Report on the external evaluation

of the

Master Program and Programs of Professional Development

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

(EdLead, 543848-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-RS-JPCR)

University of Kragujevac

University of Belgrade

University of Novi Sad

University of Niš

Evaluator: Saša Milić, PhD, Full Professor

University of Montenegro – Faculty of Philosophy

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ABBREVIATIONS

EHEA – European Higher Education Area

ESG – European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

EDLEAD – Educational Leadership Master Programme

IEP – Institutional Evaluation Programme

EUA – European University Association

ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

UBG – University of Belgrade

UKG – University of Kragujevac

UNS – University of Novi Sad

UNI – University of Niš

INGOs – Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness

TEMPUS – Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies

EQAR – European Registry of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report addresses the extent to which the Design of the Master Program of Educational Leadership at the Faculty of Education in Jagodina (UKG), Master Program of Educational Leadership at Faculty of Philosophy (UNS) and Programs of Professional Development (UBG, UKG and UNI) comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-2015), and with the Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia 2020. The evaluation is based on a variety of inputs. The evaluator conducted a series of interviews with EDLEAD partners and work package leaders, students of Master Studies and participants in Professional Development. In addition, materials and the website have been analysed. Furthermore, the views of other stakeholders in the area of higher education in Serbia have been taken into account. The objective of this external evaluation is to provide the EDLEAD partnership with an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the project activities so that these would be taken into account for any future activities. It is based on a review process initiated on the request of UBG, and performed in the period September 11 – October 15, 2017 by prof. dr Saša Milić, from University of Montenegro.

The report is based on the uncontested materials and documents submitted by the subscriber of the program entitled Master Degree of Education Leadership at UKG and UNS and Professional Development at UBG, UKG and UNI, the legal bases of the Republic of Serbia in the field of education, the added material annexes, analysis of the existing provision of education leadership in Serbia, studies of the labour market features, and relevant information on the social, cultural, and environmental realities of life in Serbia and the Central Balkan region. In addition, we are reasonably considered as key revisers for membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance and Higher Education. Evaluation was made with relevant experts and evaluators in communication with Daniela Petrović, Associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at University of Belgrade and Jelena Teodorović, Associate professor at Faculty of Educational Sciences at University of Kragujevac from the side of the subscriber.

In spite of the importance of educational leadership, the field has not been – until very recently – a priority of Serbian education policy makers. Serbian principals and vice-principals are teachers whose principalship learning is mostly experiential. Serbian school boards are selected without established criteria and receive no training. Employees in local and regional education authorities are also not required to have educational background and receive training that is frequently connected only to the educational reforms that are to be implemented, not training in educational leadership. Demand for leaders and educators within educational institutions, as well as education system, is increasing, and such a specialized degree will allow graduates to obtain or maintain educational leadership

positions in different educational institutions, at different levels. In addition, these research-oriented MA and PD programs will enhance opportunities for scholarly activity across UKG, UBG, UNS and UNI. In addition, the current and future demand for professional educational leaders is strong, especially having in mind goals of reform of Serbian education system. Educational leadership has recently garnered attention from Serbian policy makers. Serbian Strategy for Development of Education (2012) recognizes educational leadership (especially instructional leadership) as the key component of successful schools. The 2009 Law on the Foundations of Educational System stipulates that principals need to pass a license exam, but that has not yet been implemented in practice. In February 2013, the National Education Council (NEC) has adopted Standards for competencies of principals, which, although lacking certain aspects of effective leadership, are nonetheless a very important step forward. As there is currently no adequate support for the professional development of principals within the education system in Serbia, TEMPUS project Master program in Educational Leadership (EdLead, 543848-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-RS-JPCR) was created with the aim of designing and implementing a high quality master program and professional development courses in educational leadership for current and aspiring school leaders in Serbia. The research team in charge of providing the research base for the master program performed an extensive overview of state-of-art theoretical concepts and empirical findings on educational leadership, as well as of effective education leadership programs. Then, the team undertook two studies – qualitative and quantitative – examining state of the affairs of educational leadership in Serbia, especially in the domain of professional development needs of the school principals.

The EdLead Master Studies (UKG, UNS) and Professional Development Programs (UBG, UKG, UNI) are cohort models with a more contemporary design than other traditional onsite MA or PD programs, and thus offer students a collaborative and applied approach to research, with demonstrated success for adult learners. The value of this approach is outlined through these six critical factors of success:

- o Selection criteria and admissions (student qualities and personal situation);
- o Adequate mentoring and advising (supervision and the scholarly environment);
- o Financial support for the first generation provided by the EU;
- o A program environment that is respectful, inclusive, inviting, and collaborative;
- o A research mode that eliminates a lack of respect across domains; and a
- o Streamlined curricular and administrative processes/procedures.

Several benefits can be derived from this program. Experienced educators and administrators within institutions of education and the community at large are in great demand in the ever-changing educational landscapes, and the push to study and train education professionals to work within a coordinated holistic leadership model has never

been more acute. The inter-professional curricula is designed by the core program faculties from UKG, UBG, UNS and UNI, and offers the flexibility so different faculties, departments and professionals are included in implementation. The MA degree program targets the following student populations:

o   Individuals with Bachelor's and/or Master's degrees in different fields, educators or practitioners who desire to enter the community of scholar professionals and exit with the skills to lead change within their fields.

o   Learners who have exhibited requisite knowledge and skills within their areas of expertise.

o   Scholar educators who seek to contribute to scientific knowledge and who value lifelong learning, while implementing new theories into daily practice.

o   Scholar professionals and scholar educators who wish to advance in their fields.

o   Scholar practitioners who approach their professions with sensitivity to ethical issues and to developmental, cultural, and individual differences within the workplace.

The EdLead curricula, both MA and PD, are designed to build upon the advanced skills and knowledge of the professional already engaged in education and other fields enabling them to improve their leadership, pedagogical, communicational, administrative and/or managerial knowledge and skills and to advance their careers. In summary, the evaluator's opinion is that wider objective of the project to improve student learning in Serbia through the improvement of professional competencies of principals and other educational leaders is successfully achieved. The first specific objective to develop and implement a joint, modern, interdisciplinary 60 ECTS Master program in Educational Leadership, including professional development courses, that address Serbian Standards for Competencies of Principals, Law on the Foundations of the Educational System and Strategy for Development of Education is implemented in appropriate and high quality level. Universities (UKG, UNS) developed curriculum, established the program's virtual infrastructure, prepared appropriate marketing campaigns, ensured accreditation requirements in place, and provided adequate student and faculty support mechanisms developed for a program start in fall 2016 (UKG) and in spring 2017 (UNS). Universities (UKG, UNS) established and modelled an innovative, high-quality multi-access technology-supported educational framework for the scholarly community, and engaged in transformative educational leadership, practices, and research. Studies are designed so that students are offered insight into the modern tendencies of development of educational leadership in the multidisciplinary nature of various phenomena of education and the like. When defining semester module, it has been taken into account the theoretical and the empirical aspect of educational leadership. At the stage of designing the structure of postgraduate master studies, all the facts were taken into account that have influenced the creation of the following thematically defined subject areas. As we

mentioned above, an on-going educational theme in the Republic of Serbia over the last several years has been the importance of leadership development. Agencies such as colleges and universities, regional principal associations, state and non-governmental organizations discussed this topic. Today's Serbian school leaders face many difficult challenges. In EDLEAD project application and needs-assessment authors point to the increased scrutiny of schools, budget shortfalls, and student achievement challenges among the many problems facing today's school leaders. Professional development is now recognized as a vital component of policies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Serbian schools. Moreover, for the first time, the Universities of Belgrade, Kragujevac and Niš through EDLEAD project developed programs for professional development to provide current and potential school leaders the support they need to be successful. These programs are developed and implemented by UBG, UKG and UNI in the period of October 2016 – July 2017 and will continue to be offered to schools in Serbia. The second specific objective to establish an Educational Leadership Network for exchange of experiences, discourse on educational leadership, identification of issues in educational leadership in Serbia, and formulation of recommendations for their improvement is achieved in an altered form - through the online resource centre - and hopefully it will be efficient and more influential in the future.

