004).

Since all the facilities studied by us pointed out to the fruitful cooperation with the provincial Lower Silesian Vocational Information and Teacher Development Centre in Wałbrzych, we asked its Director to evaluate the system. As the top advantage of the system he emphasised its local character. He pointed out the availability of training services for teachers from small towns, the possibility of taking part in such training sessions close to home and the effective process of informing about the training opportunities organised by the Lower Silesian Vocational Information and Teacher Development Centre. According to him, the disadvantages included the poor cooperation between county-based facilities. Some training sessions offered by the Lower Silesian Vocational Information and Teacher Development Centre had to be cancelled since one facility is sometimes unable to gather the appropriate number of delegates. The above concerns mainly training sessions on vocational education in broad terms.

A sometimes inadequate equipment resources of the facilities are also a source of difficulties for the system operation (based on the interview with the Director, 9.12.2004).

After the series of opinions on the Lower Silesian Life-Long Learning System for Teachers, we would like to present changes within the system (based on the interview with Z. Tagowski, the Director of the Education Bureau in the Marshal's Office).

The fundamental change in the system came as a result of the resolution of the Local Government of the Lower Silesian Province on budgetary establishments - such as the provincial teacher development facilities. Our interlocutor said that *there was pressure on organising such forms of development which resulted from educational projects devised and implemented by the provincial authorities, and concerned different aspects of the work of schools and facilities and their management, supervision, etc.*

The changes being currently introduced in the Lower Silesian Life-Long Learning System for Teachers are related to funding training schemes and publications concerning the provincial education policy.

The amendment to the resolution of the provincial government ensured the following funds:

- for life-long learning for teachers under the educational projects:
  - up to PLN 10 per teaching hour per delegate,
  - up to 90% of the costs of conferences, seminars,
- for skill promotion:
  - up to 100% of the project costs,
- for publishing pedagogical literature:
  - up to 30% of the edition cost.

The Director provided us with the following reasons of the enforcement of those amendments: *This change corresponds to the provisions of the resolution on the accreditation of the development facilities for teachers, where the necessity of verifying the effectiveness of the individual forms is emphasised. The current practice shows explicitly that consultants with many years of „experience“, despite making a diagnosis of the development requirements, still push for “exploited” forms (...) which in my eyes are nothing more than “developmental pulp, the effectiveness of which is very much doubtful* (the same interview).

The provincial government hopes also for this kind of additional funding to stimulate efforts in favour of more comprehensive projects concerning various spheres of activities undertaken by individual schools or the entire local education systems. The Director has emphasised that the projects may in turn be applied in conjunction with appropriate EU funds.

The second, much wider change, in our interlocutor's opinion, concerns a closer cooperation of pedagogical libraries with teacher development facilities.

The current experience shows that those establishments, which are part of county-based development centres, constitute a complex from the formal point view, however, they operate fully independently in terms of the essential matters: *In consequence, the System of Pedagogical Information implemented in our region, connecting all county-based development facilities and pedagogical libraries through the ALEPHA network, is not utilising its full capacity* (the same interview).

Three former provincial cities have decided to unite the branches of pedagogical libraries with the branches of the Lower Silesian Development Centre for Teachers (incorporation of a library into DODN, i.e. its reorganisation rather than creating a complex). Appropriate teams of consultants, method specialists and the current librarians will “produce” pedagogical information in the form of educational packages (sets for teachers including textbooks and support materials, curricula, lesson scenarios and synopses) as well as informative packages regarding various formal and legal aspects (exams, awarding marks, professional promotion, foreign cooperation). The Director said also: *We hope very much for this unification to bring a valuable synergy effect to stimulate (who else is to do that, after all!?) the growth of the information society. The ALEPHA network will facilitate ordering and delivery of various materials for teachers, establishing specific subject-related platforms, publishing, and (sic! – it's a new idea) on-line counselling (this may be an encouragement for teachers who have reached the threshold of conscious incompetence and are ashamed to disclose it tête-à-tête). According to my observation and multiple “interviews”, a vast majority of teachers feel utterly lost in the jungle of chaotic and uncertain information, while many of them (vide: report from the mock secondary school examination) do not know (and obviously do not want to know) there is a compulsory system called core curriculum* (interview

with Director Z. Tagowski, 10.11.2004).

