

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINERS IN TUNISIA 2018

Executive summary

The full report can be found on ETF Open Space at:

https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-10/Tunisia%20CPD%20survey%202018_EN.pdf

More information on the survey at:

<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu/wikis/etf-international-survey-vocational-teachers-and-trainers-cpd>

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Introduction

Professional development for teachers and trainers is widely recognised as vital, not only for bringing about improvements in teaching and learning but also as a condition for other educational reform, for example in curriculum, governance and technology. This report aims to give a better understanding of the current situation and needs of vocational trainers and training centre principals in Tunisia. It deals with the professional development received, teaching beliefs and practices, professional duties and the conditions and climate in which they work. It aims to assist policy makers and professional development providers to make improvements.

Tunisia is among eight other countries that are participating in this research: Albania, Algeria, Belarus, Kosovo¹, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Methodology

The research consists of three elements: a literature review, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and surveys with trainers and directors of training centres.

The surveys sampled all of the trainers and centre directors in 179 training centres. A total of 386 trainers responded – a response rate of 9%, and 117 training centres responded – a response rate of 65%.

Findings

Most of Tunisia's vocational trainers are experienced and highly qualified graduates. More than 50% are graduates (engineer, bachelor or master degree) and 85% have more than five years of teaching experience in their professional career and around 73% in their current training centre. Almost 80% say that they have at least three years' occupational work experience. Their average age is 43 years old. Some 74% are employed full-time. Only about 40% of trainers benefited from an initial degree that integrated pedagogical training whilst another 36% received some other pedagogical training. Some 55% of the working time is spent teaching.

In most vocational training centres, decision making is participatory. Training centre boards have some influence over curriculum, recruitment and the internal use of the budget. However, decisions about recruitment, dismissal or suspension of trainers and establishing trainers' salaries, including setting pay scales and salary increases, are mostly taken at the national level.

Most training centre boards include representatives from the training centre management team, trainers and administrative personnel. Only 42% of training centre boards include business representatives.

Principals spend about 40% of their time on administrative and leadership tasks and 20% on teaching and curriculum development. Some 90% of principals reported the major constraints limiting their effectiveness as the inadequacy of the training centre budget and resources along with government regulation and policy. Insufficient CPD opportunities for trainers and excessive workload are also seen as major barriers by more than 60% of principals.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

More than two-thirds of principals identified issues presenting constraints to effective teaching in the following areas: inadequate instructional materials; shortage of support personnel, qualified and/or well performing trainers, trainer teaching competence for students with special needs; shortage or inadequacy of library materials; and lack of instructors for practical training combined with shortage of computers and/or software for instruction.

Principals and senior management observe and give feedback to staff in about 50% of vocational training centres. However, only 40% of principals observe their staff teaching. Formal appraisal is absent in 25% of training centres (although a legal requirement). Poor teaching performance does not lead to strong sanctions, for example impact on salary, promotion or contract. Only 42% of training centres expect trainers to have an individual training plan.

By contrast principals and boards in private training centres have greater authority, e.g. over salary and recruitment, and they are more likely to implement remedial action as a follow up to poor teaching performance.

The survey confirms the view of stakeholders that vocational trainers in Tunisia make use of participatory and active learning pedagogies. The majority of vocational trainers say that they place a big emphasis on learning from practice, relating theory to practice and relating learning to the world of work. Some 70% of surveyed trainers say that their students partake in at least 10% of their learning on work placements. On the other hand, trainers say that direct interactions with employers and employees are infrequent for 76% of students.

Most trainers and principals are satisfied with their work and happy about their career choices. They say that they are motivated to master challenges, optimistic about career progress and, unlike in many other countries, they believe that they are valued by society. Students are mostly attentive and well motivated. Around 80% of trainers say that, when planning lessons, they are guided by the national curriculum documents but also by their knowledge of what employers need. Trainers take an active role in devising and implementing their own assessment tools.

On the other hand, around two thirds of trainers believe, like the majority of principals, that most classes and students often do not have access to resources for learning such as textbooks, up-to-date tools and equipment, consumable materials, computer hardware and software, internet and other learning materials and sources. Furthermore, differentiation in teaching and learning is not practised routinely. Some 50% of vocational trainers make little or no use of digital tools or the internet to prepare instructional materials. Research on dropout, recently published by the ETF, reveals that around 50% of learners at secondary level in Tunisia do not complete their programmes.

