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Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine  
**ZENIČKO-DOBOJSKI KANTON**  
MINISTARSTVO ZA OBRAZOVANJE,  
NAUKU, KULTURU I SPORT



**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP FOR THE  
IMPROVEMENT OF THE INITIAL AND CONTINUING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN  
LINE WITH THE LABOUR MARKET NEEDS IN ZENICA-DOBOJ CANTON**

**MARCH, 2021**

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## Introduction

The Interagency Working Group for the Improvement of the Initial and Continuing Technical and Vocational Education in Line with the Labour Market Needs in Zenica-Doboj Canton (hereinafter the Group) was established in September 2020 as an *ad hoc* body, following the initiative of the Zenica-Doboj Canton Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (hereinafter MONKS) and the Zenica-Doboj Canton Chamber of Commerce.<sup>1</sup> It was established on the basis of findings from the study [Practical training of students in companies – legal analysis](#), as well as on the consent of the participating institutions and organisations. The Group, as stated in the 2020 Operational Framework, deals with the review of the initial and continuing technical and vocational education (hereinafter I- and C-TVET) in line with labour market needs. It looks at obstacles in the applicable legislation and makes recommendations for their improvement, allowing for long-term and sustainable solutions. The Group is grounded in a vision for the development of the Zenica-Doboj.

List of members in this Group is provided in Schedule I.

To date, the Interagency Working Group has organised 4 (four) meetings “in person” and one webinar, on the topic of labour inspection and occupational health and safety.<sup>2</sup>

Plans to expand membership in the Group during 2021 and 2022 include adding: the Zenica-Doboj Canton Office for Statistics, the Zenica-Doboj Canton Chamber of Trade and Crafts, a representative association of employers, several companies, one local administration, schools and faculties. Activities of the Group encompass designing results-based work programmes, carrying out activities, identifying responsible actors, and measuring indicators. These activities will culminate with a presentation of conclusions at a session of the Tripartite Council (comprised of the Council for the Education of Adults, Economic and Social Council, and the Zenica-Doboj Canton Government), aimed at lobbying for concrete support measures.

In 2021, the Group tentatively secured additional support through GIZ, while the Foundation Helvetas Moja Budućnost will continue providing technical and financial support to the Group as well as to assist in the implementation of some recommendations. The goal is that by 31 December 2021, the Group should be empowered enough to take ownership of the initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation Helvetas Moja Budućnost in February 2020 signed an MoU to help implement the project “With Synergy to Easier Employment in the Zenica-Doboj Canton” along with the Zenica-Doboj Canton Government, the Federation Employment Bureau, and the Zenica-Doboj Canton Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>2</sup> Travel costs, other compensations, and potential payments are borne by the institutions/organisations appointing representatives to work in the Working Group. To date, additional costs have been borne by the Foundation Helvetas Moja budućnost, serving as a facilitator in the process.

## I Conclusion of the Group related to I-TVET

Practical classes in I-TVET take place within the syllabus of practical training carried out in schools and companies, and, depending on the study programme, through the summer practice.

*Regulation on determination of conditions for the implementation of in-company practical classes* (Official Journal of Zenica-Doboj Canton, No. 3/19) and *Regulation on the implementation of summer practice in technical and related schools and vocational schools* (Official Journal of Zenica-Doboj Canton, No. 3/19)<sup>3</sup> have not been sufficiently long in place to be able to comment adequately on their efficiency and effectiveness, particularly due to the suspension of a segment of practical classes outside of school caused by the epidemiological situation.

Taking into account the current barriers to holding practical classes outside of school, and in line with the report [Practical classes in companies – legal analysis](#), the **initiators and Group members have realised that it is not effective to work on recommendations related to the improvement of quality assurance mechanisms, without first removing the obstacles to the improvement of practical classes.**

Thus, they submitted a 2021 and 2022 initiative to:

- (a) Urgently amend relevant legislation in the area of labour and social legislation, particularly:
  - a. Federation of BiH (hereinafter FBiH) labour law,
  - b. FBiH Law on contributions,
  - c. FBiH Law on income tax,
  - d. FBiH Law on occupational health and safety and bylaws, and
  - e. Other relevant laws and bylaws, falling out of canton level jurisdiction,

and consider **interagency matters surrounding the implementation of practical classes out of school** and the necessity for coordination to that end;

- (b) Define lobbying recommendations at the first next session, with the support of the legal services of all engaged institutions. Submit an official initiative to the FBiH Parliament for amendments to relevant Federation legislation. Assuming approval of the amendments, such a move would allow the Canton level legislation to be aligned with the Federation legislation;
- (c) Consider and activate the mode of cooperation with other cantons in relation to joint lobbying actions at the level of the FBiH.