### Professional support system for teachers in the Podlasie province

The analysis of the system of development facilities in the Podlasie province can lead to the conclusion that it has all the features of "declining decentralisation". This manifests in the following phenomena:

- no common vision of development programmes that would be devised by provincial institutions and carried out by local government units other than provincial government,
- open animosity of the provincial facilities towards municipal facilities (the same kind of attitude towards non-public facilities),
- competition between provincial and municipal facilities – which clearly manifests in the fact that there is no information about the municipal facilities in the publication of the Central Teacher Education Establishment (Centralny Ośrodek Kształcenia Nauczycieli),
- lack of continuity of the education policy at the time of political power shifts in local governments; it has manifested in "suspending" the course for counsellors from a municipal establishment when there was a change in the position of the director of the provincial development centre.

Very symptomatic have been the words of the Vice-Marshal of the Podlasie province: *it seems that there is no sense at all to keep two or three development levels operating at the same time, it seems that it would be much clearer to establish a uniform structure which would be subject to one decision maker, one authority, (...), and very closely, or tightly connected with the school superintendent's office, the ministry of education, to make those facilities essentially strong, well staffed, well supervised from the essential point of view, providing basis for their employees to continuously improve their skills and keep directly and continuously in touch with the central level, as such liaisons can be beneficial both in the legislative and counselling dimension; it is not about giving commands but about ensuring an unequivocal profile of the knowledge, management and decision-making.*

When asked to give his opinion on the development system in the Podlasie province, the visiting supervisor of development facilities for teachers said: *the problem is caused by insufficient regulations on counselling under the education law. The ordinance on the development facilities for teachers gives a detail description of tasks of the provincial teacher development facilities, yet, there is only one sentence about other teacher development facilities that are managed by local government units and operated in the provinces.* He said further: *A wider dialogue is needed, with the participation of different entities, on the role, tasks and importance of methodological counselling in Poland, as it is not only the problem of our province but of the whole country.* According to our interlocutor, the lack of legal regulations leads to a situation where *at present, strange enough, in the majority of the provinces new methodical counselling facilities are being established in counties or communes, which – pursuant to the ordinance – should focus on counselling, but they fail to perform the majority of counselling tasks and (...) concentrate on longer forms instead – not so much on professional development but on further education, i.e. qualification courses, which simply bring profits.*

This objection would be more reasonable if there was a common consensus as to the meaning of the expression "focusing on counselling". It seems also impossible to draw an explicit line between longer and shorter life-long learning

forms for teachers. Any differentiation would require applying some measurable indicators, whereas, this is absolutely impossible. For it is difficult to judge whether several meetings and discussions of a teacher-counsellor with his or her colleagues on the lack of motivation for school learning observed in junior high school pupils - or on aggression - are longer forms or still short forms. It is not the point, after all. The vital issue is to adopt a model of counselling. The talks have shown that many of our interlocutors define counselling, i.e. simply speaking – helping others to find relationship between values, theoretical knowledge and practical experience, as the direct advice provided mainly in the teacher's or counsellor's workplace. We can agree to this definition, however, it raises a number of questions. Can the common solution-seeking in "support groups" or methodical "open study rooms" in Lower Silesia for instance be called counselling?

Already these questions show the strong need of a broad discussion on the concept and legal regulations concerning life-long learning facilities for teachers, where defining the spheres of activity of consultants and counsellors would just be a small part of such a discussion. The lack of the general concept and the legal regulations leads to conflicts between employees from provincial facilities and the municipal and county-based staff. The conflicts aggravate whenever the competing facilities are localised close to each other. Both parties emphasised in the interviews that it was the qualification courses organised by county-based and municipal facilities that constituted the bone of contention. Whereas, pursuant to the ordinance of the minister of national education and sport (Official Journal No 84, 15 May 2003, section 779, §16.1), municipal and county-based facilities are allowed to organise some qualification courses – as provided for in the ordinance. The analysis of the documentation of the municipal and county-based facilities proves that they organise only such courses as allowed under the ordinance.