According to Law No°2008-10 of 11 February 2008, continuing professional development (CPD) constitutes a major component of the national system for human resource development. There are directives and laws that define responsibilities for the key actors. However, this framework does not make CPD a requirement or an entitlement for trainers nor does it integrate CPD within career progression. There are some policy statements regarding CPD for vocational trainers but, currently, there is not yet an authoritative policy statement nor action plan to guide improvements or reform. In addition, there are some issues around the implementation of existing regulations and responsibilities. For example, according to interviewed stakeholders, evaluation of CPD is limited to the collection of feedback received during the training process although the law foresees an evaluation of CPD trainers (Title IV, Art. 51, *Journal officiel de la République tunisienne*). While there is evidence of some consultation with stakeholders for the development of policy for CPD this does not seem to be

systematic or regular. Implementation is also hampered by the slowness and complexity of the administrative procedures at the central level and the lack of a strong regional leadership through the regional directorates of employment and vocational training.

CENAFFIF (Centre national de formation de formateurs et d'ingénierie de formation) is the main provider of CPD for VET trainers working in public and private training centres, especially those directed by the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP – Agence tunisienne de formation professionnelle), the AVFA (Agence de la vulgarisation et de la formation agricole) and the AFMT (Agence de formation dans les métiers de tourisme), and particularly with respect to pedagogical rather than technical skills. The ATFP and the AVFA also work independently to assess needs and to provide and monitor CPD for their own industrial sectors. Some national business and trade associations also help to design and provide CPD working in partnership with particular training centres. International development projects and organisations have made an important contribution to CPD for vocational trainers in Tunisia.

Although the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment has the formal role of coordinating the agencies, validating their programmes and setting their budgets with respect to CPD of vocational trainers, it is not clear that it is executing this responsibility. There is no action plan that provides the strategic framework for the work of all of the agencies – setting targets, quality standards and national or sectoral priorities for training.

There is some consultation between agencies and stakeholders. The existence of separate agencies for agriculture/fisheries and for tourism (AVFA, and AFMT) should help to engage sectoral representatives in all aspects of CPD provision. However, it is not clear how greatly industrial sectors are engaged in needs identification, design, provision and evaluation of CPD.

CENAFFIF is the major provider of CPD for vocational trainers. The extent to which it is sufficiently proactive and responsive in developing CPD programmes that meet the changing needs of vocational trainers and principals, for example with respect to new technologies and management skills is not clear. CENAFFIF is also intended to respond to the training needs of private and public training providers. Again, it is uncertain whether the CPD offer is regularly updated and relevant to the needs of training centres. The following issues work against responsiveness:

1. CENAFFIF does not have an up-to-date needs analysis from the training centres.
2. Funding, programme design, monitoring, evaluation and delivery are largely controlled by CENAFFIF and the other national agencies, making it difficult for training centres or employers to influence provision.
3. The learning outcomes and teaching quality of training providers are not effectively evaluated so there is no pressure to use CPD to raise performance.

An external evaluation of training centres will be developed as part of the 2025+ Strategy.

CPD is, for the most part, provided by public organisations. Even if they are numerous, private training institutes play little part in the provision of CPD for VET trainers in Tunisia.

According to CENAFFIF some 1,100 vocational trainers participated in one of the three different CPD programmes during the previous 12 months. However, there are no published statistics on the number of participants per training programme, location, length of the training and the learning programme on training of trainers.

According to the survey, participation of vocational trainers in CPD in Tunisia was 43% over the previous 12 months – about half of the OECD average (85%). Only 21% of trainers report participation in CPD that focused on their own occupational or sectoral specialism and the same percentage report participation in CPD on employer premises or provided by business. On the other hand, of the 43% that participated in CPD, 80% obtained at least 30 hours. Some 36% of vocational trainers participated in CPD consisting of online learning or video tutorials spending on average 77 hours on these activities.

Only around 40% of trainers in Tunisia participated in CPD which used identified modern methods: CPD with colleagues from the same training centre, active learning methods (not only listening to a lecturer), collaborative learning activities or research with other trainers, and use of new technologies, including information technology and web-based community. Some 62% of surveyed trainers say that they participated in CPD that took the form of individual or collaborative research but only 16% participated in mentoring and/or peer observation and only 14% participated in a network of trainers.

The data suggests that trainers participating in CPD working in Southern and Central regions obtained fewer hours of CPD than those in the Northern regions and in Grand Tunis.

Participation of principals in CPD was greater; 64% of principals participated in a professional network, mentoring or research activity (average 130 hours) and 52% in courses, conferences or observational visits (average 132 hours).

It appears that induction for all new staff is generally well established in vocational training centres in Tunisia. With regard to mentoring of trainers the position is less clear. Mentoring seems to be largely confined to trainee trainers. Although almost 30% of trainers have received training to be mentors and some 10% say that they are currently receiving mentoring, 60% of principals say that mentoring is not available in their training centres.

