
TRAINING OF TEACHERS, LEGISLATION AND EXPERIENCE IN ALBANIAN EDUCATION

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Abstract: Training and qualification of teachers in the Republic of Albania has gone through problems related to the political system applied before 1990, to come up to educational, economic, social and infrastructural problems. Teachers' training is an early tradition in Albania, which has changed its form and content depending on political situations, but also on structural and substantial reforms which education system in our country has experienced. Prior to the 1990s, training was solely a right of Albanian universities and higher pedagogical institutes. Hence, higher education institutions in Albania carried out both the initial education of teachers and their continuing training. Such a training was free and was generally made for qualification purposes according to a professional escalation of 5, 10, 15, 20 years and for some time even of 25 years. Overall, the training aimed at qualifying teachers, obtaining a degree in the qualification category, as well as updating their academic knowledge. After 1990, teachers' training remained still an attribute of the state and specifically of the Ministry of Education. This institution assigned this task to the Institute of Pedagogical Studies (ISP) until 2008. Meanwhile, a series of structural reforms were undertaken, leading to a reformation of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies, thereby dividing policy making into education with training. The system of local trainers already set up in 1993, was operational until 1998, when it was replaced by another method of organization by the Ministry of Education and Science. To this end, it was established the Training and Qualification Center for Education. This led to the way teachers were taught to be changed.

[1] On 1 February 2005, almost a year and a half following a Decision of the Council of Ministers, the Education and Training Center for Education was put in place. This Training Center was set up at central level by a special Decision of the Council of Ministers, with a good aim for teachers' training at the national level. Irrespective of the legal regulation made for the training process, still it left room for interpretation and there were also certain deficiencies. In order to make the training of its teachers in the Regional Educational Directorates and Educational Offices the most active and qualitative possible, special sections for teachers' training and qualification were set up. The establishment of these structures was regulated by virtue of instructions issued by the Minister of Education as a legal power attributed to him by the constitution. Until that time, the training for teachers was state-organized and free of charge. Following 2011, several legal amendments were made which liberalized the teachers' training market while introducing private operators as well. The Law 69/2012 sanctioned a special provision on teachers' training. This article explicitly states that teachers should be trained for duration of at least three days a year. Training providers according to the law are: the personal contribution of the education employee, the State Budget, projects of non-profit organizations, foundations, institutions, domestic or foreign, and other legitimate sources. Certainly, the relevant sub-legal acts and guidelines for this purpose have been issued to make the law as applicable as possible. In our opinion, it would be of interest, to treat in our paper at the training session from legal perspective, the way of implementation and the experience gained in Albanian education.

Keywords: teacher, legislation, training, qualification

1. INTRODUCTION

Training and qualification are very important for all categories of teachers worldwide, as well as Albanian teachers. We believe that the results of teachers training should be a significant pre-condition for compilation and implementation of a clear, understandable and applicative legislation. The structure and legislation of qualification and trainings in Albania have changed. Albanian experience in trainings is rich, but it has been subject of significant changes since 1993 and pursuant. Before the '90-ies, it was called teachers' attestation and was based on guideline of Universities and Higher Pedagogical Institutes (Elbasan, Gjirokaster and Shkoder). Meanwhile, after 1993, it was considered as a pyramid-shaped training. Institute of Pedagogical Studies used to train trainers at local level so than they could train trainers at school level.

In early 2006, the training method totally changed in physiognomy, as well as in the legal aspect. This required not only an adaptation of by-laws with new structure, but it was also necessary to review the effects of this reformation. Hence, in the legal point of view, the state was still the only provider of the trainings, except trainings held in cooperation with foreign associations, which were carried out based on joint agreements.

Later on, in 2011, it was noted that from the human resources point of view the state was not capable of covering all the needs of professional development of teachers. Therefore, it was obligated to allow state operators, Public Higher Education Institutions (HEI), Non-Public Higher Education Institutions, NGO-s, different training centers, which offered trainings in line with the respective law and sub-legal acts. We should highlight that changes in the training methods were very frequent, perhaps not well-defined and sometimes they did not make sense. Certainly, we must consider as positive the fact that trainings and vocational education of teachers was sanctioned by law, paving the way to a legal package related to this process.