It is worthwhile emphasising that similar discussions have been held for years in other European countries. The result has been a departure from analysing the *in-service training* segment in favour of working out a comprehensive concept of teacher education. This system has been equipped with certain performance indicators, while its characteristic features include continuity and integrity (Eurydice 2004).

Continuity is understood as no boundaries between:

- education of candidates for teachers at universities, in pedagogical colleges or other authorised establishments;
- education of trainees during initial work placements at educational facilities;
- further life-long development of teachers.

This postulate is difficult to achieve as the education structure of those three stages differs traditionally and is also organised by different subjects. Let us take a closer look at the teacher education stages in our country.

The initial preparation to become a teacher usually involves studies at a university or another authorised facility.

Afterwards, the initial work placement is organised in a different place, at school, under the guidance of a tutor, who is often not related to the university where the trainee studied. Generally, tutors employ traditional approach and use their intuition when dealing with trainees. This has been proved by our study. No facility involved with our the research had any offer of development or qualification courses for the trainee tutors.

Further education of teachers in development facilities involves participation in courses, workshops, conferences, where the themes have a discreet structure to "meet the social demand". Our findings proved that the facilities offered no

policy of supporting professional development of teachers. In many cases it was difficult to find any relation between the policy priorities in a facility, indicated by its director, and the number of training hours or the number of training sessions earmarked for exploring the priority. We got the impression that subjects tackled during the courses for teachers were fully fortuitous. We also noticed a severe deficiency in terms of ensuring sequences of themes, long-term projects or modular training sessions.

In addition, the policies of the individual development facilities can be characterised as strongly promoting their respective particular interests. *Lack of cooperation, ban on cooperation, cool non-aggression* are the expressions describing the status of relations between numerous provincial and municipal teacher development facilities. In such atmosphere any cooperation concerning the programme or attempts to devise a common concept of training at the third level of education seem difficult. Level three is marked by the lowest integrity and integration of educational contents around any leading slogan.

Unfortunately, nothing good is to be expected in terms of the lack of concept of education at stage three as the result of the enforcement of the accreditation requirement for the development facilities. Additionally, the accreditation rules for universities, including those hosting future teacher candidates, are by far stricter than in those in development facilities. Accreditation boards in universities are composed of academics from different colleges and universities all over the country. On the other hand, accreditation boards appointed by competent school superintendents for the purpose of accrediting a development facility are composed of representatives of the same district. Thus we have a Polish paradox: a partial self-rule of universities and a full autonomy of the development institutions.

Systems that ensure teacher development schemes in cooperation with the schools the teachers graduated from (usually universities) tend to demonstrate a higher degree of continuity. This is the case in Australia or Sweden. Local governments in Australia simply order training cycles for their teachers with the universities. Such solutions have an additional advantage: there is a continuous research taking place during the school activities, pursued by both the lecturers and the delegates, with the subject-matters focusing on the school problems and the teacher's profession.

The facilities we have studied employed some academic teachers as lecturers, however, those were usually incidental cases and any such activities were by no means regular. One facility had to employ academics when its teachers refused to participate in the lectures that were supposed to be conducted by provincial consultants, regarding them of no added value. Much more interesting was an example of a facility that cooperated with a foreign language college, as there we could see the continuity of education at stages one and three.

## Recommendations

The results of our study leave no room for doubt that it is necessary to hold a wide-scale debate on the school and professional development of teachers. Such a debate should involve theoretical discussion and monitoring of the programmes at the three stages of teacher education: the initial stage at the university or another authorised institution, the stage of initial work placement and during further development.

No discussion in that respect leads to the absence of any programme concept - specifically at the stage of education of the already active teachers. The debate should help the

teacher development support facilities (the small ones in particular) in building the work programmes (according to our expert, it often happens that: *they fail to embrace the existing needs or identify own possibilities or opportunities of cooperation with other entities*). Our interviews have shown that the opinions concerning professional development are becoming commonplace thinking or adopt a form of dispersed, spontaneous, intuitive and emotional utterances. They are by no means structured, systematic or supported by any systematic argument. They are often a result of hasty generalisation of one's individual experience or a partial interpretation of events. It should certainly be pointed out, however, that - as in the case of every commonplace thinking, also this kind of experience can sometimes contain numerous relevant remarks. Yet, we are unable to make a sound judgement whether they are true and to what extent they are applicable, as we have no method of their verification. The facilities participating in our study (mainly those located in Lower Silesia) do try to change their educational practice. Such attempts are on a local scale, yet, they are important enough to make them eligible for becoming the focal point of a broad discussion.

