



Teacher profession in Albania and the continuous need for improvement

Heliona Miço and Ervin Karamuço

The focus of the article

- ▶ Highlights the need for strengthening the capacities of teachers in Albania
- ▶ Presents the initial training education of teachers in Albania during the transition period
- ▶ Analyses the changes that has affected this profession, and the ongoing need for improvement



The structure

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania
- ▶ The 'Professional Profile for Teachers' in Albania and the applicable legislation
- ▶ The need of teacher training reforms
- ▶ Conclusions



Introduction

During the transition period in Albania

- ▶ the adaptation of education legislation took time and still continues
- ▶ the main difficulty: the way of organizing and functioning the educational system inherited by the communist regime

Introduction

- ▶ The first law in pre-university education system was adopted in 1995
- ▶ The teachers enjoyed the right to get post-university qualification according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education
- ▶ The pre-service training in education was divided between Tirana University, regional universities and some secondary pedagogical schools.
- ▶ The in-service teacher training: responsibility of Education Directorates to organize and conduct training and qualification of teachers

Introduction

After the signing of Bologna Declaration

- ▶ The study programmes for teaching profession organized in two cycles, bachelor and master
- ▶ In 2011, the teaching profession was incorporated in the Law "On Regulated Professions"
- ▶ Law in Pre-University Education System (2012) determined the level of education for each category of teachers from pre-schooling, to secondary education.
- ▶ The new approach of in-service training for teachers based on the demand- offer system, (requests from the educational institutions and the offers from public or private training agencies, including Universities)



The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania

In 2014, a new curriculum package in pre-university education system was conceived.

- ▶ It is based in competence-based approach.
- ▶ It aims the shifting from a teacher-centred to the student- centred philosophy.
- ▶ As the Albanian education system is taking many reforms, the professional development of teachers still remains a problem.

The main research question is:

Are the Albanian reforms in education sector associated with the improvement of teacher training education?



The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania

- ▶ The new in-service training system did not enable the development of training forms according to the needs of the schools, or online training
- ▶ Lack of interaction between top-level authorities, - the institute that deals with the pre-university curricula - universities that offer initial training education for teachers
- ▶ The rhythm of changing the curricula in pre-university education is too fast in comparison with the changing of bachelor and master's degree in education



The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania

Lack of data and information for every step followed in the teaching profession, starting from:

- ❖ the quality at the entrance of the students in higher education institutions
- ❖ the analyses from the process of licensing of teachers
- ❖ the analyses of the needs of teachers, regarding the professional field and according to their background education



The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania

The Law on Higher Education 2015 differentiates the initial training education according to the respective categories of teachers.

- ▶ The level of qualification for pre-school teachers is Bachelor degree, three academic years, 180 ECTS credits.
- ▶ For elementary education teachers, the level of qualification is "Professional Master" in primary education.
- ▶ The qualification for lower and upper secondary education teachers is Master's level, precisely 2 academic years and 120 credits.

The latest reforms in teacher training in Albania

- ▶ The vast majority of Master study programmes in education are offered by public universities.
- ▶ The law on higher education has provided for
 - ▶ Master study programs in the teaching field should have at least 25 % of the credits in the field of pedagogy and psychology
 - ▶ Masters' degrees of the same field of study should have similar content at minimum 80 %.

The standardization of initial training education will help students to acquire the same knowledge in a specific field

The 'Professional Profile for Teachers' in Albania and the applicable legislation

- ▶ Teacher education usually includes:
 - a general and a professional component.***
- ▶ The general component refers to general education courses on the subject(s) that candidates will teach when qualified.
- ▶ The professional part provides prospective teachers with both the theoretical and practical skills needed for teaching.

The 'Professional Profile for Teachers' in Albania and the applicable legislation

- ▶ The state exam of teachers is organized in **23 different profiles**.
- ▶ The professional profile of the teachers is not mentioned neither in the Law of pre-university education nor in the Law of higher education and research.

The 'Professional Profile for Teachers' in Albania and the applicable legislation

- ▶ Inconsistencies in the profile of teachers where they perform the state exam, with
 - ▶ initial training education of teachers in the universities
 - ▶ the profiles of the *Teachers for Albania* competitive employment exam
- ▶ **Example:** For Spanish language, Russian language, Turkish language in University of Tirana, the state exam in teaching profession is not conducted
- ▶ **Example:** Bachelor programme with two profiles: History and German Language / Geography and Italian Language of University of Elbasan
(two directions have uneven credit weights)
- ▶ **Example:** The competitive employment exam "*Teachers for Albania*" does not cover teaching profiles with double or triple directions

The need of teacher training reforms

The curriculum reform for basic education in Albania aims:

- ▶ to make the curricula more modular and competency-based one
- ▶ to introduce a modern ICT curriculum in basic and secondary schools

These curricular changes must be accompanied with updated knowledge in teaching profession, starting from initial training education

Conclusions

- ▶ The reforms done in Albania show the tendency to improve the teaching profession.
- ▶ On the other side, the reality shows that they are done without the continuous follow up of all the stages of the teaching profession, making the changes look incomplete.
- ▶ It is needed a **holistic long term strategic policy** with proper analyses and feedback for every stage of teaching profession including:

legislation, institutional changes, curricula, pre-service and teacher training education.