



Current state of vocational teacher training at South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky

Institutional report



Co-funded by the
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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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Erasmus+ Project:	New mechanisms of partnership-based governance and standardization of vocational teacher education in Ukraine
Project number:	609536-EPP-1-2019-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP
Title of the document:	Institutional report about current state and problems of vocational teacher training at South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky and assumptions for further improvements
Author(s) (name, surname, institution):	Tetiana Fogel, Valentyn Usov, Ushynsky University
Contributor(s) (name, surname, institution):	
Submission Date:	15.07.2020
Reviewer(s) (name, surname, institution):	La Rocca Concetta, Uniroma Tre; Oksana Melnyk, UKON
Editor (s) (name, surname, institution):	Oksana Melnyk, UKON
Final version date:	07.09.2020
Revision date(s) and comment, responsible (name, surname, institution):	23.02.2021: the creative commons license was added, UKON (Anne-Kathrin Obergfell)
Version:	V.2
Work package:	WP1 Analysis of governance of vocational teacher education
Work package leader:	P9/IVET
Deliverable:	Yes=>1.3
Type:	Report
Form, language:	MS Word/PDF, EN
Distribution:	Public: international, national, regional
Summary:	The documents outlines the current state and problems of vocational teacher training at South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynsky. Based on need analysis of the target groups the assumptions for further improvements were made



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ACRONYMS

ECTS – European Credit Transfer System

EU – European Union

HEI – Higher Education Institution

VET – Vocational Education and Training

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF STUDENTS OF SPECIALITY “VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (DESIGN)” AT USHYNKY UNIVERSITY

The South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky is the only institution of higher education in the Southern region of Ukraine, which trains teachers for technical colleges and vocational schools, although in Ukraine in general and in the Odesa region in particular there are quite a lot of vocational education institutions. Thus, according to the Register of subjects of educational activity in the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in the Odesa region, there are currently 56 institutions of professional (vocational) education, including 27 in Odesa. Such a number of vocational education institutions creates demand for highly qualified specialists in vocational education, who can provide high quality training to VET students. Therefore, Ushynsky University has a leading role in training teachers of vocational sphere in this region and it also plays an important role in this sphere on the national level.

VET (vocational education and training) teachers are trained at the Department of Technological and Vocational Education at the Faculty of Art and Graphics of the University.

The Department of Technological and Vocational Education provides training for the first (Bachelor's) degree in the speciality¹ 014 Secondary Education (Labour Training and Technology) and the Bachelor's degree in the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) in the specializations² “Clothing Design” and “Computer Graphics”. Graduates of the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) are awarded the qualification “Specialist in the field of design, teacher of practical training in the field of design” and can work at VET institutions.

Taking into account that objectives of the project “PAGOSTE” is to foster the quality and relevance vocational teacher education in Ukraine by establishing standards with respect to partnership-based governance mechanism between universities, which offer vocational teacher training, and vocational school it is exactly the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) will be analyzed.

The speciality “Vocational Education (Design)” was licensed in 2015 and has been accredited since 2019. It is now in growing demand, as evidenced by the monitoring of admission sessions. It should be noticed that students of the Department of “Technological and Vocational Education” are young people from various cities of Ukraine, which proves the leading role of the university in this field.

¹ In the context of Ukrainian education system the term ‘speciality’ implies a specific occupational field or research area in which a higher education institution delivers study programs and awards degrees (Junior Bachelor, Bachelor or Master)

² Speciality is a broader term; it normally comprises several specialisations, i.e. narrower occupational fields within the speciality.

As of October 1, 2019, 65 students are studying in this speciality. Table 1 shows distribution of students.

Table 1. Distribution of student according to the year of study in speciality ‘Vocational Education’ at Ushynsky University as of October 2019.

Year of study	Licensed seats	Full-time department	Part-time department
1	30	16	6
2	30	16	8
3	30	10	-
4	30	9	-

The content of the study program at the university provides the formation and development of students’ general and professional competencies in the field of vocational education in design. Moreover, it is focused on substantial psychological and pedagogical training of future teachers of practical training in vocational education institutions.