There is still another aspect concerning devising of programmes for institutions supporting professional development of teachers. The programmes of the analysed facilities were approved to a large extent by their teachers. Other teachers evaluated their suitability expressing own attitude towards the offer they were proposed. It can be, therefore, said that it is the teachers concerned who decide about the structure of the professional development support institutions for teachers. We should take into account the fact that teachers may have a different point of view on their development or potential changes that may or should be introduced at school, than the rest of the society. For instance, an OECD book entitled *What Schools for the Future?* has shown the problem of trusting in school as an institution in Sweden in the following light: 37% of the Swedes have trust in school while in the case of teachers that percentage accounts for 65%.

A lack of discussion on professional development of teachers is not the Polish specialty. K. Livingston and J. Robertson (2001) claim that the lack of theoretical debate is one of the driving factors in Scotland of establishing many different institutions according to bureaucratic procedures, providing no clear network of support in terms of professional development of teachers. Fullan (1991), already quoted by us on various occasions, is of the opinion that the lack of theory causes that thousands of teachers return from hundreds of workshops, courses and conferences to their school classes where nothing changes - neither after the course nor at any later time. Let us point out that changes may not actually be necessary, yet, if it is so, it should be a conscious decision of the entire teachers' society, supported by a theoretical rationale, according to the saying "there is nothing more practical than a good theory".

Problems that definitely need discussing include the autonomy of universities in adopting the programmes. It seems necessary to thoroughly review the analysis materials concerning the new situation in the European universities after the "competence-driven" programmes have been adopted. We also need to discuss the issue of the complementary character of the traditional university curricula, such as: philosophy, psychology, sociology, history of education, which, according to V. Halstead (2003), have disappeared from the English universities, as well as of the complementary character of the competence-driven programmes.

The duties of the teachers of teachers need to be defined. Our suggestion is - first - to introduce a closer cooperation with the school of both counsellors - working directly with

teachers and consultants – lecturers invited to participate in courses for teachers and counsellors. Both groups should stay in continuous touch with the school and:

- Support teachers by providing in-service training, organise own demonstration lessons and open lessons of other teachers;
- Support teachers in negotiations with parents and other representatives from the educational circles;
- Monitor the school activities;
- Conduct research within the framework of the *action research* projects;
- Organise educational excursions and internships, including abroad;
- Assist teachers in professional self-development, make them familiar with new publications, articles or texts published in the Internet.

Secondly, it seems reasonable to ensure an equal legal status of consultants and counsellors (*keeping both forms in the legal system with the ever more often overlapping tasks should be put into consideration* – says one of our experts, a development facilities visiting supervisor from the Podlaskie Superintendent's Office).

The rules of examining teachers to qualify for “professional promotion” should definitely be changed. A situation where vocational support facilities for teachers organise courses to train teachers how to build a professional portfolio using the money of taxpayers is inadmissible. This situation is an example of a spiral of bureaucracy and is similar to another pathological example: the minister of finance issues a vague ordinance and his or her employees earn money on explaining the ordinance to the people.

The cooperation between the development facilities and publishers require a definite normalisation. We should go back to the practice of organising common conferences with publishers on the textbooks and other publications for pupils and teachers. Independent training sessions organised by publishers, as described by our interlocutors, are simply promotional campaigns and as such should take place elsewhere rather than in teacher development facilities. A promotional campaign carried out in a development facility can bring to life corruptive practices. What is worth promoting, though, is the cooperation between publishers, teachers (a revival of experimental schools may be worth considering here) and the development facility staff to jointly monitor the functioning of textbooks and other educational publications.

A pact on “continuity of the education policy” should be definitely adopted and remain in force during political shifts in local governments!

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