Organisational Aspects

Teachers have the opportunity to professionalize throughout their careers. Professional development is part of the professional continuum that starts with the training and ends when you leave the job. It includes all the initiatives that ensure that teachers grow in their professional expertise to optimize the quality of education. These initiatives can be different in terms of set-up, duration, target group, offer, etc.

In the first place, there are the common “traditional” activities of professional development (e.g. participation in workshops and colloquia outside the school, participation in pedagogical seminars).

There is also learning within and outside the school. Examples of such professional development activities include mentorship and coaching, cooperation within the school and mutual class and school attendance.

The school can be considered as a work and learning place. It is a place where not only pupils are given learning opportunities but where teachers can (continue to) develop their expertise. In a school as work and learning place, school leaders are responsible for setting up a place of learning where teachers are given opportunities to investigate their own practice and are able to work continuously with colleagues to improve the quality of their education.

Organization

The teacher is primarily responsible for his/her professional development. However, he/she can only fully assume this responsibility if he/she is supported in this by his/her school and school board. In view of the fact that there must be coordination between individual professional development and school policy, the school board helps to draw up the concrete lines of approach with regard to professional development.

This means that various players are involved in professional development, both directly and indirectly. Examples include the school (fellow teachers, middle managers, managers, support staff, etc.), school board, combined school, teacher trainers, pedagogical supervisors and POC employees, providers of professional development, publishers, researchers, external parties, education authorities, etc. in accordance with sustainable professional development (including the support of the transfer), coordination between the various players is crucial.

The government also has a role to play in this support, for example by means of professional development at the initiative of the Government of Flanders and by providing the necessary means of professional development (see below).

Professional development is an inherent part of being a teacher and is part of the mission of every
staff member. It is a right and a duty for the teacher and the school administration/leadership. The evaluator of a teacher (usually the school leader) can, in consultation with the teacher, impose certain professional development initiatives on a mandatory basis. In this case, these initiatives will be included in the staff member’s job description. However, professional development is not a necessary condition for the promotion of education.

Teachers develop for the most part during working hours but this does not necessarily imply that the teacher is absent from the school. Think of certain informal forms of professional development, such as co-teaching, departmental consultation and informal discussions with colleagues. Other forms of professional development may be accompanied by absence. It is up to the school to determine how they take care of this. In nursery and primary education (mainstream and special), schools can use the system of short term replacements (of which in-service training is an example). In particular, they receive additional resources to cover short absences of staff appointed to the post of pre-school teacher or teacher. In secondary education, the Department of Education and Training facilitates the taking of a company work placement by offering replacement class activities relating to entrepreneurship and/or entrepreneurship to the pupils during the absence of the teachers on work placement.

**Financing the in-service training**

The decree of 8 May 2009 on the quality of education contains the channels laid down by decree through which professional development is financed. More specifically, the decree contains the in-service training for the institutions, the in-service training on the initiative of the Government of Flanders and the in-service training on the initiative of the school advisory services.

In addition, the government subsidizes other projects (which can be of short or long duration) by means of a semi or non-regulated subsidy and also organizes study days for all kinds of education professionals.

**In-service training budget 2016 (in thousands of EUR)**

| In-service training for the institutions by level | 11,221 |
| Nursery and primary education | 4,007 |
| Secondary education | 6,335 |
| Adult education, excluding adult basic education | 418 |
| Part-time education in the arts | 255 |
| CLBs | 178 |
| Adult basic education | 28 |
| In-service training resources at the initiative of the school advisory services | 1,221 |
| In-service training at the initiative of the Government of Flanders | 546 |
| **TOTAL** | **12,988** |

**In-service training resources for institutions**

This concerns the resources allocated directly to schools for the implementation of their **in-service training plan**. The in-service training plan contains, in a coherent manner, all training efforts aimed at developing, broadening or deepening the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the institution’s staff and guidance initiatives aimed at organizational development. A school is obliged to draw up a plan
every year. The in-service training plan is approved either by the local committee or, if there is no local committee, by the general staff meeting. The legislation defines in-service training broadly as long as it can be demonstrated that the funded initiatives contribute to the professional development of the teacher.

In the case of in-service training, the principle of the free market applies. The institutions may have recourse to an in-service organization of their choice for the periodic in-service training of their staff. There are various organizations (non-profit organizations, university colleges, universities, etc.) that offer in-service training. On their own initiative, they can register as an in-service training organization in the following areas database on KlasCement [1]. Through this platform, the organizations have the opportunity to announce specific in-service training (supply-driven operation) but they can also indicate in general which topics teachers and school leaders can approach them for the purpose of developing a tailor-made initiative for them (demand-driven operation). The government does not award a quality label to these organizations and their offerings but the teachers and school leaders do have access to the "viewing guide" in search of professional development [2] in order to be able to make a choice that is appropriate for them.

**In-service training at the initiative of the Government of Flanders (priority in-service training)**

Every two years, the minister will determine one or more themes to support the implementation of education reforms. Any organization which considers itself capable of doing so may submit a project proposal. The selected projects are offered to schools free of charge and across the board.

In the school year 2017-2018, the choice was made for an extension of the theme from school years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, i.e. the M-decree. For the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, the theme chosen is “The professional development of supporters for specific educational needs in mainstream nursery and primary education and secondary education and in the centres for part-time vocational secondary education”.

**In-service training on the initiative of the pedagogical counselling services**

The school advisory services are also important providers of professional development. They work in a demand-driven and supply-driven way. The network-based educational guidance services of Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen, GO!, OVSG, FOPEM, POV, VONAC/VOOP, Federatie van Steinerscholen Vlaanderen and IPCO [see 11.1.4] receive separate budgets each year for the organization of in-service training and guidance activities for their own staff and for the staff of the institutions they supervise.

**Semi- or on-regulated grants and other initiatives**

Examples of short or longer-term grants are

- **Francoform**: a professional development programme for French secondary and adult teachers;
- **Formaprim**: a French professional development programme for nursery and primary school teachers;
- **Subsidy to the Prince Philippe Fund** with the aim of establishing exchange routes between compulsory education schools from two different communities in our country. These can be initiatives for pupils, teachers or school management.

In addition, the government also organizes free seminars on all kinds of topics (e.g. M-Decree Study Day, Study Day on Languages in cooperation with the other communities) aimed at education professionals.
Permanent training organized in higher education

The university colleges offer various programmes of advanced bachelor’s programmes in education: including special educational needs education (SEN), special needs and remedial learning, school development, etc. In addition, various postgraduate programmes are also offered in higher education, including teacher training: school management, school policy, ICT coordinator for nursery and primary education, equal educational opportunities in cities and town, etc.

Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities

In principle, both the school management and all the school staff have access to the in-service training fees. It must, however, be possible to demonstrate that the in-service training is useful for the staff member’s tasks. Schools can reimburse transport costs and registration fees for teachers and also decide whether teachers can be exempted from the scope of their teaching for the purpose of in-service training.

Source URL:

Links
[1] https://www.klascement.net/organisaties/nascholing/