This report has summarized a broad range of documentation, education policy documents, interviews, empirical research and related literature. Our purpose was to summarize the starting points for a major new effort (MA and PD programs organized by UKG, UBG, UNS and UNI) to better understand the links between educational leadership, quality of education system and quality of teaching and learning. We strongly believe that these project efforts can provide a critical bridge between most educational reform initiatives and their consequences for education system and students.

2. FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE WORK PACKAGES

2.1. GENERAL PERCEPTION

The EDLEAD project has been funded by the European Union through the Tempus IV (6th call) project scheme as a project focussing on development and implementation a joint, modern, interdisciplinary 60 ECTS Master program in Educational Leadership, including professional development courses, that will address Serbian Standards for Competencies for principals, Law on the Foundations of the Educational System and Strategy for Development of Education, as well as was built on rigorous research evidence and Bologna principles. The program flexible and practice-oriented, and increases competencies of aspiring educational leaders, school principals and middle management, as well as of school boards and employees in local, regional and national educational authorities. The project lasted from 01/12/2013 until 30/11/2017. It was co-ordinated by the University of Kragujevac.

As there is currently no adequate support for the professional development of principals within the education system in Serbia, TEMPUS project Master program in Educational Leadership (EdLead, 543848-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-RS-JPCR) was created with the aim of designing and implementing a high quality master program and professional development courses in educational leadership for current and aspiring school leaders in Serbia.

The project also aimed to establish an Educational Leadership Network for exchange of experiences, discourse on educational leadership, identification of issues in educational leadership in Serbia, and formulation of recommendations for their improvement.

The inclusion of other Serbian partners – the Institute for Education Research, Association of High-school Principals of Novi Sad, Head Teacher Association of Primary Schools of Novi Sad and Municipality of Zvezdara (Belgrade), as well as EU partners – had very positive impact to project creation and implementation. The relationship with Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development was more fragile, in part because the Ministry has not made steps toward accepting parts of the master program and/or PD courses as formal modus of principal preparation.

The EDLEAD project is widely known amongst the higher education community in Serbia, also beyond the scope of the partnership. This can indeed be considered as a highly positive feature, both in terms of the impact of the project and the sustainability of the activities undertaken. The EDLEAD project has been considered by all partners but also by many external as a very good project. This consideration is referring both to the topic of the project, but also to the actual undertaking of the project.

2.2. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The EDLEAD project consisted of a range of different activities under each work package. Many of these activities have been undertaken according to the envisaged timetable. Some delays were nevertheless unavoidable due to reasons outlined below. Nevertheless, despite the delays all activities that were initially foreseen were completed by the end of the project. Furthermore, the project reached an even greater number of stakeholders than initially envisioned.

There were a few problems with sometimes unresponsive and/or antagonistic Ministry of Education. There were three ministries over the time of the project, and each had its own agenda regarding principals. The first one signed up for the partnership in this project and wanted the master program to be the main modus of principal education. The second one was very much opposed to the master program and wanted principals to be educated via short courses (which is not supported by literature and experience of EU countries); Ms. Mirjana Bojanić of the latter Ministry of Education did start to move things along (in regards to providing project team with the lists of principal mentors who could attend the training), but that was very slow. Project team had to postpone already planned and organized trainings for principal mentors and educational counsellors because they did not get Ministry's approval of the principals on time, and that cost project team a lot of time and energy. The third Ministry of education (current one) made things easier for EDLEAD, but that can perhaps be due to the fact that project team knew the person in charge of all school regional authorities in Serbia who came to the Ministry. Ms. Jasmina Djelic was very helpful to project team and because of her willingness and quick communication project team was able to organize and implement planned trainings for principal mentors and education counsellors. Ministry's formalization of the parts of the master program and/or PD courses would strengthen the sustainability of the project.

Additionally, administration is quite heavy - EACEA requirements can many times be interpreted in different ways, so, in order to be safe, universities demand overly encompassing documentation. This distracts a lot from the substance of the work.

Within *work package 1* all activities were successfully accomplished. It was seen as essential that comparative overviews to direct development of the Master program and PD courses so that they address the needs of the target group, and reflect top notch research findings and most effective training practices in educational leadership. This package also included needs assessment studies and with that aim project team carried out the survey on the state of education leadership in Serbian education system has been conducted with 200 principals from primary and secondary schools in Serbia, and organized focus groups with over 60 principals, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists. Review of current theory and empirical research findings in educational leadership has been done, as well as review of

effective, exemplary educational leadership preparation programs in EU and international community.

Within *work package 2* partners developed the detailed syllabi for each course in the Master program and PD in compliance with Bologna principles, based on the learning outcomes and assigning appropriate workload to the number of ECTS; the starting point for the development of syllabi was be the Final report outlining concept of the Master program. Aim of this working package was also identification of appropriate teaching materials (literature, video-clips, etc) and teaching methods (lecture, group work, independent inquiry, etc) for each course.

Within *work package 3* a range of activities took place that aimed to train future teachers & mentors in the Master program and PD courses. The second aim was to improve essential educational leadership competencies of the same group of people - academic and school staff and local and regional public servants - so that they can apply them to their own leadership roles. Selected academic staff to teach in the Master program and PD courses (25), as well as selected experienced principals (77) and employees from the Regional school authorities (100) have been trained by the EU partners (University of Jyvaskyla and University of Szeged) and Institute for Education Research. Trained academic staff were the same ones preparing syllabi and teaching methods and materials and teaching the courses. Experienced principals and employees from regional school authorities were trained by University of Jyvaskyla and University of Szeged in educational leadership as well as for mentorship undertaken during the implementation of the project. The approach of professional development training for specific competences and skills required by school leaders and representatives of authorities also ensured a good sustainability of these activities, which is fundamental given the turnover of school leaders.

Within *work package 4*, implementation of the Master program and PD courses, all activities undertaken were assessed very positively. This work package included following activities: development of criteria for student selection, selection and enrolment of 55 students into Master program (30 students at UKG, and 25 at UNS) and of 195 attendees of PD courses; implementation of the master program and PD courses (core courses in first semester, module/elective courses and master thesis in second semester); impending organisation of internships of 36 students (11 from UNS, 25 from UKG). All planned activities under this work package will be realized by November 2017 and in appropriate manner. Detailed elaboration in Sections 4 and 5;

Within *work package 5*, Educational Leadership Network (ELN) has been replaced by online Resource center for principals and others who have leadership ambitions. Considering that National principal association has been independently established when the project startd, the partners decided to provide a different kind of support to principals: online platform which would equip principals with useful documents, research findings, national and national papers, laws and bylaws that pertain to educational leadership The activities in

this work package were drawn on both theory and practice in order to help develop effective educational leadership in Serbia.

Within *work package 6* there were two important aims: first, formative evaluation of the program by the partner staff and rigorous external evaluation of the entire program will be undertaken to ensure its quality; second, the QA procedures in line with Bologna principles, in place at partner universities and compatible with Serbian QA mechanisms will be developed to both ensure the program quality and ease its institutionalization. These QA mechanisms had been examined prior to preparation of accreditation procedure, and adjusted during the implementation of the program, but they were mostly finalized alongside other documentation prepared for accreditation. Within this work package, partners did not establish a committee in charge of quality control that could ensure that the project stayed on track and avoid potential negative impact the success of the EDLEAD project. Steering committee exists, and it met during the three study visits in the Netherland, Hungary and Finland and then in a bit limited form (as not all partners could attend) at several meetings in Serbia, via skype and e-mail and during short-term seminars that Hungarian and Finnish partners held.

Within *work package 7*, dissemination, activities were organized to ensure that the Master program and PD courses are highly visible to potential students, stakeholders and wider public. The success of the dissemination activities was measured via attendance at dissemination events, and, ultimately, via number of program applicants. In order to fulfil work package tasks, partners organized following activities: developed web site, prepared the user-friendly, practitioner-oriented Handbook "Best practices in Educational Leadership", prepared and distributed the Master program brochure, promoted of the Master program and PD courses at various conferences (international conference organized by the project in fall 2015, but also presentations at various conferences organized by MoE, Regional centres for professional development, Klett publishing company, etc) and through media (Prosvetni pregled, several appearances on local news), organized dissemination conferences/student info days that were organized at PC universities. A variety of stakeholders will also attended the final project conference, where project results and successes will be presented.