Training of specialists in the field of vocational education in design is provided at the Bachelor’s level (eight semesters, 240 ECTS credits). Currently, the Master’s level licensing procedure has been successfully completed (three semesters, 90 ECTS credits).

The study program at the Bachelor’s degree includes the following components: a block of disciplines that provide the formation of general competencies comprises 20%, 20% is for disciplines that provide the formation of special pedagogical competencies and specialized, branch-related disciplines cover 40%. The practical component is 20% of the whole curriculum.

Table 2. Distribution of introductory and productive internship according to the year of study in speciality ‘Vocational Education’ at Ushynsky University

Year of study	Introductory internship (weeks)	Productive internship (weeks)	
		Pedagogical	Technological
1	1	-	-
2	2	3	9
3	-	4	9
4	-	10	5
Total	3	17	23

As can be seen from Table 2, the algorithm of the educational and professional programme is built in such a way that students master theoretical educational material and acquire special professional competencies during productive (technological) internship and productive (pedagogical) internship (the practical component which cover 20% of the whole curriculum) each semester throughout the training period.

Graduates of the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) with the qualification “Specialist in the field of design, teacher of practical training in the field of design” can work both as teachers at VET school, colleges, centres etc. and as specialists in this field.

Table 3. *Employment of graduates of the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design)*

Teacher	Specialist
- educational institutions of different levels	- managers in the field of management and organizations
	- masters of industrial training
	- technologists
	- constructors
	- technicians and technologists
	- modeller and designer
	- engineer in standardization
	- heads and masters of production sites

Creation of design objects that are competitive on the labour market should be provided by specialists with a high level of professional training. In turn, the level of professional training of specialists – designers – directly depends on the level of professional training of VET teachers in the field of design.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS: STUDENTS OF SPECIALITY “VOCATIONAL EDUCATION”

In order to clarify the current state in the training of students for speciality 015 Vocational Education and the state of partnership in the training of VTE teachers within the international project Erasmus+ “New governance mechanisms based on partnership and standardization of vocational education in Ukraine (PAGOSTE)” a survey was held. It involved students of Ushynsky University who study in the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) and teachers who train in the speciality “Vocational Education”.

Forty-seven students took part in the survey (eight were 3rd and 4th year students, fourteen were 2nd year students, seventeen were first-year students of the Bachelor's level in program 015 Vocational Education (Design)).

Among the most significant factors that influenced the choice of students in the speciality, we can highlight the following:

- passion for the profession of designer (57%);
- other factors (recommendations, tuition fees, occasion, etc.) 43%;

Therefore, it is an alarming sign that only about a half of the future VET teachers have chosen the profession because of the inner motivation. For the profession of a teacher, the

inner motivation (interest in occupational field, motivation to work with children, to make contribution into the social development) is of primary importance (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The criteria for choosing a higher education institution are the high reputation and prestige of the institution (55%), work during training (15%), the tuition fees (30%), recommendations (23%).

Only nearly half of the surveyed students have chosen the university because of its reputation what can be a negative indicator and the reason for improving the situation.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the higher education institution (85%), the content of teaching (79%), teaching methods (91%), the availability of educational materials (89%), the list of optional disciplines (91%), the willingness of teachers and administration to answer questions, provide assistance (91%).

According to the answers students had a positive experience during the pedagogical internship: 13% of students rated their pedagogical experience as "very good", 60% answered that it was "quite good", 10% gave the mark "rather good", for the rest of the students it was difficult to choose the answer. Among the knowledge and skills that students lacked for conducting classes at VET institutions during their pedagogical internship, the most significant were professional (47%) knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (20%). The level of readiness for classes at VET institutions was assessed as "very good" by 5%, as "good" by 45%, for the rest it was difficult to answer. This should be taken into account when teaching students (future VET teachers).