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<sup>3</sup> Both regulations were drafted in the course of this project with the support of the Swiss Government (2017–2018) and implemented by the Zenica-Doboj Canton Chamber of Commerce.

Recognizing that changes in educational policies may be required, the Group identified in thematic discussions a series of obstacles to the development of the I-TVET in line with labour market needs. These were defined in individual reports from the Group meetings.

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of conclusions and recommendations. The implementation of these would add to the current capacities and resources available to MONKS and the Pedagogical Institute through the provision of external technical and financial support.

Around 70% of secondary schools in Zenica-Doboj Canton are TVET schools. Competence over the education in these schools is not dual, so the Group is of the opinion that the notion of **dual education is incorrectly used in practice, for which reason this practice should be stopped.**

The definition of obstacles includes activities that could and should be carried out and the level of difficulty attributed to them. Said difficulties mandate either the engagement of different actors or additional resources.

A basic problem lies **in the different communication styles used by the educational and business sectors.** For example, most terms used come from the educational sector and have little meaning to the business sector. Moreover, there exists an expectation that the function of the public sector is to satisfy the short-term needs of the employer at the expense of the labour force. Good practices have not been properly analysed, so it is not known which segments are “good” in terms of “transferability” to other contexts in the canton, plus, they are not adequately promoted.

Around 20% of TVET school students in Zenica-Doboj Canton are trained by way of modular curricula, whereas the remaining students are trained by way of traditional, content-based, curricula, which mainly go back to the period of 1994/1995 and/or 1995/1996.

MONKS has recognised the importance of the introduction of a single methodology in drafting curricula for vocational education and training, as well as the need to have a comprehensive reform approach based on empiric studies. This will require additional human and financial resources, and technical support.

The reform of current curricula is related to the drafting of standards for occupations and qualifications, which according to the applicable Law on Secondary School<sup>4</sup> is overseen by the Agency for Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Education, which, *inter alia*, “initiates and proposes to the Zenica-Doboj Canton Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports the structuring and revision of classification of occupations”. Therefore, the Group proposes short-term solutions that will lead to improvement over the current situation, while **remaining within the framework of the applicable Law**, namely to (not necessarily in order, listed in the text):

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<sup>4</sup> Law on secondary school, Article 6, Official Journal of Zenica-Doboj Canton, No. 9 dated 7 August 2017.

- 1) draft, promote, and plan guidelines for changing 30% of curricula, to be in line with labour market needs,<sup>5</sup> and thus contribute to the opening of schools to the business community on the local level;
- 2) draft, promote, and pilot methodology for identification of “deficit occupations” and/or “deficit competencies” on the local level; identify procedures to ensure adequate servicing of those needs;
- 3) develop recommendations to bridge the gap between the current classification of occupations and the qualifications, update mechanisms to improve existing classifications of occupations and introduce new occupations and qualifications;
- 4) draft and promote reports on vertical mobility of TVET students, with recommendations for interventions aimed at their improvement;
- 5) give clear recommendations on ways to introduce new occupations and qualifications, reflecting the strategic vision for the development of Zenica-Doboj Canton as defined in the Development Strategy for 2021-2027, with a particular focus on smart development and ‘green skills’ to ensure they are given additional support;
- 6) analyse the effects of previously listed bylaws on practical classes and summer practice;
- 7) revise bylaws related to practical classes and summer practice to:
  - a. particularly and additionally define the roles and responsibilities of mentors in business entities, mandate mandatory training<sup>6</sup> for mentors and oversight of that training, adopt the training programme for mentors, define the number of students a mentor is responsible for, clarify funding for the mentors’ training and mentorships, describe the tasks of employees, and other matters;
  - b. define conditions for the implementation of practical classes and supervision over the implementation of those classes;
  - c. establish a register of business entities that can host the practical classes, along with a definition of minimum criteria the companies need to meet for the purpose of implementing practical classes, etc.;
  - d. establish a register of mentors for practical classes that take place in business entities, and define their competencies.