Within *work package 8,* institutionalization of the Master program and PD courses, it was ensured that the project would have effects, which exceed the lifetime of the project significantly. The aim of this package is to ensure institutionalization and longevity of the Master program and PD courses and partners organized following activities: preparation and submission of accreditation documentation, with subsequent re-accreditation in five years, assuring continuation of the Master program; preparation and submission of registration documentation for the Catalogue of PD training, with subsequent re-authorization, assuring continuation of the LLL opportunities for principals and other leaders; ensuring institutionalization of the joint Master program at universities by established needed

overseeing bodies and defining and maintaining inter-university cooperation regarding the joint program by higher authorities. The EDLEAD project has already had some significant impacts. Further impact is to be in the future, but for it, it would be highly desirable for the master program or its part to become a formal way of principal education.

Within *work package 9* the aim was to ensure adequate operational and financial management of the project. UKG was the lead partner, but the decision-making was participatory: Steering Committee (SC) has been established at the kick-off meeting; it consisted of one representative from each partner and meet on six occasions. It had the authority to make decisions on all key aspects of the program; the decisions were made by majority vote. UKG ensured that all decisions were in line with TEMPUS and partner country rules and regulations. Communication between the partners was ongoing, in person (during EU-PC and PC-EU visits, and especially during PC-PC meetings), via email, skype and video-conferencing.

3. FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (ESG)

This is a report on the external evaluation of the program design of Master Programme of Educational Leadership at the Pedagogical Faculty UKG and Faculty of Philosophy UNS.

On September 11th, 2017, the University of Belgrade invited the evaluator to carry out evaluation of the educational program of Education Leadership at the second stage of Bologna studies. As regards the definition of the evaluation context, we first considered *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG-2015[1]) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).* Part 1 and Part 2 of the *ESG-2015* will be considered for our purpose*:*

- Internal quality assurance
- External quality assurance

Additionally, we conducted the evaluation of the curriculum of the Master program of Education Leadership. These are critical for assessing the quality of design programs taking place within the European Higher Education Area.

In the evaluation, we examined how the design of the program follows the basic principle:

• providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;

• the interests of society in the quality and standards of higher education need to be safeguarded;

• the quality of academic programmes need to be developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of higher education across the EHEA;

• there need to be efficient and effective organisational structures within which those academic programmes can be provided and supported;

• transparency and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important;

• there should be encouragement of a culture of quality within higher education institutions;

• processes should be developed through which higher education institutions can demonstrate their accountability, including accountability for the investment of public and private money;

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[1] Revised ESG approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015.

• quality assurance for accountability purposes is fully compatible with quality assurance for enhancement purposes;

• institutions should be able to demonstrate their quality at home and internationally;

• processes used should not stifle diversity and innovation.

The basic principle was checked through the structure of the (ESG-2015) and the European Higher Education Area.

3.1. FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (ESG)

3.1.1. Policy end quality assurance

Standard:

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Assumption:

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

Findings:

The Universities (UKG[2], UNS[3]) established formal mechanisms for the approval, regular monitoring, and periodic reviews of study programs, teaching and working conditions, thus assuring their continued value. Adapted version of the guidelines 'EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)' was used for this purpose: Guidelines for institutions.

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[2]Statute of the University of Kragujevac (2011),
http://www.kg.ac.rs/Docs/statut_univerziteta_u_kragujevcu_28042017.pdf
[3]Statute of the University of Novi Sad (2011)
https://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/rs/univerzitet/dokumenti/category/6-statut

In its quality assurance procedures, the Universities (UKG, UNS) are consulting with employers, employee representatives, and other partners. Consultation partners are a part of the periodic review of study programs and diplomas awarded, and include all stakeholders: former students, employers, trade unions, representatives of local government, and state bodies (Statute UKG Art. 18, 100, 104, 110, 111, Statute UNS Art. 19, 23, 72, 73, 88, 101,175, Rule book about quality control UKG[4], Rule book about quality control UNS[5],

The policy of the quality of education on the one hand depends on experts from the universities, and a good preparation of the bases in cooperation with other universities, for instance those included in the program of inclusive pedagogy: Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven, Heverlee (Leuven), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium); University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä (Finland), Instituto Politécnico do Porto, Porto (Portugal); and on the other side other bodies such as the Councils of the Faculties, Senates of the Universities (UKG, UNS), which reviews and approves proposals of education, and the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Republic of Serbia (www.kapk.org).

All information is published on the websites of the Faculty of Education at the University of Kragujevac and Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Novi Sad. The websites are regularly updated and available to the general public (www.pefja.kg.ac.rs; www.ff.ns.ac.rs), (https://sr.edlead.edu.rs/).

Overall appraisal:

The delivered documents with published rules and instruments, which are available on the website, present the appropriate system of decision-making structures and controls to ensure the quality of the institution. Internal control authorities are put in place, individually defined internal accountability, and external quality assurance policies (Ministry and its bodies). Faculties and Universities (UKG, UNS) have robust procedures for internal evaluation, and the evaluator was provided with all the information needed.

3.1.2. Design and approval of programmes

Standard:

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national

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[4] http://www.kg.ac.rs/Docs/Pravilnik_o_obezbedenju_kvaliteta.pdf
[5] https://www.uns.ac.rs/index.php/rs/univerzitet/dokumenti/send/7-pravilnici/12-pravilnik-o-obezbedenju-kvaliteta-i-postupku-samovrednovanja

qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Assumption:

Study programmes are at the core of the higher education institutions' teaching mission. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers.

Findings:

The legal bases that are transparent (open access) to all participants and stakeholders, define who prepares the program (experts) and who approves and confirms it. When preparing the program objectives and results are taken into account as provided in the documents of the country (strategy), or the views and opinions of stakeholders in the process of adopting the programs.

The program includes a large number of elective disciplines. Each student, depending on their interests and needs, chooses two from five elective subjects. The use of different methodological strategies and procedures promotes an individualised learning process and the respect of various needs and interests of students.

Certification program is determined in line with the rules and established by the Council and the Faculty Senate, the Senate and the Administrative Board of the University and on to the national level through the Council for Qualifications and Educational Council at the Ministry of Education.

The number of student enrolment in the study program is decided by the Senates of Universities (UKG, UNS). The procedure envisages that the proposal provides the number of Study program students, which is then proposed to the Faculty Councils. The Faculty as an organizational unit adopts the proposal (through the Council) and the accompanying documentation is forwarded for the final decision of the Senates (Jagodina, 2015; Novi Sad, 2015).

The programs at the Universities have a horizontal or vertical links with other education programs in terms of providing transitions. Education Leadership is on the second Bologna level and for now has no continuation to the doctoral program. Master students of EdLead can continue onwards, toward a variety of PhD programs.

Education leadership program was recommended by the Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia until 2020 – Training for Directors (p.11) (www.erasmusplus.rs).

Overall appraisal:

Universities (UKG, UNS) have processed the design and approved the programmes. The programmes are designed so that they meet the set objectives, including the intended learning outcomes.

Remarks:

Design and approval of programmes should provide students with more impact on academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers.

3.1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Assumption:

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of outcomes.

Findings:

Students have the opportunity to fill out the survey and express their opinion and assessment of the quality of study programs, thus influencing the improvement of pedagogical practices. Involving students in the improvement of pedagogical practices is desirable. Universities (UKG, UNS) take into account their opinions and suggestions.

In addition to a very affirmative evaluations of the study program, students expect more activity in practice and visits in schools. To enable students a greater insight into the quality of the study and the transfer of best practices, student exchange with foreign countries will be provided in November 2017 and preparations are in progress.

Two principal associations who were partners in the program and who know very well target group and their professional needs and challenges did help project team by giving advice in the period of conceptualization of the master program and preparation of courses. Their main contribution is making courses more practical and oriented toward real needs of working principals.

The organization of teaching, scheduling and attending classes is harmonized at a meeting between students and professors. All the activities in the program are made clear to

the students. Based on them, they create a plan of their implementation, so that everyone can follow the plan.

Teaching methods used are appropriate. Class sizes are small and there is a high degree of interaction between the staff and the students in the classroom, which is greatly appreciated by the students. Attendance is not required for all classes. To assist students who work during the day, classes are taking place only at weekends. Teaching procedures, materials and resources are on average standard levels. Course material given to students online and in class, is up to date. Most courses are taught by experts who are active in research in that particular field. The staff is highly motivated, and the institutional culture is one that values innovation and flexibility.