Table 4. Students' attitude towards pedagogical internship and its components, in % of respondents

Types of internship / aspects of work organization of internship /	completely satisfied	rather satisfied	rather dissatisfied	fully dissatisfied	difficult to answer
Educational internship					
Period	20	57	16	7	-
Duration	31	51	8	10	-
Content of internship	27	33	27	13	-
Places of internship	21	34	24	21	-
Guidance from higher educational institution	20	57	20	3	-
Guidance from the place of internship	35	46	6	13	-
Productive (technological) internship					
Period	26	49	12	13	-
Duration	26	49	12	13	-
Content of internship	27	43	17	13	-
Bases of internship	17	43	27	13	-
Guidance from higher educational institution	26	54	9	13	-
Guidance from the places of internship	24	54	9	13	-

Awareness of students about vocational education institutions, where they can be employed after graduation, is quite limited: only 13% of students said they are fully informed, 40% of students have limited information, 47% of students were not informed.

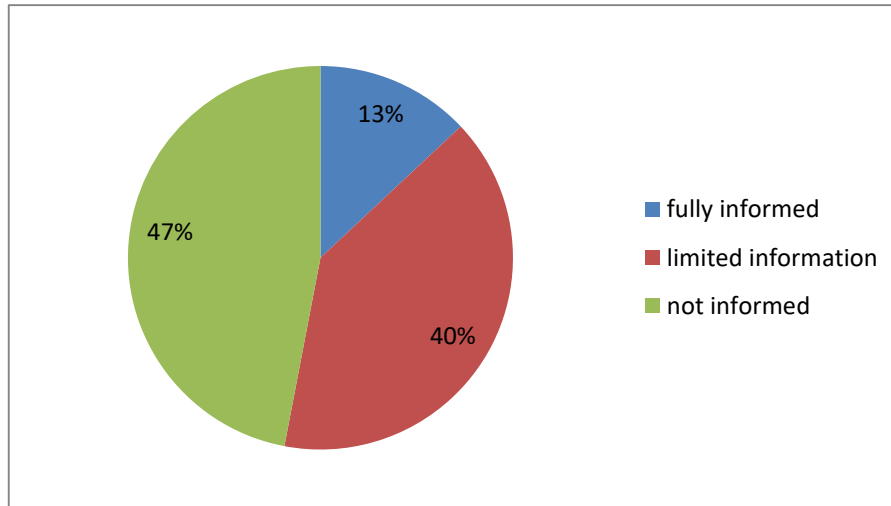


Figure 1. Awareness of students about vocational educational institutions, where they can be employed after graduation, in % of respondents

Among the most common sources of information about vocational education institutions:

- official websites of institutions and advertising (32%);
- information from teachers and other students (20%);
- job fairs (10%);
- 38% surveyed students did not answer the question.

Therefore, the appropriate work should be conducted due to extend the students' awareness in this field.

At the same time, students were satisfied with the cooperation between the university and vocational education institutions: 72% of students chose the options "very good" and "quite good". They also proposed directions for further cooperation.

Regarding the relevance of the involvement of VET teachers in conducting practical classes, 30% of students believe that such cooperation is appropriate, 4% gave a negative answer, and for 66% of students it was difficult to choose the answer.

The survey also examined students' professional experience and their intentions for further work. 26% of respondents constantly and 40% from time to time combined the paid work with their studies. Among such students, 19% had a job that was completely, and 35% had a job that partially corresponded to their speciality / curriculum.