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<sup>5</sup> Law on Secondary School, Article 32, Official Journal of Zenica-Doboj Canton, No. 9 dated 7 August 2017.

<sup>6</sup> In early 2021, within the project “With Synergy to Easier Employment in Zenica-Doboj Canton”, the training programme for mentors of practical classes implemented in companies was revised. The basis for the revision was the validation of the DACUM research graph for mentors of practical classes in Zenica-Doboj Canton companies, drafted during the project carried out by the Zenica-Doboj Canton Chamber of Commerce and Mixed Secondary School, with the support of the Swiss Government 2017–2018. The novelties are, inter alia, the examination and autonomous work related to the drafting of a plan for implementation of practical classes for the occupations, whereby the students are supervised by mentors employed in these business entities.

- 8) activate and promote the work of the school advisory councils, and local economic councils (they may be named differently), which would propose enrolment policies through clear guidelines involving all relevant actors on the local and cantonal level, in addition to drafting and promoting catalogues of good practices;
- 9) draft and promote guidelines for improving the inclusion of the business community into the processes of drafting, implementing and evaluating educational policies affecting vocational education and training at all relevant levels, by way of drafting and promoting catalogues of good practices;
- 10) conduct a survey on the need for vocational education and training of secondary schools' teachers (60% of them are from non-educational faculties), and establish necessary cycles of training (pedagogy, psychology, methods, didactics, digital competencies, subject of occupation, 'soft skills'), and if deemed necessary, additional training of trainers;
  - a. an action of particular interest for schools, the local economy and the local community would involve drafting and promoting pilot guidelines for the development of teachers in business entities, aimed at their knowing about modern technologies and work methods;
- 11) conduct a survey on the current level of knowledge of primary school students; draft and promote guidelines for its improvement; maintain a catalogue of good practices; carry out all activities with a due regard for gender equality and social inclusion;
- 12) organise a study of mid-term perspectives of practical classes in/out of school, with due regard for the anticipated demographic situation;
- 13) draft and promote clear guidelines related to the protection and safety of students in practical classes out of school;
- 14) draft and promote clear guidelines related to the insurance of students in practical classes out of school;
- 15) designate one month in the current academic year as a month for signing agreements on the implementation of practical classes for the next academic year; such an action would ensure that September, as the first month in an academic year, could be effectively used for practical classes rather than for administrative preparations;
- 16) study closely the possibility for teachers to partially take over the role of mentors in business entities, as it is already taking place in some professions e.g. medical;
- 17) create a separate Group forum engaged in the promotion of the financial model; task the Group forum with closely analysing the financial burden on actors, and determining possible redistribution of practical classes costs in companies, both aimed at determining an

appropriate pilot model, that might include reliefs and incentives, particularly for SMEs (Schedule II contains the review of the Group from the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held on 26–27 November 2020);

- 18) draft and promote guidelines to inform the business community about the existing qualifications;
- 19) open a sectoral dialogue related to occupations such as “waiter”, “salesperson” or similar, for which there will be no supply as long as there are no clear sectoral demands for the qualification;
- 20) organise research about the possibilities to create revenue in TVET schools through various mechanisms (the revenue would fund the purchase of raw-materials for practical classes), promote findings, and implement and evaluate the pilot;
- 21) review the effectiveness and efficiency of existing scholarships as mechanisms for ensuring the necessary labour force;
- 22) promote and discuss a pilot based on [\*Analysis and projection of employer’s needs for knowledge, skills, abilities, and views\*](#) aimed at analysing additional needs for quality research that could offer a clearer response to the needs of sectors and individual employers, and serve as a tool to achieve a societal consensus and ensure continuity in drafting similar analyses at the canton level;
- 23) draft a survey of methodologies for analysing employers’ labour force needs at the level of local administration;
- 24) pilot during 2021 a methodology described in [\*Analysis and projection of employer’s needs for knowledge, skills, abilities, and views\*](#) within at least one local administration, and analyse how to use findings for the purpose of enforcing adequate local support measures for employment, revision of curricula and enrolment policies;
- 25) draft a review of so-called advisory councils in TVET schools, and draft and promote a catalogue of good practices with guidelines;
- 26) draft a review of material and technical capacities of classrooms and laboratories for practical classes;
- 27) draft a standard for coordinators of practical classes;
- 28) draft and promote an analysis of perception of costs and benefits of practical classes in business entities per size/sector of engagement;
- 29) draft and promote an initiative for the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Refugees to amend criteria for incentives, to apply a positive discrimination