Monitoring and evaluation of students' work is fully aligned with the Universities Statutes (UKG – Art. 141, 145, 146; UNS – Art. 100, 124, 125). The evaluation is consistently implemented in compliance with these laws. Students are informed in detail at the beginning of the semester about the ''methodology of teaching organization, monitoring and evaluation, character and content of the final exam, structure of the total number of points and the method of grade", which is contained in the Statutes and the Rules.

During the first hour of instruction, the teacher introduces the students in detail each subject in terms of its objective, ways of monitoring their work, terms of testing knowledge, the character and the content of the final exam, structure of the total number of points, and the method of shaping the closing marks. The teacher regularly monitors and records the results and knowledge of each student recording them official documentation. Some teachers publicly post the total number of points at the final exam and forms the final grade for each student. If the student does not win the minimum number of points intended for a passing grade, the student is obliged can re-take the exam at a later date. Assessment and evaluation is performed in accordance with the ECTS scale evaluations: 5 (failure) – 10 (excellent).

Some examsare of modular structure, so that two or more teachers participate. Exam results are available to students on all aspects of the evaluation of their work (colloquiums, essays, research results in practice) and provided to each student. Terms of progression are determined by the internal rules and published on the universities' websites.

Students may influence planning, implementation and evaluation of the quality of studies of educational leadership through the surveys of students by Student Association. Survey for students is the main way in which students assess the quality of the study program and the lecturers who implement them. The survey results are submitted for evaluation by the professional and competent committee appointed by the Faculty. Regular (quarterly) survey of students can evaluate the quality of a study program through the following dimensions: - the quality of teaching; - The quality of teachers; - Regularity of tuition; - Expediency under study content; - The availability of literature.

Universities (UKG, UNS) have in place bodies dealing with legal regulations and the legality of the teaching work organization. In the procedure of completing the studies, each student is entered in the system, logs in for exams and grades, and prepares and realizes the defence of the final paper.

If students notice a failure or a problem, they can appeal in writing or in person to the Head of the study program, which informs the vice-dean about what was discussed at the collegium, or to the Dean's Council if the problem is more complex.

Faculties might also like to consider whether there is room for greater standardisation in the setting of exam papers, especially as regards the number and the type of the questions set, and the rubric used.

There is an anonymous evaluation of the teachers, and each student fills in a questionnaire and gives its suggestions for improving the quality of work. Each professor receives the results of the evaluation, and at organizational meetings, those results are discussed.

Overall appraisal:

Programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and the assessment of students reflects this approach. Teaching procedures, materials and resources are on average standards level.

3.1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Standard:

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Assumption:

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education system.

Findings:

Universities (UKG, UNS) announces a public invitation with clear and precise criteria for enrolment, which are required by the Statutes. In Article 35 (UKG), Article 11 (UNS) related to the activities of the Board, the Statute of UKG/UNS quotes: *Determine the admission policy and open invitation for enrolment in the study in accordance with the law*.

The program includes severalelective disciplines. Depending on their interests and needs, each student chooses two out of five elective subjects in the second semester (fours subjects in the first semester are obligatory).

The use of different methodological strategies and procedures promotes an individualised learning process and the respect of various needs and interests of students.

When it comes to the Master degree program, it has its own specifics related to the field of education leadership and gives the opportunity to all graduates of specialized study teaching direction to continue their study without obstacles. The transition from one to another Master study program follows the prescribed way. Under the Bologna rules of procedure, the same examinations are recognized if the student has set a particular subject to a related study program.

Moving to studies with the same or similar study programs and rights on the basis of student mobility are realized in line with the rules determined by the Senate (Statutes UKG, UNS).

The student has the right to appeal to the University Senate on the quality of teaching and the quality of the academic staff of the organizational unit where he is studying. The first instance disciplinary bodies are the Disciplinary Committee and the Senate. The second instance disciplinary bodies are the Council of the University organizational unit or Senate for independent study programs of the University and Board of Directors (Statute of UKG – Art. 147-149; Statute of UNS – Art. 108, 123).

Overall appraisal:

The University provides conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career. Terms relating to the study and students' obligations are prescribed by the University rules published on the website, which provides a wide transparency. Students are also involved in designing the standards.

3.1.5. Teaching staff

Standard:

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Assumption:

The teacher's role is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centred learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing (cf. Standard 1.3).

Findings:

The career development of teachers is regulated by the Statutes of the Univesrities (UKG, UNS), and the same procedure is organized for each teacher. Academic staff is elected by the Senate on the basis of a public invitation for a period of five years, except for full-term professors who are elected for an indefinite period of time. Selection of a higher grade is based on the principle of gradualism, after the election to the previous lower rank (UKG Statute - Art. 125; UNS Statute – Art. 11, 73, 78, 135, 142, 145). Teaching staff has been selected by previous experience and expertise that most closely matched the content of the courses in question - e.g. Prof. Biljana Stojanovic (UKG) was previously a principal at the pre-school institution; Prof. Sladjana Zukovic's (UNS) field is family pedagogy and partnership among family and school, Prof. Vesna Petrovic's (UKG) interests and experience are in the quality of the teaching process (and she holds in-service training for teachers in the area of instructional quality), Prof. Danijela Petrovic's (UBG) expertise is in communication, Prof. Prof. Ivana Petrovic (UBG) and Prof. Svetlana Cizmic (UBG) are deeply knowledgeable about organizational psychology, Prof. Jelena Teodorovic's (UKG) field is education policy, Prof. Olivera Floric experise is methodology of educational research (UNS), Prof. Jelena Masimovic (UNI) experise is action research, etc.

Within the project EDLEAD, staff trainings are organized and carried through group study visits and stays (Amsterdam, two weeks, Szeged, two weeks, Jyvaskyla, two weeks). Teaching staff attended conferences and presented papers in Serbia and abroad - MEST conference in Feb 2015, ECER conference in Hungary in fall 2015, project-organized conference in fall 2015, Klett conference in April 2017 and Conference of Network of Regional Training Centres in Vrnjacka banja in October 2017 (https://sr.edlead.edu.rs/).

Overall appraisal:

The Universities and Faculties guarantee the competence of their teachers. They apply transparent procedures for the recruitment and development of staff.

3.2. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Standard:

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Assumption:

For a good higher education experience, institutions provide a range of resources to assist student learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors and other advisers. The role of support services is of particular importance in facilitating the mobility of students within and across higher education systems.

Findings:

Organization units have appropriate resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure, in addition to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers.

Information technology (video-conferencing, software, video, Skype, etc.) is fully integrated into all parts of the programme. Classrooms are equipped. The e-learning resource platform is possible. Students are also provided with access to a large number of PCs, and to a broad IT support.

Teaching and learning resources are at a solid level. The e-learning resource platform is close to being finished and will be used to provide students with the opportunity to download all essential material relating to each course, or to the methodological classes. It also gives students and other access to useful documents relating to the field of educational leadership as a whole (e.g. handbooks, past papers, international documents, etc).

Teaching rooms are equipped and more than adequate in size. The library provides good access to online resources, both on campus and off, via VPN. The small weakness was in the provision of books (hard copy or e-book), but books were obtained during the course of the project.

For the needs of the program of educational leadership, the necessary equipment is available (computers, video conferencing equipment …), and literature for this study program, so that the resources are at a high level.

Overall appraisal:

The Universities and the Faculties have learning resources and support students in the implementation of high quality education. In the system of ensuring proper equipping students are engaged in the provision of basic equipment and support. Customized forms of support for the education of students with special needs has not yet implemented all the possible solutions.

Remarks:

Achieve even greater technical modernization of educational equipment, enhance the activation of students and other stakeholders in the processes of quality assurance studies and support to students and regularly enforced adaptation of the learning environment and support to different needs of students. Faculty of Education in Jagodina would need a better link with the outside internet world (via optical cable). Subscriptions for various journals and student access to them is most needed, as well as spendable funds for various digital tools/sites that principals of today should use.

3.3. CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

Assumption:

Quality assurance in higher education is based on the institutions' responsibility for the quality of their programmes and other provision; therefore, it is important that external quality assurance recognises and supports institutional responsibility for quality assurance. To ensure the link between internal and external quality assurance, external quality assurance includes consideration of the standards of Part 1. These may be addressed differently, depending on the type of external quality assurance.