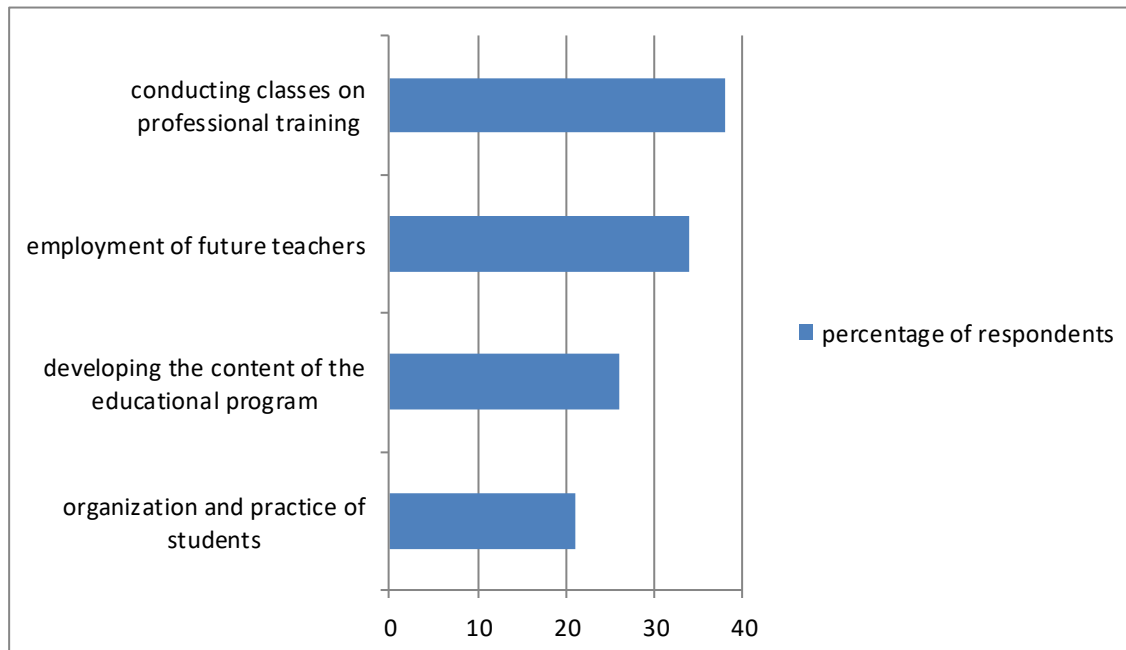


Figure 2. Directions of development of cooperation of the university with vocational education institutions, in % of respondents

From this point of view, the results of the survey of students who study in the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) showed that students are generally satisfied with their studies at the university and the disciplines taught. Respondents had positive experience with teaching at VET institutions during their pedagogical internship. In addition, they suggested the directions of cooperation between higher educational institutions and vocational educational institutions in order to improve training. At the same time, students' awareness of vocational education institutions, where they can work after graduation, is quite limited. This primarily indicates a low motivation to study, which confirmed their intentions for future work. The results of the survey allowed identifying areas for improving the training of VET teachers: involving practitioners in the educational process, improving teaching methods, strengthening practical orientation (professional skills and pedagogical knowledge), developing cooperation with institutions and organizations where students undergo internships.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS: HEI TEACHERS OF SPECIALITY “VOCATIONAL EDUCATION”

At the University of Ushynsky, the Department of “Technological and Vocational Education” 21 teachers are employed who deliver training in the educational program “015 Vocational Education (Design)”. Five of them are men and 16 are women. They teach disciplines and courses in the following areas: seven courses are in general training; special (vocational)

training covers 11 disciplines. Among the pedagogical staff there are two doctors of sciences, professors; seven are associate professors, six are senior teachers, three are teachers, one person works as an assistant.

The majority of teachers (81% or 17 out of 21) belong to the age group 41 to 50+, and only 19% (i.e. 4) are aged up to 40.

Most teachers have extensive scientific and pedagogical experience (90% have from 4 to 20+ years of experience).

All research and teaching staff of the department cooperate (or have cooperated) with various partners (educational and methodical centres (offices) of VTE, VTE institutions, higher education institutions, scientific institutions, enterprises, institutions of postgraduate pedagogical education, trade unions, Ministry of education and science of Ukraine) (see Figure 3).