2. LEGAL PRINCIPLES IN THE FIELD OF TEACHERS TRAINING

From the legislation point of view, teachers' qualification and training is currently regulated based on law 69/2012 dated 21.06. 2012. Earlier and in continuity, there were several laws and guidelines focused exactly on teachers' training. The landmark legislation of teachers' training was law 7952 dated 21.06.1995 "On Higher Pre-University Education", and later on the amendments to law 872 in 2004 and 2008¹¹². The first represents a number of key rules related to the field of students' assessment, registrations, standards and predictions of teachers training; as such, it accelerated the recent law 69/2012. The second, law 8872 defines general principles of composition, organization and management of Education and Professional Training (APT).

Upon a joint guideline of Ministry of Education and Ministry responsible for vocational education¹¹³, a series of guidelines have been issued in this respect, including the Normative Provisions of Pre-University Education approved in 2002, as well as a series of orders and guidelines regulating teachers' training¹¹⁴. As mentioned, Ministry of Education gave up from the being the one and only provider of teachers' training, but is certainly the supervisor, licenser and controller of the training procedures. Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY), together with Institute for Educational Development (IED), are responsible of the supervision of constant professional development system. IED shall carry out surveys and questionnaires in the entire country aiming to identify the national need for teachers' training at country scale. While authorities identify data for needs of teachers, Commission for Accreditation of Training Programs (CAPT) accredits the programs for a Constant Professional Development (CPD) for a 4-year period to meet these needs.

Need for teachers training is a known international practice, discussed in numerous national and international documents¹¹⁵. Since 2014- 2015, teachers must attend the compulsory IED in order to get qualified for promotion as soon as they get five, ten and twenty years of work in careers or after them as part of the scheme of their qualifications (MoES, 2015b, 2015)¹¹⁶. The 2012 law requires that schools must plan the IED in line with needs of teachers, as well as central and local education policies. Nevertheless, teachers make their decisions regarding the IED they wish to attend, by choosing from a list of accredited offers. The system of their progress in career does not reward participation in potentially valid forms of ZHVP, as school-based learning.

In continuity, MoESY has recently compiled teachers' qualification standards¹¹⁷ as well as has defined the teachers training methods, timetable, credits to be received, registration manner, etc. Likewise, the Institute for Educational Development has a special website where are published all types of trainings, private and state providers, as well as definitions of the training modules. Registration of teachers with a special guideline is carried out online, under the excuse of increase of training transparency, better supervision, as well as the opportunity that the state could collect

¹¹² 2011b. Regulation on the Organization and Development of Professional Practices to Regulate the Profession of Teachers. <http://www.arsimi.gov.al/files/userfiles/arkiva/dok-0004.pdf> (Accessed 12 October 2015.) (in Albanian.)

¹¹³ Project name: *Assistance in preparation of Sublegal Act for Vocation Education and Training in frame of execution of new VET Law approved by the parliament in May 2014.*

¹¹⁴ *Manuali i plotë i Inspektimit të shkollës*, SAVE THE CHILDREN&MOES (2005)

¹¹⁵ 2013. *Teachers for the 21st Century: Using Evaluation to Improve Teaching*. Paris, OECD Publishing UNESCO, Seksioni i Politikës Arsimore Gusht (2017)

¹¹⁶ 2013. *Teachers for the 21st Century: Using Evaluation to Improve Teaching*. Paris, OECD Publishing: UNESCO, Seksioni i Politikës Arsimore Gusht (2017)

¹¹⁷ <https://arsimi.gov.al/files/userfiles/udhezimeurdhera/Udhezim-4-19022015.pdf>

taxes from the private providers. But, the question is how the state will be involved directly in the teachers' training, taking into consideration its capabilities in human resources. If we refer to the legislation, it envisages the use of a part of state budget for teachers' training, which is used a little or not at all. Perhaps because of the fact, as distinguished American Professor Elmore says that "government rush to make re-forms based on good will, but do not manage to finalize due to different reasons including lack of human resources". Taking into account this point of view and Albanian experience, there is room for one question: How did legal changes and their impact affect teachers' training?