Findings:

The University established formal mechanisms for the approval, regular monitoring and periodic reviews of study programs, teaching and working conditions, thus assuring their continued value (Art. 100, 110 Statute of UKG, Art. 84 Statute UNS).

Quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures are (Rule book UNS, Art. 2):

1. Study programs

2. Teaching

3. Research

4. Cooperation

5. Textbooks and literature

6. Evaluation of students

7. Resources

8. Non-study support

9. Study conditions

10. Management process

11. Culture of quality.

For each quality assurance area, the entities involved in the procedure are determined, as well as quality assurance indicators on the basis of which quality assessment is given. Entities can be teaching and non-teaching staff employed at faculties or University, students and employers. For each area of quality assurance, the Quality Assurance Committee defines the quality assurance procedures. Procedures are adopted and periodically reviewed by the Committee.

The instruments that carry out the self-evaluation process are (Rule Book UNS, Art. 4:

1. Surveys

2. Statistics of exam periods

3. Statistics of the Labour Market Institute

4. Library statistics at the University, Faculties and Institutes

5. Statistics of the activities of student organizations

6. Scientific research results statistics

7. Annual Report of the Commission on Quality assurance at Faculties within the University and managers of organizational units within the University.

The main topics of monitoring are:

- Quality of teaching procedures and teaching methods
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching
- Mobility of academic staff and students
- Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching, and (b) the course content and study material/resources
- Efficacy of teaching.

- Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.

- Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.

3.4. DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

Assumption:

The system for external quality assurance might operate in a more flexible way if institutions are able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance.

Findings:

Stakeholders are involved in the process of securing external quality assurance. This process is provided from the bottom up (the proposals on the basis of innovation, changes in the world etc.), as well as from the top down to the universities and colleges. The FoP improvement-orientated evaluation process includes self-evaluation, external evaluation, and visits carried out by internal or external actors. They produce an oral and a written report. The procedures are laid down in the acts of the University, which are published on the website.

Reports are accessible to all who are responsible for the control and quality of education including the authorities of the Ministry and the Board of Education.

The qualification of the academic staff, teaching methods, percentage of students who pass exams, percentage of graduates, and other necessary indicators of the successful work of the University, or organizational units of the University (Art. 71, Statute of UKG, UNS).

A written report of the Commission of organizational units includes analysis and evaluation of compliance with standards for self-evaluation, advantages and disadvantages in terms of compliance with these standards, and the proposed measures to improve the quality. The quality management committee considers reports from the Senate and delivers its opinion on the assessment of the quality of the University, and of the quality assessment in certain areas executing the process of self-evaluation (Statute UKG, Art. 100, Statute UNS, Art. 73, 175).

The Steering Committee adopts self-evaluation reports of the University. The reports and the decisions of the Board of Directors are available to academic staff and students.

Overall appraisal:

The organization has set the criteria and the procedure for carrying out external quality assurance. These are transparent; all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process.

3.5. PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Assumption:

At the core of external quality assurance is the wide range of expertise provided by peer experts, who contribute to the work of the agency through input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students and employers/professional practitioners**.**

Findings:

The practice of the Universities (UKG, UNS) is to include various quality experts, external and internal, including students. Participation in this process is regulated by the statutes of the Universities.

Quality assurance is implemented through regular and periodic checks and surveillance. The results are made known to the key bodies of the Universities (Senate) as well as the ministry.

At the end of each academic year, the University implements a process of the evaluation of study programs implemented at the university, the teaching and the working conditions, including a survey of students at all levels of study.

Student participation is part of regular (annual) monitoring, and includes evaluation of lectures, programs and professors and their teaching abilities by the students, as well as consultations with student organizations and student representatives in the university's professional and organizational units (UKG Statute – Art. 63, 152; UNS Statute – Art. 72).

Overall appraisal:

The quality of the Universities is ensured through regular and extraordinary surveillance based on pre-established criteria and procedures. Stakeholders, internal and external experts and associations of students are included in the quality assurance.

3.6. CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

Assumption:

External quality assurance and in particular its outcomes have a significant impact on institutions and programmes that are evaluated and judged.

Findings:

Universities regularly monitor the results of their work, in particular the effects of education.

The Universities are aware of the need to monitor the success of the programme and to make appropriate changes: There has also been a rise in student satisfaction with various aspects of the programme and the support services, as documented in the results of student questionnaires, a fact which demonstrates that the Universities are responding to student concerns.

Evaluation is performed continuously (annually and periodically at intervals via surveys, quality control methods and regularity of teaching, analysis of results of examinations and in other ways.

The key criteria of result verification are (Statute of UKG – Art 145-146; Statute of UNS – Art. 124-125):

- all registered students
- students who pass exams,
- percentage of graduates/

Written reports are prepared on the basis of pre-prepared and adopted criteria and are available for the Quality System Management Committee which reviews the reports. The Senate delivers its opinion on the assessment of the quality of Universities, i.e. assessment of the quality in certain areas which implement the process of self-evaluation. The governing board of the University also deals with it. The results of the Council for Higher Education and the Department of institutions and external quality control are transparent.

Overall appraisal:

The University monitors the results and outcomes of its work through the set criteria. Evaluation is performed continuously (annually and periodically at intervals to be determined by the Senate), via surveys, quality control methods and regularity of teaching, analysis of results of examinations and in other ways.

4. EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

The evaluation was prepared on the basis of:

- Document "Request for accreditation of the study program of Master program of Educational Leadership within the TEMPUS project "

- Legal acts of the Universities

- Other/internal documents

- Communications, correspondence with the personnel of the UKG, UNS, UBG, UNI.

4.1. THE EDUCATION ARGUMENTS[6]

Educational leadership has a great impact on student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998; Waters et al, 2003). Multiple studies have established that setting the vision and direction of the organization, developing its people, leading the instructional processes, and creating positive organizational culture and practices are the hallmarks of effective educational leadership (Leithwood et al, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003; Robinson et al, 2009; Scheerens, 2012). Effective leadership is also contextual in regards to student population, organization size, environment and developmental stage, and employee characteristics (Leithwood et al, 2004; Day et al, 2007). OECD's review of 22 education systems in the world points out to leader preparation as one of the key elements for improvement of educational leadership (Pont et al, 2008).

In spite of the importance of educational leadership, the field has not been – until very recently – a priority of Serbian education policy makers. Serbian principals and vice principals are teachers whose principalship learning is mostly experiential. Serbian school boards are selected without established criteria and receive no training. Employees in local and regional education authorities are also not required to have educational background and receive training that is frequently connected only to the educational reforms that are to be implemented, not training in educational leadership.

Educational leaders who want to improve their capacities face a rather inadequate supply of training. The in-service training that is available to principals is mostly comprised of isolated 2-3 day long lectures or workshops that are usually focused on routine, managerial issues, rather than on the evidence-based competencies of effective leaders. The only two master-level programs / modules targeting educational administrators (independently at UB and UNS) are located in the field of management and organizational science, so they

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[6] Downloaded from *Teodorović, J. et al.* (2014). Educational leadership: Needs analysis - Final report;

naturally focus on managerial and operational tasks. While these tasks are important and addressed in this Master program (also via PC staff who teach in the above-mentioned UNS module), they lack many aspects of effective educational leadership (see above). This situation is dire, as inadequate educational leadership ultimately leads to inadequate student learning. Country such as Serbia, whose PISA scores of around 60 points below the OECD average indicate poor student achievement, cannot afford to not improve the capacities of its educational leaders.

Thankfully, educational leadership has recently garnered attention from Serbian policy makers. Serbian Strategy for Development of Education (2012) recognizes educational leadership (especially instructional leadership) as the key component of successful schools. The 2009 Law on the Foundations of Educational System stipulates that principals need to pass a license exam, but that has not yet been implemented in practice. In February 2013, the National Education Council (NEC) has adopted Standards for competencies of principals, which, although lacking certain aspects of effective leadership, are nonetheless a very important step forward.