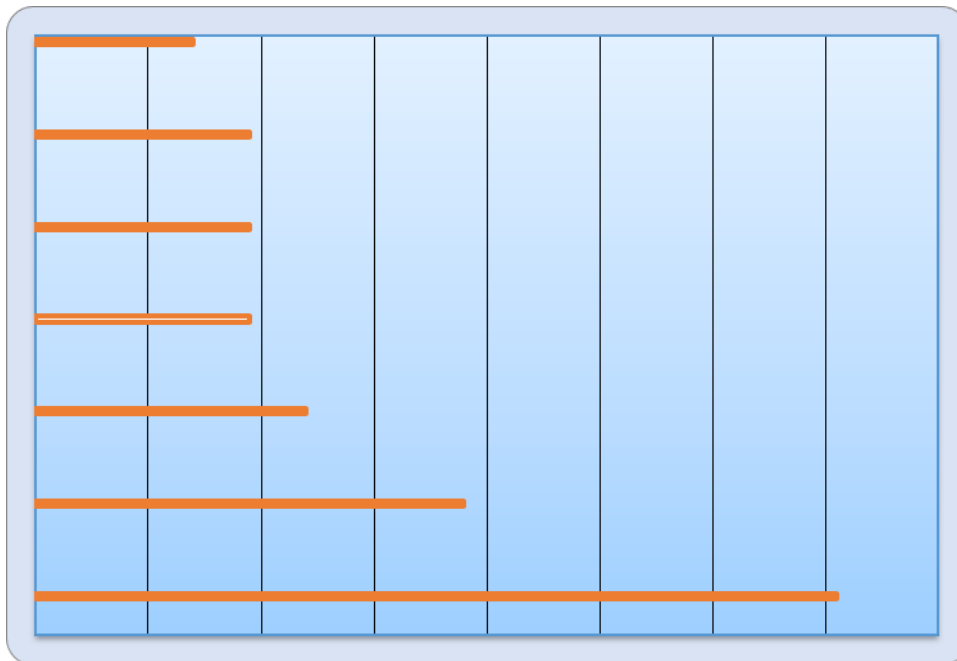


Figure 3. Partners with whom HEI teachers cooperate, in % of respondents

All respondents (100%) positively assessed the cooperation of the university with vocational education institutions. The results of the respondents' assessment of different areas of such cooperation (see Table 5), showed that in general, only 76% of respondents positively assessed the cooperation with VET on the employment of future teachers. At the same time, the interviewed teachers of higher education institutions praised the need to develop cooperation between the university and vocational education institutions in all areas. Regarding the validity of the involvement of VET teachers in practical classes, the majority of respondents (95%) answered positively, as well as the feasibility of involving freelance teachers to conduct classes in vocational schools. Teachers of higher education institutions

also unanimously stated that they feel the need for constant development of their professional and pedagogical competence.

Table 4. Results of the respondents' assessment of various areas of university's cooperation with vocational education institutions, in % of respondents

Areas of cooperation	very well	rather well	rather bad	very bad	difficult to answer
Developing content of the educational program and curricula	76	24	-	-	-
Conducting classes on psychological and Pedagogical disciplines	71	24	-	-	5
Conducting classes on professional training	90	5	-	-	5
Organizing and conducting educational practice	90	10	-	-	-
Joint implementation of educational (training) projects	76	19	5	-	-
Employment of future teachers	71	24	-	-	-
Holding joint events	81	19	-	-	-
Organization of teachers' training and skill enhancement	81	14	5	-	-
Career guidance	90	10	-	-	-

The majority of the surveyed teachers (81% or 19 out of 21) have not participated in in-service training activities conducted at/by vocational education institutions. Among the most common events in which respondents participated are conferences (19%), round tables (10%), methodological seminars (14%), workshops, trainings (15%). Despite the fact that among those who took part in such events, 20% expressed satisfaction, and 75% of respondents did not answer the questions, 100% of the surveyed teachers consider it as relevant for the development of professional competence to take part in events held at vocational education institutions. Therefore, the cooperation between university teachers and these institutions should be developed.

The majority of respondents (90%, i.e. 19) consider it possible to constantly communicate on professional issues with colleagues from vocational education institutions (in the framework of joint conferences, job fairs, etc.).

It is a positive indicator that all the surveyed teachers (100% or 21) consider it appropriate to create a specialized online platform for professional communication.

From this point of view, the results of a survey of teachers involved in training students in the educational program "015 Vocational Education (Design)" confirmed the need to develop cooperation between the university and vocational education institutions. The study identified problems in establishing such cooperation: employment of future teachers and

organization of joint activities with vocational education institutions, including conferences, round tables, seminars, methodological seminars, etc.

ASSUMPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Having analyzed the results of the need analysis of students (see the questionnaire in “Instruments of need analysis of project PAGOSTE on the project website <http://pagoste.eu>), we discovered a number of problems passion for the profession of designer, namely:

- a large number of the surveyed students do not intend to work in the education system and do not see themselves in the future as teachers of professional (vocational) education;
- a large number of respondents sometimes or permanently work, but their work does not correspond to the speciality / educational program in which they study;
- almost half of all the respondents do not have information about VTE institutions where they could be employed after graduation;
- a large number of respondents stated that they lacked professional skills and / or knowledge for conducting proper classes during internships;
- when choosing a profession and High Educational Establishment, only half of the respondents took into account their hobbies, etc.

These problems affect the quality of comprehensive theoretical and practical training of future specialists, which may affect their competitiveness in the labour market.

Areas of work to improve the guidance of teaching students in educational speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design) within the project may be the following:

1. Improving the career guidance work in order to get potential students interested in the speciality 015 Vocational Education (Design).
2. Improving the content of education in order to increase the availability of the educational program, reduction in the repetition of material in various disciplines, the convenience of premises and equipment.
3. Increasing the level of involving practitioners in teaching by concluding cooperation agreements between HEI and VTE institutions.
4. Improving the organization of internships (period, duration, content, bases of internship, the organization of guidance from the base of internship, which still satisfies 87% of the surveyed students. At the same time, 50% of respondents rated their readiness for classes in VET institutions as good, 30% – as bad, 20% could not answer.

5. Providing information sessions, conference, career guidance meeting due to improve students' awareness of VET institutions where the students of Ushynsky University can be employed after graduation, as 87% of the surveyed students do not have or have little information.
6. Diversifying the areas of cooperation of Ushynsky University with institutions of professional (vocational) education (cooperation in the direction of developing the content of educational programs, providing classes on professional training, organizing and conducting students' internship, employment of future teachers, involving teachers of VTE institutions in practical classes).
7. Increasing the number of pedagogical staff participating in events held at professional (vocational and technical) education institutions, as 81% (or 19 out of 21 respondents) have not joined the above-mentioned cooperation yet.
8. Establishing constant communication on professional issues with colleagues from vocational education institutions (in the framework of joint conferences, job fairs, etc.).
9. Conducting educational and explanatory work with students to explain the importance of combining education with paid work, in order to consciously choose a place of work that corresponds to the speciality or educational program in which students study.
10. Conducting educational, explanatory and popularization work with students in order to choose a place of employment (after graduation), connected with the education system (HEIs, VET institutions), or in accordance with the qualification of a diploma in higher education, as 53 % of respondents expressed a desire to work outside the education system, 9% are going to work in higher education institutions, 17% are planning to provide educational services on a commercial basis, 21% of respondents have not decided yet.
11. Improving the organization of pedagogical internship, which still satisfies 87% of respondents, 83% of respondents positively evaluate their experience of conducting classes during pedagogical internship. At the same time, 47% of the surveyed students lacked professional knowledge and 20% pedagogical knowledge for proper classes.
12. Increasing the participation of students in international projects during their studies.
13. Establishing interactive communication between teachers and administration on ways to improve the educational process with students, 57% of whom have never been involved in the discussion.
14. Increasing the role of the official website, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers of the University of Ushynsky, which have never been used by more than 50% of the surveyed students to learn news and events at the university. At the same time, 100% of the surveyed students receive information about news and events at the university from teachers and other students.

15. Diversification of areas of cooperation of teachers involved in the training of applicants in the speciality "015 Vocational Education (Design)" with institutions of vocational education. Namely: cooperation in the direction of developing the content of educational programs, conducting classes on professional training, organizing and conducting student internships, employment of future teachers, involvement of teachers of VET institutions in conducting practical classes.
16. Expansion of the number of pedagogical staff participating in events held at vocational (technical) education institutions, as 81% (or 19 out of 21 respondents) have not joined yet the above-mentioned cooperation.
17. Establishing constant communication on professional issues with colleagues from vocational education institutions, potential employers, stakeholders (in the framework of joint conferences, job fairs, etc.).
18. Involvement of HEI teachers to participate in the creation of a specialized online platform for professional communication.

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Co-funded by the
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