towards business entities that organise practical classes for TVET students, thus promoting additional cooperation between the educational and business sectors;

30) additionally define, value, and empower the role of the Chamber of Commerce, which represents the interests of 250 companies, in reference to these matters.

The majority of these activities do not require huge human and financial resources. They are sufficiently directed towards capacity building at the local level and improvement in cooperation. As such, they are proposed as a development avenue related to short-term goals. They additionally offer analyses on ways to provide adequate support to bigger endeavours that are directed towards a comprehensive reform. Interinstitutional cooperation is certainly crucial, considering the transferability of the area of I-TVET.



## II Conclusions related to the C-TVET.

Considering the project focus, as well as the relevance of adult education to the socioeconomic situation, the Group has discussed important elements relating to the legal framework and actual situation in adult education in line with labour market needs.

One of the principal conclusions refers to the necessity of reviewing the intersectoral feature of this area as well as applicable legislation falling outside the competence of MONKS, which regulate the area of adult education. The Group also recommends analysing labour and social laws applicable to the status of trainees attending training in companies. To that end, the Foundation, at its third Group meeting, engaged a consultancy company and tasked them with carrying out the above-mentioned recommendations. The findings are expected in March 2021.

Nevertheless, the discussions have generally suggested that the education of adults in line with labour market needs is not an area that is sufficiently regulated, requiring an individual legal solution to be analysed<sup>7</sup>, including applicable bylaws, and the adoption of missing ones.

Just like I-TVET, this area suffers due to the lack of harmonised classification of occupations and/or codes, used by Employment Bureaus and Tax administrations on the one hand, and qualifications produced by the education system on the other. In addition to the obvious gap, problems were observed also in the terms used and the different interpretation of these terms.

Career counselling and other counselling of adults were also viewed, accompanied by a conclusion to review the current situation and draft and promote guidelines for improvements, along with a catalogue of good practices, with due regard for gender equality and social inclusion.

Some of the topics discussed and agreed upon were meanwhile integrated in a new project implemented by the Zenica-Doboj Chamber of Commerce, with the support of the Foundation. The project is focused on building the capacities of three canton chambers of commerce<sup>8</sup>, thus allowing them to be actively engaged in the process of adult education. The project will strengthen their capacities to prepare and implement trainings, as well as test candidates based on jointly developed quality standards for adult education with due regard for the analysis of labour market needs. The project also includes advocating policies for the improvement of education of adults in line with labour market needs. Accordingly, the recommendations of the Group in adult education can be summarised in three key elements:

- A. Improvement in the quality of adult education;

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<sup>7</sup> Law on Education of Adults, Official Journal of Zenica-Doboj Canton, Nos 5/2014 and 12/2018.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the Zenica-Doboj Chamber of Commerce, there is also the Canton Sarajevo and Tuzla Canton Chambers of Commerce.

- B. Strengthening the role of Chambers of Commerce in the education of adults, which is relevant to the labour market;
- C. Coordination between key actors from the public and private sectors.