These circumstances create a perfect opportunity to establish the Master program that: 1) directly targeted all NEC Standards for competencies for principals; 2) addressed additional, research-established competencies for school and other educational leaders (e.g., in Quinn et al, 1996); 3) adopted principles of effective leadership preparation programs, such as those at NSO (the Netherlands), University of Jyvaskyla (Finland), National College for School Leadership (England), programs based on Ontario Leadership Framework (Canada) and others. These programs use active, student-centred instruction; intertwine practice and theory; have a strong mentorship component; allow flexibility of learning pathways; differentiate between various educational leaders, and cooperate strongly with local school systems (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Additionally, this time also presents the opportunity to enhance the discourse on educational leadership and move the field forward.

In summary, the wider objective of the project is to improve student learning in Serbia through the improvement of professional competencies of principals and other educational leaders. The first specific objective is to develop and implement a joint, modern, interdisciplinary 60 ECTS Master program in Educational Leadership, including professional development courses, that addressed Serbian Standards for Competencies of Principals, Law on the Foundations of the Educational System and Strategy for Development of Education, as well as be built on rigorous research evidence and Bologna principles. The second specific objective is to establish an Educational Leadership Network for exchange of experiences, discourse on educational leadership, identification of issues in educational leadership in Serbia, and formulation of recommendations for their improvement.

Statement:

In Republic of Serbia, there are real educational needs for the implementation of education leadership master.

4.2. INTERNATIONAL LAW ON THE EDUCATIONAL LEDASERSHIP

There is no any official or law regulation on educational leadership on EU level. Having in mind those facts, introduction of Master studies of Educational Leadership at Serbian universities is based on contemporary literature on educational leadership and master programs of EU and other institutions.

Statement:

Master Studies on Educational Leadership (UKG, UNS) are compatible and fully in accordance with European practice.

4.3. EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

4.3.1. Contents

The program is balanced in content, relevant to the current educational context, provide participants a deeper understanding of the concepts of educational leadership. For the purpose of informing the Master program in Educational leadership in Serbia, 14 educational leadership programs from the Netherlands, Finland, UK, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Canada, USA and Australia were analyzed in depth. In regards to the curriculum, thirteen major themes were mapped: Theories of leadership; Education policy; Educational[7] leadership; Leading the development of organization; Quality management; Leading the development of people; Improving teaching and learning; Law and finance; Research and evaluation; Management of curriculum; Leading inclusion; Leading partnership; and Leadership in practice. Programs largely include problem-based and practice-based learning that intertwines theory and practice. They provide opportunities for matching individual development plans of the candidates with strategic plans of their schools.

The project aimed to develop a modern and flexible joint Master-level program in Educational Leadership. The program has been comprised of 60 ECTS and be primarily intended for current principals, vice-principals, school team leaders, aspiring future educational leaders, employees in state and private local, regional and national educational institutions, educational NGOs, and others. Select courses in the Master program have been

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[7] Downloaded from *Teodorović, J. et al.* (2014). Educational leadership: Review of current theory, research findings and exemplary preparation programs - Final report;

adapted and also registered and offered as professional development courses. The first part of the project in regards to development WPs – needs analysis and state of art review, creation of the concept of the master program, development of syllabi, teaching methods and materials, as well as training of teacher / mentors. In addition, the project developed a network of collaborators that will work jointly on enhancing discourse and policy options in educational leadership in Serbia.

More specifically, the project has been comprised of the following elements:

1) Assessment of needs of current principals and other education leaders in regards to Serbian Standards of competencies, competencies established by research and demands of their work has been undertaken. Two hundred principals from Belgrade, Vojvodina and Central Serbia responded to the questionnaire developed for this purpose, and 10 focus groups (6 with principals, 3 with teachers and 1 with school counselors) and 7 interviews were conducted; the analysis of their responses have been taken as one strand of evidence in deliberations on the master program concept (WP1).

2) Review of current research on educational leadership and on the most effective educational leadership preparation programs has been undertaken, with implications for the development of the master program (WP1). For the purpose of informing the Master program in Educational leadership in Serbia, 14 educational leadership programs from the Netherlands, Finland, UK, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Canada, USA and Australia were analyzed in depth. In regards to the curriculum, thirteen major themes were mapped: Theories of leadership; Education policy; Educational leadership; Leading the development of organization; Quality management; Leading the development of people; Improving teaching and learning; Law and finance; Research and evaluation; Management of curriculum; Leading inclusion; Leading partnership; and Leadership in practice.

3) Based on the above, the concept and the structure of the program have been developed (WP1). Programs largely include problem-based and practice-based learning that intertwines theory and practice. They provide opportunities for matching individual development plans of the candidates with strategic plans of their schools. The expertise of Consortium suggests that the program should satisfy the following:

a) be built around standards (in addition to all NEC Standards for competencies of principals, additional research-based roles of effective principals and also other educational leaders have been addressed); the competencies will serve as the learning outcomes which drove the creation of courses that will have properly assigned ECTS based on the required workload;

b) Intertwine strong theoretical foundation with practical assignments;

c) Rely on experienced mentors to be role models and professional support for the master program students;

d) Provide flexibility of learning pathways for different needs and roles of learners (e.g., school middle management; experienced principals, educational leaders in school governance; high school principals, elementary school principals, etc);

e) Utilize a wide variety of teaching methods.

4) Following the establishment of the concept and structure of the program, detailed syllabi and teaching materials and methods have been developed (WP2). This has been the primary task of the PC university staff, as that ensured learning-by-doing and ownership on their part. Considering that the program is a joint program, the strengths of each professor/university has been matched to the appropriate course, so as to ensure a very high quality of the program and enable a wide range of coursework to be offered.

5) In parallel to the development of syllabi, materials and methods, rigorous training of trainers (17 university professors and researchers as teachers, 77 experienced principals and 100 employees in local and regional school authorities as mentors) have taken place (WP3). Trainings have been led by EU partners, but have been highly interactive. The trainings have been tailor-made to fit the concept of the master program, and have both raised teachers' & mentors' own leadership competencies and train them to be teachers & mentors to the Master program and PD courses students. The upgrading of skills and competencies has been also increased through mobility and exchange of good practices with EU partners during visits to NSO, UJ and SZTE.

6) Fifty-five students have been selected into the Master program based on their grades, prior experiences, and potential to reach a large number of teachers and students, and other criteria. To be able to satisfy the requirements listed under point 3, the Master program is envisioned to contain core courses, several elective modules, elective courses and a Master thesis. The division between the core courses, elective courses, practice and master thesis is 24 ECTS: 12 ECTS: 6 ECTS: 18 ECTS master thesis (respectively). Importantly, since each course has been developed to address certain competence(s), or parts thereof, the students have been able to select exactly those courses that would allow them to acquire competencies they lack. Select courses in the Master program totalling 30 ECTS were created so as to fulfil all NEC Standards for competencies of principals. Several of those that were deemed most applicable to the general population of principals have been also registered in the official Catalogue for professional development (as individual PD courses), so that they are visible to all teachers and principals in the education system and can be used in piecemeal fashion to build NEC-prescribed competencies of persons that do not desire to enrol in the entire Master program. The credit earned this way can be later recognized should the person decide to enrol in the Master program.

Topics in the coursework have addressed: transformational, instructional and integrated leadership; roles of educational leaders; school-based management; school administration and finances; school improvement; school culture; adult learning; needs

assessment and data analysis for improvement purposes; effective teaching practices; teacher professional development; teacher evaluation mechanisms; student assessment; classroom management; psychology of learning; interpersonal interactions; parental and community involvement; education policy; innovation, and entrepreneurship. Also essential themes are: equity; early interventions; and ICT.

The coursework consisted of lectures, plenary discussions, workshops, case studies, school visits, peer learning in small groups, problem-based learning, brainstorming, role-play, personal feedback, reflection, assignments, personal development plans and independent study.

The program provides a critical understanding of the educational leadership and encourages empirical research in the field of leadership and broader educational, teaching practice in Republic of Serbia, including by making future master thesis.

The proposed model for the study is not aimed at profiling completely new educational personnel. The existing highly educated teachers and counsellors with the above mentioned orientation can, through master training, get a new unique corpus and quality of knowledge in the field of education leadership, and thus, in the future, provide significant contribution and support for the improvement of the segment of leadership in the educational system of Republic of Serbia.

Overall appraisal:

The content of the curriculum is balanced between different subjects that require teaching or counselling staff in the field of educational leadership. More content could be introduced on individual teaching discipline.