3. LEGAL AMENDMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT IN TEACHERS TRAINING

Improvement of teaching level, change of curricula, increase of requests for more trainings and qualifications have caused big problems for implementation of legislation on qualification, or lets us say they have not been able to solve it yet. Let us take pre-school education as an example. The goal of Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth is clearly focused on an increase of up to 98% of the number of children, who must attend pre-school education. Thus, in pre-school level, the aim is to boost number of registration each year. Likewise, government considers as a priority the training of teachers in pre-school system, which is certainly a good thing.

On the other side, the unfortunate increase of the number of the disabled children demands a significant attention to the preparation, training, constant qualification for children with special needs and disabled. Moreover, it is known that new appointments of supporting trained teachers is a necessity for the disabled children in schools with an integrated and all-inclusive teaching, as contemporary education requires. Student-centered teaching is also challenging for Albanian education. Nevertheless, it seems that Albanian teachers find it challenging to teach and encourage the unique talent in classes characterized by students with heterogeneous levels of ability. This phenomenon may be related to teachers who do not have the relevant training and skill¹¹⁸ for development and holding of a differentiated teaching stance enabling teachers to work in different ways with students of different capacity levels in class. Teachers often look as if they are telling a poem, and students answer the same way. This is not the right way or remains one of the weakest points of our education system. Numerous training in this direction seem to have not generated any effects or lets believe that there are serious programs in the training methods themselves. Likewise, during Bachelor study programs in teaching, but also in second cycle programs, little attention is paid to the vocational practices and mentor teachers supervise them almost formally. It is difficult to say that trainings and qualifications in our country aim to offer contemporary knowledge, new techniques, methods and strategies in the field of education. Indeed, it has now turned into an opportunity for teachers to achieve a higher rank, serving for a wage rise in very low limits of 5-7%. Taking into account this point of view, teachers are often trained for something that they want or need, but for what they are offered, which is considered a possibility to complete unfinished tasks with state as soon as possible. There is still a high percentage of teachers who do not have the necessary knowledge, capability and skills regarding use of ICT, a necessity for a contemporary teaching. Likewise, there is a lack of professional digital libraries or hard-copy books in the teachers's hands. In a few words, it is clear that numerous legal changes and guidelines have not managed to change fundamentally or have at least positive trend regarding teachers' qualification and training, an extremely important process for a successful teaching.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Student-oriented teaching is a little bit lamed due to an over estimation of theory during teachers training, and what is more important later on, also due to the belief that only duly trained experts can address the special needs of talented students, those who find learning difficult and the disabled. Hence, the need to boost teachers' capacities aiming to address needs and different social challenges has been considered a great priority for the entire region.

Amendments to the legislation were clearly done, but they have not met the expectations of a higher performance of teachers. Where is the problematic and reasons?

Training to teach children with special needs remains a major challenge for the Albanian education. In terms of all-inclusive schools, increase of number of children with special needs and disabled, displacement of families toward bigger urban centers, the training of an increasing number of young education employees and qualification of teachers who face these phenomena is a great necessary.

¹¹⁸ QTKA, *Mësimdhënia me në qendër Nxënësin*, Tiranë: (December, 2005)

Use of ICT. It is not a special capability but a skill required from every teacher. All the teachers must have this skill. Teachers training and qualification should be oriented in this direction and can be completed in school level.

Digital methods, intelligent classes and smart-boards. These are also an important element of student-oriented teaching, increase of students' participation in class, increase of students perception for different phenomena, establishment of a working, cooperation and inter-action climate between teachers and students.

Training and qualification in the teaching environment is an additional opportunity to boost human resources capacities within the school and at the same time make evident all the problems in the field of qualification and trainings of teachers in the educational institution. Meanwhile, school-based trainings and qualifications can serve also for the exchange of experiences between teachers irrespective of the subject they teach or their initial education. Teachers' training is a necessity of the time. In circumstances of all-inclusive education and classes with a big number of students, it is difficult to achieve best results without the support of an assisting teaching.

Professional practices shall be focused on the education of young teachers for contemporary teaching challenges and not just in drafting of final document in the capacity of the mentor in order to offer the practicant the possibility of obtain a teaching license.

In conclusion, the state must increase investments for budget of education in general and teachers training in particular. The Albanian education cannot succeed only with the help changes in the legislation and teachers' training, without a well-trained and well-paid teacher, eager to cope with the challenges of a contemporary teaching process.

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