The first two areas are partially covered in the current project “Building Quality Standards in the Education of Adults of Cantonal Chambers of Commerce”, and the proposals of the Group for actions to be taken in 2021 are:

- Promotion of adult education according to labour market needs, while positioning Chambers of Commerce as key actors between the employer and educational authorities;
- Making a feasibility study on the possibilities for introducing a centre for recognition of earlier knowledge and skills;
- Making a feasibility study on the possibilities for drafting a training programme for mentors who carry out adult education in companies;
- Additional reviewing the applicability of legal solutions – obligations related to the andragogical training – as a developmental obstacle in the area of training for employment;
- Support for making a feasibility study on the establishment of a training centre within the Chamber of Commerce;
- Promotion of the Survey conducted by the Federation Employment Bureau<sup>9</sup> and the piloted document [Analysis and projection of employer’s needs for knowledge, skills, abilities, and views](#), as a way to get information from the Federation and/or Canton labour market, which could be used as a basis to define the types of training that will lead to employment;<sup>10</sup>
- Support for the Federation Employment Bureau to amend the measure “service in cooperation with employers” and the programme “with training to employment”, so that the training process could include a quality element that would ensure public document validity, and more importantly learning outcomes in line with employers’ needs within a sector, rather than individual employers’ needs.

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<sup>9</sup> In 2019, the Foundation improved its research methodology and survey questionnaire, and collected a representative sample which provided information about the needs of companies.

<sup>10</sup> Please note that the development of new training programmes for employment and the revision of existing ones require other types of analysis, such as qualitative analysis, sectoral analysis or occupation/job analysis.

## SCHEDULE I List of members of the Group

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports

Ministry of Labour, Social Policies, and Refugees

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Finance

Pedagogical Institute

Employment Service

Canton Tax Administration

Chamber of Commerce

Canton Department for Inspections

Council for Education of Adults

College of Secondary Schools' Directors

ArcelorMittal Zenica, Pobjeda-Tešanj d.d., Medena Commerce d.o.o. Tešanj, RM – LH Zenica

Municipality of Kakanj

Mixed Secondary School Tešanj

Industrial School Zenica

## SCHEDULE II Costs of practical classes in business entity – current situation

<i>Costs</i>	<i>Payer</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Enrolment costs	Parent/guardian	One-off, annually
Medical certificate	Parent/guardian	One-off, annually
Sanitary card <sup>11</sup>	Parent/guardian	Two times, annually
Transport compensation <sup>12</sup>	Parent/guardian (deviations)	Monthly
Meal allowance <sup>13</sup>	Business entity (deviations)	
OHS means	Business entity	
Hygienic items	Business entity	
Mentoring costs	Business entity	Through wage – details not known <sup>14</sup>
Administrative costs (contracts, agreements, execution plan)	School, through budget	
Costs of practical classes coordinator	School, through budget	Through wage
Costs of raw-materials (tools, raw-materials, machines, electricity, heating, maintenance of machines)	Business entity	
Rewards for the students	–	Not known that it officially exists <sup>15</sup>
Practical classes daily logs of mentors	Business entity	
Practical classes daily logs of students	Parent/guardian	
Insurance of students	Parent/guardian	One-off, annually, from tuition
Insurance in case of accident <sup>16</sup>	–	Not known that it exists
Costs of final examination with necessary raw-materials	Business entity	
Costs of dormitory, if used	Parent/guardian, budget	

<sup>11</sup> For students who take part in practical classes in business entities whose activities fall under the FBiH Law on Protection from Infectious Diseases, health supervision is required and/or sanitary protection.

<sup>12</sup> Commuting costs between school and home, in some cities and municipalities, are provided for socially vulnerable categories.

<sup>13</sup> Following the adoption of *Regulation on Determination of Conditions for the Implementation of Practical Classes out of Schools*, MONKS has registered cases of termination of long-term cooperation between schools and business entities, and/or agreements on the implementation of practical classes, on the ground of obligation to provide food or pay corresponding compensation for food in line with the internal acts of the business entity – host of practical classes.

<sup>14</sup> Only one company in Zenica-Doboj Canton is mentioned that has employees with exclusive job description for mentoring students during practical classes. It is necessary to additionally analyse practices and promote good examples.

<sup>15</sup> Considering the tax and contributions that are to be paid in line with applicable legislation, this is not unexpected. Moreover, the problem is also that the VET students are getting accustomed to work in “grey area”.

<sup>16</sup> It is necessary to verify in every individual case and check the possibility of a different type of solution.