4.3.2. Students education and training

The quantitative study[8] focused on the needs assessment for improvement of principals' competencies from their point of view. The sample consisted of 200 principals from Belgrade, Vojvodina and Central Serbia (129 elementary school principals and 71 secondary school principals). The designated questionnaire asked principals to assess (a) how important they perceived specific tasks to be as part of their overall duties and (b) the extent to which they perceived the need to improve their knowledge and skills in order to perform those tasks more effectively. All tasks were divided in six categories corresponding to six domains of the Serbian Standards of competencies for school principals.

The results show that most of the principals that took part in the study (a) perceive that all tasks specified in the instrument (and, by extension, in the Standards of

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[8] Downloaded from *Teodorović, J. et al.* (2014). Educational leadership: Needs analysis - Final report (internal documentation);

competencies) represent important professional duties of principals, and (b) state that they either mostly need or very much need to improve their knowledge and skills on these tasks. On average, over two thirds of principals (67.60%) mostly need or very much need the improvement on the tasks listed. Furthermore, all domains of Standards are, to a certain extent, equally perceived as those where development of knowledge and skills is mostly or very much needed. On each of 82 tasks in the instrument, more than half of principals placed themselves in the "mostly need improvement" or "very much need improvement" category.

The proposed program allowed the upgrade of knowledge for educational personnel of different orientations. Additionally, it provided adequate professional competencies needed for effective support and application of the principles of educational leadership in the educational system of Republic of Serbia.

By attending this program, student develops competencies defined in the document Rulebook on the Standards of Competence of the Directors of Educational Institutions, as well as other competences for which modern research indicates that they are necessary for quality and efficient leadership. Based on accreditation documentation, it is expected that upon completion of the program, student will be able to:

- o Plan, organize and control the quality of work of the institution in the context of complex systemic changes and significant social challenges;

- o Improve the educational process in the institution as a whole, as well as the process of teaching and learning, in accordance with the contemporary understanding of the quality of the educational process;

- o Monitor and improve the work of employees by encouraging their professional development, and by improving interpersonal relationships and evaluating work results;

- o Develop cooperation with parents, governing bodies, representative trade union, state administration and local self-government and the wider community;

- o Effectively supervise and manage the financial and administrative work of the institution;

- o Manage the complex pedagogical and organizational changes in the institution;

- o Initiate and manage research and development projects in the institution.

After successfully completing this program, the student will be able to:

- o Explain the theoretical ideas, concepts and relevant models of educational leadership and their implications for governing the institution;

o Apply contemporary knowledge about educational and organizational processes and models in improving the work of the institution and professional development of employees;

o Apply administrative and financial regulations in the work of the institution in an adequate manner;

o Build, promote and maintain good interpersonal relationships based on respect and acknowledgement for employees;

o Constructively communicate and cooperate with various actors in education, both inside and outside the institution;

o Promote participatory decision making, team work and fair division of assignments;

o Critically examine and use data and research, and participates in analyzes, development projects and research as a reflective practitioner;

o Respect diversity and respond to the individual needs of children, students, employees, and other actors in education;

Overall appraisal:

The Universities see in the education programmes employment opportunities for graduates of teachers and counsellors for educational leadership. The program provides upgrading basic educational qualifications for different areas of employment, giving more opportunities for graduates career choices and career development. Master students are mostly employed principals and, in rare cases, teachers. Draft of the new Law on the foundations of the educational system suggests that master or specialization programs such as this one should be taken into account when the new principals for preschool, elementary and secondary schools are selected.

4.3.3. Material conditions for education

For the implementation of the program, adequate spatial, technical, and didactic equipment is available.

Rooms for teaching includes classrooms, offices, a computer room and a reading room of the library of the Faculty of Philosophy (UNS) and library of the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Jagodina (UKG) (minimum 10 m² per postgraduate).

Information technology (video-conferencing, software, video, Skype, etc.) is fully integrated into all parts of the program. Classrooms are equipped. The e-learning resource platform is possible. Students are also provided with access to a large number of PCs, and a broad IT support.

Teaching and learning resources are at a solid level. The e-learning resource platform provides students with the opportunity to download all essential material relating to each course, or to the methodological classes. It also gives students and others access to useful documents relating to the program as a whole (e.g. handbooks, past papers, international documents, etc.).

Teaching rooms are equipped and more than adequate in size. The library provides good access to online resources, both on campus and off, via VPN. The main weakness is in the provision of books (hard copy or e-book); there is generous provision of computers for student use in PC-rooms, which are open to students 24 hours a day.

Overall appraisal:

Faculty of Education (UKG) needs a better link with the outside internet world (via optical cable and more computers for students' usage. Also, universities need more subscriptions for various journals and student access to them, but also spendable funds for various digital tools/sites that principals of today should use.

4.3.4. Financial resources

The first year of the program is fully funded by the TEMPUS foundation (55 students at University of Kragujevac and University of Novi Sad). PD courses and training for principal mentors and education counselors were also free. Afterwards, the programs will be financed by individuals and organizations and perhaps partly Ministry of Education. Students of UNS have opportunity to apply to Province Secretariat for Higher Education and Research of Vojvodina for financial support for attendance to scientific conferences etc.

Overall appraisal:

Future enrolment in the program will depend on the financial ability of individuals and the ability of schools and other public organizations for education, which will fund the study. This may lead to some uncertainty of enrolment.

4.3.5. Educational plan

The range of subjects indicates that the content includes didactic approaches in the education plan. This content provide to the future principals, guidance counsellors and other educational personnel flexible teaching and counselling strategies to work in sections and classes, which feature the diversity of participants, as there are students with different needs.

Studies are designed so that students are offered insight into the modern tendencies of development of educational leadership in the multidisciplinary nature of various

phenomena of education and the like. When defining semester module, it has been taken into account the theoretical and the empirical aspect of educational leadership. At the stage of designing the structure of postgraduate master studies, all the facts were taken into account that have influenced the creation of the following thematically defined subject areas.

Overall appraisal:

The plan submitted is balanced between different areas (research, law, educational leadership, organization, methodology). However, we propose to include more didactic content in the program of teacher education for educational leadership, as teachers or counsellors need a continuous wide range of knowledge, skills and competencies for leading different educational institutions. We also recommend a content to enrich the knowledge of teachers for vocational education and lifelong learning of adult learners capable of making transitions in order to self-manage their own career.

4.3.6. The structure of provided lecturers

The estimated structure of teachers indicates that they are trained to implement the program, which is reflected through the bibliography of authors and their experience, essential for the modern study of educational leadership. Prospective teachers have the necessary scientific and research visibility.

4.3.7. Quality assurance

Quality assurance is performed continuously with a uniform methodology of the survey, continues to control the manner and the regularity of teaching by reviewing the evaluation system, the percentage of passing the exams – it is carried out by the Head of postgraduate studies at the faculty, the Dean, and the Faculty Council. Quality control of Master studies of educational leadership had been implemented through students' evaluation. All subjects and teachers have been evaluated highly and all comments are positive.

5. EVALUATION OF EDLEAD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

An on-going educational theme in the Republic of Serbia over the last several years has been the importance of leadership development. Agencies such as colleges and universities, regional principal associations, state and non-governmental organizations discussed this topic. Today's Serbian school leaders face many difficult challenges. In EDLEAD project application and needs-assessment authors point to the increased scrutiny of schools, budget shortfalls, and student achievement challenges among the many problems facing today's school leaders. Professional development is now recognized as a vital component of policies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Serbian schools. Moreover, for the first time, the Universities of Belgrade, Kragujevac and Niš through EDLEAD project developed programs for professional development to provide current and potential school leaders the support they need to be successful. These programs were developed and implemented by UBG, UKG and UNI in the period of Octobar 2016 – July 2017.

University of Belgrade (UBG) developed and implemented two programs for professional development, each comprising seven one-day modules (56 hours in total per program). These professional development programs have been accredited by Senate of the University of Belgrade.

The first PD program is *Educational Leadership - Development of Human Resources in Organisation* (Modules: Recruiting people; Managing professional development of people; Managing work efficiency; Creating a positive culture and psychological climate in an educational institution; Teamwork in an educational institution; Managing people in the function of managing change; Educational institution as a psychologically healthy workplace). This PD program supports the development of competencies especially in the *Standards of competence of the directors of the institutions of education* (field three) which are necessary for monitoring and improving the work of employees. The total of 26 participants (69.5% female; 69.5% school principals, 65.2% from institutions outside of Belgrade) enrolled in this PD program and 22 of them completed the program and received a certificate from the University of Belgrade. The program's overall evaluation score on a four-point scale was 3.8. In 2017, this program will be submitted to the Institute for Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia for a new cycle of accreditation (for school years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021).