There is some evidence of planned and informal collaboration between trainers but more than 50% say that they did not discuss their teaching informally or formally with a colleague, and 70% did not discuss their teaching with a manager or pedagogue over the previous month. This suggests that for many Tunisian trainers, lesson preparation and reflection upon practice is a solitary affair.

According to the survey, about 60% of trainers say that they are deterred from participation in CPD because there is no relevant offer nor sufficient incentives. Around 50% say they lack strong support from their training centres. The research suggests that participation in CPD is not closely linked to improvements in individual trainer performance or the development of training centres. Therefore, individual trainers are not motivated to participate. There is little relationship between CPD and promotion. CPD is not designed to prepare trainers to carry out additional or special responsibilities such as mentoring, curriculum development or resource development.

Moreover, participation in CPD is not systematically published so it is not clear what progress is made in provision.

Recommendations

At the level of training centre governance, appropriate authorities, agencies, CPD providers and vocational training centres should cooperate to:

1. empower principals and training centre boards to participate in key decisions relating to recruitment, remuneration, performance management and use of budget;
2. involve social partners, student and family representatives in the management and development of training centres;
3. strengthen the role of principals and training centre management in relation to the development of teaching and curriculum, e.g. through observation and organisation of CPD;
4. trainer training centres should support and coordinate trainers to develop up-to-date instructional materials in a collaborative manner;
5. strengthen evaluation practice at the level of training centres.

With respect to teaching approaches and links to the work place, appropriate authorities, CPD providers and vocational training centres should cooperate to:

6. train and support teachers to develop more differentiated learning tasks and to use formative assessment to inform teaching and learning;
7. empower and support trainers and pedagogical experts to develop and share instructional materials and text books; fund training centres to acquire up-to-date tools and consumables;
8. equip training centres with sufficient and appropriate hardware, software and internet and training of trainers to use ICT in lesson design and in classroom learning.

With respect to policy and implementation, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment and wider stakeholders should:

9. bring together different actors, institutions and stakeholders to agree strategies to improve and make coherent the CPD system for trainers in Tunisia;
10. define more clearly the entitlement and expectation for CPD in the normative framework;
11. define objectives for CPD for vocational trainers in the 2025 National Strategy for Vocational Education and publish an action plan;
12. strengthen the role of the regional directorates and activate their decision-making role; better coordinate between regional structure and training centres to provide the required materials and human resources.

At the level of CPD design, quality assurance and funding, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the agencies, VET trainers and training centre principals should cooperate to:

13. better analyse needs and sharing and use of information in planning and coordinating CPD;
14. ensure better practice and higher expectations in training centres in relation to the evaluation of trainer performance and impact of CPD on training.

With respect to volume, mode and character of CPD provision, appropriate authorities, CPD providers, vocational training centres and agencies should cooperate to:

15. raise participation by increasing the volume and the variety of the offer;
16. CENAFFIF and other CPD providers should review the methodology of its CPD programmes and, where appropriate, introduce modern and varied methodologies;
17. develop tools for identifying needs and funding mechanisms for technical training of vocational training of trainers; CENAFFIF (and the other CPD providers) should work in partnership with industry and other partners to provide specialised professional CPD designed to update professional knowledge and skills and work practices.

At the level of training centre-based professional development, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the agencies, VET trainers and training centre principals should cooperate to:

18. revise the status, compensation, training and recognition offered to mentors; consider how mentorship might be used more generally as a form of CPD for VET trainers and principals;
19. ensure management within training centres encourage and support trainers to collaborate, for example, by making time and celebrating collaboration.

With respect to the relevance and impact of CPD, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the agencies, VET trainers and training centre principals should cooperate to:

20. ensure training centres receive assistance and training to conduct needs analysis and to produce individual and centre workforce training plans – which should inform national and training centre CPD-related provision and resourcing;
21. more CPD should be provided to more trainers to address the issues related to the needs of learners, motivation and personalisation;
22. needs analysis should be enhanced to ensure that trainers are aware of the full range of relevant CPD.

Regarding recognition and incentivisation, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the agencies and stakeholders should work together to:

23. ensure CPD opportunities are linked to improvements in teaching which are identified through feedback and to career development; where possible CPD should be designed to prepare trainers and principals to take on enhanced responsibilities and to gain recognition through promotion in the career ladder;
24. aggregate and publish national records of CPD participation.

Where to find out more

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E-mail

info@etf.europa.eu



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