The second PD program is *Educational Leadership – Partnership and communication* (Modules: Partnership in the function of improving education; Partnership with parents; Project partnership; Communication and promotion of cooperation; Business and intercultural communication; Behaviour in conflict and alternative ways of resolving conflict; Public speech, public relations and advocacy). This PD program supports the development of competencies necessary for the successful establishment and development of cooperation

with different partners (field four, *Standards of competence of the directors of the institutions of education* necessary). Twenty-eight participants (76% female; 64% school principals, 68% from institutions outside of Belgrade) enrolled in this PD program and 26 of them completed the program and received a certificate from University of Belgrade. The program's overall evaluation score on a four-point scale was 3.8

University of Kragujevac (UKG) developed and implemented the PD program *Educational Leadership - Leading Educational Institutions part 1* (Themes: Leadership in education; The Cycle of Educational Policies; Identifying problems in the organization; Development of an adequate solution/improvement method; Characteristics of contemporary educational institutions; Mechanisms for recognizing the complexity in which educational organizations) and *part 2* (Themes: Participatory decision-making; Formulation of an action plan; Implementation of action plans/activities in the school; Sharing leadership; Use of ICT in management; Formative evaluation; Summative evaluation; Planning of formative and summative evaluation; Self-evaluation and external evaluation; Record keeping and reporting). Together, these two PD programs consisted of five days (or 40 hours in total) and were accredited by the Institute for Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia for school years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 (C2: Competence for communication and cooperation; Priority 2: Monitoring and evaluation of educational achievements, i.e. monitoring and encouraging the development of children, pupils and students[9]). Two groups of the two programs were held in Belgrade and Jagodina. The total of 57 participants completed the first part of the PD program. Overall evaluation of this part on a four-point scale was 3.8. The second part of the PD program was completed by 48 same participants. Overall evaluation on a four-point scale was 3.9. In 2017, these programs will be submitted to the Institute for Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia for a new cycle of accreditation (for school years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021).

University of Niš (UNI) developed and implemented the PD program *Action Research in a function of improvement teaching and learning* (Themes: -The notion of action research; Elements and characteristics of action research; A matrix of action research planning; Methods in action research; Participants in Action Research; Types of action research; Practical and theoretical issues in action research; Ethical principles in the implementation of action research; The role of action research in improving educational practice; School development plan as a framework for action research; Creation of the Action Research outline), 24 hours in total. This PD program has been accredited by the Institute for Improvement of Education of Republic of Serbia for school years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 (C2: Competence for teaching and learning, Priority 2). Three cycles of this PD program were held in Niš (2) and Jagodina (1) and 90 participants in total completed the program. The program's overall evaluation score on a four-point scale was 3.9. In 2017, this program will

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[9] http://katalog2016.zuov.rs/StandardiKompetencija.aspx#k2 and http://katalog2016.zuov.rs/Prioriteti.aspx

be submitted to the Institute for Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia for a new cycle of accreditation (for school years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021).

For internal evaluation of all EdLead PD programs (including the PD programs developed by the UBG which is accredited by the Senate of the UBG) a questionnaire was used developed by the Institute for Improvement of Education of Republic of Serbia[10]. The PD program participants were asked to describe both the processes of learning that they experienced and the impact of these programs on their knowledge, practice, sense of efficacy, and their principals' learning. The survey also asked the participants about the impact of the programs on the nature and extent of collaborative work amongst colleagues in their schools. Overall evaluation of all PD program is was very high and ranges from 3.8 to 3.9 on a four-point scale. In the framework of EdLead Tempus project, 264 hours of PD programs were delivered to 195 participants[11] (school principals, school and pre-school teachers, school psychologist and school pedagogues).

Results of interviews during external evaluation showed importance of *what principals* had the opportunity to learn during EDLEAD PD programs. All interviewed participants stressed that all courses were meaningful, delivered in efficient manner and functional for their work. They confirmed as well that they have been actively engaged in their own learning, had opportunity to direct their learning process through active research in the practice and had opportunity for per exchange and collaborative work. Creators put a lot of effort to illustrate the applicability of the courses material, knowledge, or practice to the participants' context. List of interviewed participants has been given in Appendix.

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[10]http://www.zuov.gov.rs/uputstva/
[11] Not including the training of experienced principals (77) and employees from the Regional school authorities (100)

6. CONCLUSION

In the light of evaluation, the documentation provided and the oral evidence considered in communication leads to a conclusion that the Master Programs of Educational Leadership at UKG and UNS are fully compliant with the majority of criteria of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* (ESG-2015) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

As a general conclusion, we can say that Programme is sufficiently compliant with the ESG standards and rules (2015). We estimate that the Master's Programs of Educational Leadership are properly conceived, as they follow the conditions for a successful and it provides graduates with a perspective for career development. It also provides the Serbian professional staff for educational leadership and training which is in terms with the implementation of the international law and practice. The program also takes into account the cultural, economic, and developmental characteristics of the Republic of Serbia.

Demand for leadership at a variety of education system levels is endemic in the Serbia and other countries in Balkan Region today, supported by a large body of empirical research and practical solutions on leadership in the organizational psychology, pedagogy, communicology, education, and social science fields. General feedback of participants on EdLead PD programs is that creators recognized vital requirements of principals' position in Serbian educational system and helped principals to develop new skills and integrate them into their practice. Creators also included the empirical research foundation of the educational leadership (e.g., citations, verbal references to research literature, key researchers), built content on participants' previous professional development and very important, they built courses in accordance with Serbian state quality standards for headmasters. As a conclusion, I can say that creators offered opportunities for continued learning through technical assistance and resources, and maybe most important – most of participants stressed readiness to continue professional and personal development and (in communication with PD course participants) to enroll in Master Study on Educational Leadership.

Furthermore, effective leadership has the greatest impact in those circumstances (e.g., schools "in trouble") in which it is most needed. This evidence supports the present widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful implementation of large-scale reforms. Educational leadership comes from many sources, not just the "usual suspects" – superintendents and principals. However, the usual suspects are likely still the most influential. Efforts to improve their recruitment, training, evaluation and ongoing development should be considered highly cost-effective approaches to successful school improvement. Our opinion is that EdLead project provides solid base in this direction.

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8. APPENDIX

Participants in external evaluation of TEMPUS EdLead project

University of Kragujevac (UKG)

1. prof. dr Violeta Jovanović, dean
2. doc. dr Jelena Teodorović, coordinator, project team member Master and PD programme lecturer
3. doc. dr Biljana Stojanović Master programme lecturer
4. doc. dr Vesna Petrović, Master programme lecturer
5. Ivan Ilić, project adminstrator
6. Zvezdana Petrović, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
7. Sonja Stamenković, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
8. Rade Zejak, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
9. Vera Kostić, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
10. Danijela Marković, Master programme in Educational Leadership student

University of Novi Sad

1. prof. dr Olivera Knežević Florić, coordinator, project team member, Master programme lecturer
2. prof. dr Slađana Zuković, coordinator, project team member, Master programme lecturer
3. prof. dr Svetlana Kostović, Master programme lecturer
4. dr Biljana Lungulov, Master programme assistant
5. dr Stefan Ninković, project team member, Master programme assistant
6. Senka Slijepčević, Master programme assistant
7. Zoltan Arđelan, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
8. Lidija Radulović, Master programme in Educational Leadership student
9. Liljana Siriški, project administrator

University of Belgrade

1. prof. dr Danijela Petrović, coordinator, project team member, Master and PD programme lecturer
2. prof. dr Svetlana Čizmić, project team member, Master and PD programme lecturer
3. prof. dr Ivana Petrović, project team member, Master and PD programme lecturer
4. Maja Jovanović, project administrator
5. Tomislav Alavanja, PD programme student
6. Marina Bunčić, PD programme student
7. Slađana Pejić, PD programme student

University of Niš

1. prof. dr Jelena Maksimović coordinator, project team member Master and PD programme lecturer
2. Jelena Osmanović, project team member